

ARE YOU A HELICOPTER PARENT? TAKE THE QUIZ!

You've probably heard the term "**helicopter parent**." It's used to describe parents who often "hover" and cling to their child(ren) and thus, develop a relationship where the child—even at age 18 or older—depends on them and can't do some basic adult tasks on their own. While it's hard to see your child grow up, it is necessary, especially as they approach graduation, to help them become more independent by letting them do things on their own (even if that means watching them struggle or make mistakes).

*Are you a helicopter parent? Or do you know your limits? Take the quiz below and see for yourself! **

** Please note: this quiz isn't any sort of scientific measurement or judgement of you and/or your "hovering" habits. We're not even close to helicopter parenting scientists. Seriously.*

1. Congratulations! Your teen has started the college search. What role do you play in it?

- A. You join him on college tours, help discuss his college financing, and offer sage advice. But for the most part, your teen is taking the reigns.
- B. You set up the college tours, you organize all the college materials, but he's still doing most of the work.
- C. Oops, you keep accidentally stepping on the heels of the campus tour guides since you're two feet behind them, asking roughly 10–20 questions per minute. That's okay, though, because you need to be prepared for when you're filling out your teen's college applications.

2. Your baby is all grown up, and you're moving her into the dorm. How exciting! What do you find yourself doing on move-in day?

- A. You're mostly there just to help her move and get situated. After that, she can do her own thing.
- B. You help her move but also take her downtown and around campus so she doesn't get lost and lonely, and perhaps try to meet one or two of her new professors while you're at it.
- C. You're on your hands and knees scrubbing the dorm room, setting up every scrap of Ikea furniture, and knocking on the surrounding dorm doors to scope out the hooligans who may try to befriend your child. You also took vacation time to stay in a hotel near campus during her first week. You know, just in case she needs you.

3. Your student can't figure out the laundry machine in the dorms and/or just doesn't like using them. You:

- A. Tell her to ask someone for help. It's been 18 years—she can finally do her own dang laundry!
- B. Look up the washer/dryer model online and type out a step-by-step guide to doing laundry.
- C. Easy fix: you'll drive to campus once a month to do her laundry for her.

4. Oh no, your college student is homesick! What do you do?

- A. Comfort him, and encourage him to branch out, do some activities, and take advantage of campus activities to distract himself.
- B. Pay for a ride, bus, train, or plane for him to come home for a weekend.
- C. Bus or train? No way. You drive yourself to campus, pick him up, take him home, pamper him endlessly, drive him back when he's comfortable returning (even if that's next semester), then drive yourself home.

5. Your student got an A+ on that huge bio exam she was dreading! You:

- A. Offer your congratulations over the phone.
- B. Offer your congratulations over the phone, then proceed to brag about it excessively to extended family, coworkers, strangers in the supermarket, etc.
- C. Start uncontrollably weeping with joy. You post this update on Facebook in all caps, thank friends and family for their thoughts and prayers, and remind the world of her upcoming Intro to Psych midterm. Fingers crossed!

6. Your student says he doesn't feel well. You:

- A. Advise him to take some medicine, take a nap, and go to the campus health center if it gets worse.
- B. Give him a long "awww, poor baby" talk over the phone, proceed with option A above, and text him every hour just to make sure he's okay.
- C. Phone call? You're already in your car driving the 12-hour journey to campus with homemade soup, fresh cookies, his childhood blankie, and every kind of over-the-counter medicine you can get your hands on.

7. You know your teen is going out and having fun on the weekends. You want to check in. How do you do so?

- A. You usually call on Sundays to catch up on the essentials like school, family, football, etc., so that's your time to make sure she's okay.
- B. You shoot her a text on Saturday and Sunday mornings just to make sure she's alive.
- C. You require her to text you when she arrives home each night. You call campus police if she doesn't respond within three minutes.

8. Your student graduated—congratulations! What is your role now that he's done with school?

- A. You'll help with a few things, but let's be honest: he's a full-blown adult now and he knows how to take care of himself.
- B. You believe he's on his own to an extent but still pay some bills, file his taxes, do laundry from time to time, etc.
- C. You found the perfect car and apartment for him and visit frequently to do laundry, cook, and clean. Also, the world stops if he comes home to visit. To heck with your prior commitments.

Did you answer . . .

Mostly A's?

You have found the ideal balance. Your 18-year-old, by definition, is an adult. You know to keep your distance so he or she can figure out things on his or her own. But that doesn't mean you're totally out of the picture—at the end of the day, you're as supportive and loving as ever.

Mostly B's?

You're starting to approach helicopter parent status, but no need to fret. You recognize that your student must be independent, but there are still a few things you can pull back on. That's what college is for—let this be an educating experience for both you and your child! All those things you're used to doing? Slowly start to wean your son or daughter off of them, and soon he or she will be the independent adult you always dreamed of.

Mostly C's?

We hate to break it to you, but you're a helicopter parent. Though the answers here are exaggerated, there are kernels of truth. Take a good look at your role in the college search and how involved you are in your student's life, even while he or she is away at school. Often, students find it overwhelming if a parent is clingy, so you'd be doing them a twofold favor: giving the independence they need to thrive as adults as well as the freedom to have fun and do their own thing during their college years. That's what the glory days are all about!