

The Prepared Parent Guide: A Resource for Sending Your Child to College

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Dicmar Publishing (March 2008)

Softcover \$13.95 (206pp)

978-0-933165-10-6

College. It's enough to send a shudder through the heart of any parent, and not just because of empty-nest syndrome. Money (both the parent's and the student's)—or lack thereof. Transportation. Dorms versus apartments. Parent weekends. What the student wants from the parent—and doesn't want. How is a parent to know where to even begin?

Marie Pinak Carr is more than qualified to tell you. The mother of three daughters who have collectively attended four different universities, she's been through it all: car issues, finances, homesickness and long-distance physical illness, roommate anguish, and coping with the loss of parental control. Her even-keeled book, *The Prepared Parent Guide*, explains what to expect, how to cope, what it takes to navigate the maze of collegial options and regulations, and what to do when the unexpected (or expected but dreaded) happens.

Carr not only understands the processes, she understands that the parent facing this daunting challenge doesn't need a tome of thousands of pages to complicate their lives. Instead, she presents a brisk, easily digestible book with concise chapters full of bullet lists, short descriptions of necessary terms and situations, and comprehensive checklists, including budgeting, insurance management, inventory checklists, discussion points, and even a car emergency kit.

Dividing the book into these brief chapters filled with hands-on tip sheets and checklists makes the process seem more manageable and less stressful. Carr's approach, which is "If I could do it, so can you, especially since you can learn from my experience," gives the book a no-nonsense but friendly sense of guidance. She works from the beginning, with the first chapters detailing what should be done during the summer prior to the student's departure for college. Things that could easily be forgotten, such as health care proxies, health insurance records, and determining how and what homeowner's insurance might cover for off-premises dependents, is all detailed. Worksheets help students figure out the process of budgeting, and a thorough (and necessary) section covers the ins and outs of credit and debt.

Carr does an excellent job of covering what parents and students should know and what they should do. This is an indispensable handbook for any parent facing the college years, whether it's the first year or even the last—the advice is valuable for each year the student is enrolled.

(August 18, 2009)

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