

The Complete College Send-Off Checklist

Everything beyond the dorm shopping list — the health forms, legal paperwork, and real conversations that actually protect your kid.

Legal Forms — Sign These Before They Leave

Once your child turns 18, you lose automatic legal access to their medical and academic information — even if you're still paying every bill. These forms take an afternoon; without them, a routine emergency can turn into a legal roadblock.

- ☐ **HIPAA authorization/release form.** Without it, doctors and hospitals legally cannot share your child's medical info with you, even in an emergency. Get one for the campus health center and the nearest hospital — free templates at your college, eForms.com, or HIPAAJournal.com. No notary needed.
- ☐ **Medical power of attorney (healthcare proxy).** Lets you make medical decisions if your child is incapacitated and can't decide for themselves. Many states combine this with the HIPAA release into one form.
- ☐ **FERPA waiver.** Without it, the school can't legally discuss grades, disciplinary records, or enrollment status with you. Most colleges offer this through the registrar or student portal.
- ☐ **Durable power of attorney.** Covers financial and administrative matters — leases, bank accounts, insurance paperwork — if your child is unavailable or unable to handle it.
- ☐ **Check state-specific requirements.** Rules vary by state — a quick call to an estate attorney or your state bar's website confirms your documents are valid where your child will actually live.

Health Prep — Handle It While You're Still in the Room

Once they're on campus, healthcare becomes their responsibility. Lock in the basics now.

- ☐ **Full physical and dental checkup.** Especially important without an established local doctor — ask about telehealth options too.
- ☐ **Prescription refills.** Enough supply to bridge the gap until they establish care near campus — and they should know how to manage refills themselves.
- ☐ **Vaccinations confirmed.** Many colleges require meningococcal (MenACWY, sometimes MenB) for students in dorms — often a hard requirement for move-in.
- ☐ **Mental health resources identified.** Look up the campus counseling center together; talk honestly about stress, homesickness, and asking for help.
- ☐ **Health insurance reviewed.** Confirm coverage in the school's state; check the student health plan if not. Make sure your child knows how to actually use their insurance card.

- ☐ **Basic health toolkit packed.** Thermometer, first aid basics, labeled meds, and a saved list of allergies, prescriptions, and doctors' contacts.

Emotional & Relationship Prep — Don't Skip This

This is the part you'll remember most in five years.

- ☐ **Have the real conversations weeks before, not the final days.** Emotions run high right before drop-off — a car ride a few weeks out works better than the last week.
- ☐ **Agree on a communication plan together.** Ask what feels right to your student instead of assuming — weekly call, daily text, Sunday dinner by video.
- ☐ **Ask a few real questions.** Try "what are you most nervous about?" or "what do you want to make sure doesn't change between us?" instead of "are you excited?"
- ☐ **Make one more memory before the goodbye memory.** A final trip, a tradition, a standing dinner — something to look forward to beyond the send-off itself.
- ☐ **Write something down.** A letter in the suitcase, a note in a drawer — something they find later, not just at drop-off.

Academic & Administrative

- ☐ Confirm class registration, orientation dates, and required placement tests.
- ☐ Look into tutoring and advising resources before they're needed.
- ☐ Set up student portal, campus email, and LMS (Canvas, Blackboard, etc.).
- ☐ Check the financial aid refund and billing timeline.

Financial & Legal Logistics

- ☐ Set up a way to transfer money fast — joint account, Venmo/Zelle, or shared budgeting app.
- ☐ Confirm renter's/property insurance for dorm electronics.
- ☐ Add them to a card for emergencies and agree on a real semester budget.
- ☐ Update their mailing address for anything tied to their name.
- ☐ Check auto insurance and parking permits if bringing a car.

Practical Life Skills (Yes, Really)

- ☐ Do a full trial run of laundry, start to finish.
- ☐ Practice a real monthly budget and what happens if they go over.
- ☐ Cook a few simple, dorm-realistic meals together.
- ☐ Walk through a roommate conflict, missed deadline, or lockout scenario.

- ☐ Save a "who to call for what" list — RA, security, health center, financial aid.

Tech & Safety

- ☐ Back up phone and laptop data before the move.
- ☐ Download the campus safety app and save security's number.
- ☐ Share locations if both are comfortable — safety net, not surveillance.
- ☐ Confirm phone plan coverage at the new location.

If You Only Have an Hour

Prioritize these five: HIPAA release signed, FERPA waiver submitted, one real conversation had, insurance card understood, and a way to send money fast. Everything else can be handled with a phone call after move-in — these five are much harder to fix after the fact.

Print this, tape it to the fridge, and check things off as you go. It's a lot less glamorous than the Target run — but it's the part that actually protects your kid.

— Created by GalPal.net