

Pointers For Parents

Helping Teens Adjust To College Life

(NAPSA)—Moving to a new city and leaving behind good friends is difficult enough for an adult—imagine the challenge for a teen going off to college, worried about friendships and fitting in. College campuses, with their cliques and social structures, can be difficult places for young adults to find their footing. Adolescents face similar problems when their families relocate, and must start anew at another school.

One of the first steps parents can take to help smooth the transition is to give up the guilt. Families generally relocate due to career changes, divorce or other adult emergencies, and it's not uncommon for adolescents to resent the intrusion into their structured lives. Apologizing for the situation—one created out of necessity—can only prolong the anger and upset. Instead, assure teens that the move is the right thing for your family, and that you're going to make the best of it—together.

Since the first day at a new school is an opportunity for students to start fresh with new teachers, new friends and new activities, parents should also take this time to start fresh in fostering a growing child's maturity and independence. Allow teens a little more freedom, trusting them to make their own decisions—and their own mistakes. Showing your youngster a new level of trust will ultimately help strengthen your relationship.

While such a move can encourage personal growth and build a child's character, parents need to monitor the situation. If the child begins to go astray, perhaps getting involved with the wrong crowd, you may need to pull in the reins and provide a little redirec-



Letting go can be an emotional experience for both parents and their children.

tion. Still, it's a good idea to talk with teachers and other parents to confirm your suspicions before jumping to conclusions and potentially embarrassing your child just as he/she is beginning to settle in.

One recent film that addresses this topic with a deft touch is "First Daughter," starring Katie Holmes, Michael Keaton and Margatha Colin. Holmes plays Samantha Mackenzie, a sheltered young woman who heads off to college and tries to fit in—a situation made more complicated by the fact that her father is the President of the United States.

Directed by Forest Whitaker ("Hope Floats," "Waiting to Exhale"), "First Daughter" is a charming, heartfelt and fun tale full of laughter and surprises that's now available on Fox Home Entertainment VHS and DVD. Watching the film together as a family can be a great way to open up discussions about what's going on in your children's lives—and helping them get used to their new surroundings.

For more information about "First Daughter" go to www.firstdaughterDVD.com.