

# Health Promotion Hot Topics: Parents as Partners

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# Session Objectives

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- The attendee should be able to:
    - Identify key ways to manage parental expectations and balance their influence.
    - Identify areas of collaboration between parents and health promotion staff to improve services to millennial students.
    - Discuss implications for parent partnerships on college health promotion strategies.
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# Session Overview

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- Review millennial characteristics
  - Background – parents and college health issues
  - Selected campus and parent perspectives
  - Small group discussion
  - Closing remarks and key resources
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# Relevance to College Health

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- Standards of Practice for Health Promotion in Higher Education
    - Standard 2: Collaborative Practice
  
  - National College Health Assessment data:
    - Parents as believable sources of health-related information
    - Students get health-related information from parents
  
  - Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
    - Part 10: Campus and External Relations
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- [Parents] are needy, overanxious and sometimes plain pesky -- and schools at every level are trying to find ways to deal with them. (Strauss, 2006)
  - Let's not *deal* with parents – let's *partner* with them! Let's actively engage and leverage their influence.
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# Millennials Overview

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- ❑ Born between 1982 and 2002
- ❑ Graduate high school between 2000 and 2020
- ❑ Structured rule followers
- ❑ Protected and sheltered
- ❑ Confident and optimistic about their future
- ❑ Cooperative and team-oriented
- ❑ Accepting of authority
- ❑ Talented achievers

# Millennials Characteristics: *Parents*

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- ❑ Parents spend more time with their children than previous generations
- ❑ Much better communication with parents than recent generations
- ❑ Parents are cited the greatest influence on the lives of their children
- ❑ Parents are actively involved in course selection, major declaration, negotiating grades, and often monitor course content

# Factors That Contribute to Hyper-Engagement of Parents

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Factor	External	Intrapersonal
Image	Desire for children to be successful	Desire to be perceived as successful parent; embracing the symbolic value of children
Safety	Perceived increase in school violence	Desire to be perceived as ensuring family safety
Parental Control	Increase in the number of youth who are homeschooled	Concern about the safety of formal educational environments
Communication	Increased access and use of communication technology	Desire to be, and be perceived as, readily available, especially in comparison to peers
Accountability	Emphasis on testing and grades	Need for external validation as reflected in quantitative metrics
Consumerism	Decreased appreciation of the benefits of a rigorous liberal arts education	Fee for service mindset entitlement

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Source: Keeling & Underhile, 2007

# Sources of Data: *Survey of College Parent Experiences*

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□ *'This year, what is your greatest concern regarding your student?'*

■ Academics	34.0%
■ Finances	24.4%
■ Health and safety	12.1%
■ Career planning	11.9%
■ Personal relationships	7.9%
■ Other (please specify)	7.0%
■ Campus or community involvement opportunities	2.6%

# Sources of Data: *National Survey of College and University Parent Programs*

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## □ Parent services offered included:

- Parent Orientation
- Parent/Family Weekend
- Parent Web site
- Print newsletter
- E-mail newsletter
- Parent chat room
- Hotline/parent questions
- E-mail/parent questions
- Parent handbook
- Move-in events
- Educational Workshops
- Parents Council
- Parent Assoc. (fee based)
- Parent Assoc. (free)
- Fund Solicitation

# Sources of Data: *Transition Year Project*

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- Implications for how and what to communicate to parents in programming efforts:
  - Encourage conversation
  - Address stigma
  - Increase knowledge
  - Improve help-seeking

# Developing Partnerships with Parents

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- Improve communication with parents
  - Articulate parent outcomes
  - Develop parent engagement curriculum
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# Selected Campus and Parent Perspectives

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- ❑ Marquette University
  - ❑ Montana State University
  - ❑ Princeton University
  - ❑ Dr. Elizabeth Estrada, Princeton parent
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# Small Group Table Discussion

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- ❑ Balancing student autonomy with the influence of parents
  - ❑ Logical points of collaboration between health promotion and parents (as an organized board on campus or individually)
  - ❑ Important health promotion services relevant to parents
  - ❑ Potential challenges having parents more involved in health promotion strategies
  - ❑ Key benefits of increasing the collaboration between parents and health promotion
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# Small Group Table Discussion – Participant Feedback

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- ❑ Laminate card of information for parents and/or students
  - ❑ Include parents on committees as we would any other key stakeholder group
  - ❑ Send home social norm/marketing information so that parents can help us debunk student myths about SHS and clarify misperceptions
  - ❑ Connect with parents actively via email rather than waiting for them to visit our web pages for information
  - ❑ Communicate with parents around flu shot and other key times during the year to encourage attendance/participation
  - ❑ Include “parent” icon on our web pages for easy access to relevant information and resources
  - ❑ “Be gentle” with parents – demonstrate strong customer service skills when parents call – SHS staff
  - ❑ Use relevant topics to engage parents (e.g., empty nest conversations)
  - ❑ Conduct QPR and other similar trainings with parent groups – provide them with concrete skills to use
  - ❑ Present consistent messages from Health Promotion, Res Life, etc. (panel discussion with other administrators to hear each others’ messages)
  - ❑ Identify institution’s value around parent engagement - parents leaving ceremony with tissues example
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# References and Resources

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  - ❑ Locke, J. & Eichorn, M. Mental health: What do parents think? *Student Health Spectrum*, April 2008.
  - ❑ NASPA Parent and Family Relations Knowledge Community website  
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# References and Resources, cont.

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- ❑ NASPA Parent and Family Relations Knowledge Community Resources page  
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  - ❑ Shapiro, J.R. (2002). Keeping parents off campus. *The New York Times*, August 22.
  - ❑ Florida State University “Parents’ Guide to Letting Go”  
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# Questions?

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