

PRACTICAL STUFF: HELPING YOUR STUDENT SET UP A DORM ROOM

Before You Do Anything

- Read the college's housing page on what is provided and what is allowed/ prohibited. Is there carpet? Shelving? Often, items like candles, space heaters, grills, or halogen lamps are prohibited.
- Figure out what you already have. Do you really need more of everything?

If Your Student Will Be Far Away

- Consider using Bed, Bath, and Beyond's [Pack & Hold](#) for bedding & accessories. It is handy to walk into the store nearest the school and have your stuff ready. These stores can be busy during college move-in and run out of stock, so walking in with a shopping list might not work.
- If you need a refrigerator, microwave, or air conditioner, you can order online from HomeDepot or similar and pick up at a local store. Be sure you ask how long they will hold a purchase before pickup.
- If you would like bedding washed, build in time to visit a laundromat the day before move-in.
- Inquire whether items can be shipped to the school prior to the school year and held for your arrival.

Communicate with Roommate(s)

Both kids don't need refrigerators/ microwaves. Save space and don't duplicate.

Do Ahead of Time

- Share contacts: be sure your student has email addresses & phone numbers of family and friends.
- Find out if bedbugs are an issue. If they are, you might want mattress and pillow protectors.
- Identify the nearest stores, both for dorm setup and for your student's use.
- Set up Amazon Student Prime, which costs less than regular Amazon Prime.

Compile Four Small Kits

1. Self-care: extra toothbrush & floss, nail clippers/ file, cotton swabs, cold remedy & basic first aid items, thermometer, face masks. Easy on the meds.
2. Desk supplies (don't overdo): small stapler, scissors, a few stamps, envelopes, pens, Sharpies, tape.
3. Important papers: insurance card, passport, birth certificate, etc. Originals may be needed for employment.
4. Tools: basic small tool kit, duct tape, ways to hang items (Command strips are useful.)

Moving In

- Get there early. Your student can meet people after you finish setting up.
- Know where you packed the scissors.
- Have the disinfecting wipes out. Most rooms will be dusty from the summer.
- Tackle the bed setup first, then move to the smaller things.
- Let your student decide how to arrange the room.
- Keep the door propped open so others can see who is moving in.
- When your kid isn't looking, slip a note and \$20 under the sheet of the clean, made bed. It will be found the first time your student washes the sheets.
- Meet the roommate & the roommate's parents if possible. Exchange phone numbers & establish any parameters (only in case of emergency?) for use.

Other Tips

- Send a small photo collage or a framed photo of a fun family time.
- Plan what you are going to say when you leave them at their new destination. If you don't get a chance, handwrite a note and send it.
- Send a care package a few weeks into the school year.

PACKING/ BUYING

This list and most of the online lists (like Big Future's [Off to College Checklist](#)) have much more than a student actually needs, so when in doubt, don't buy it, or get the smallest size. It is easier to buy more stuff later than to return items.

*=some would consider essential. All other items optional.

Linens

- *Extra long twin sheets (1-2 sets)
- *Blanket(s)
- Comforter
- *Pillows (more than one)
- Pillowcases
- *Mattress protector
- *Mattress pad
- *Mattress topper (consider natural latex)
- *Towels, washcloths
- Lots of hand towels

Appliances

check for dorm size limits

- Microwave
- Refrigerator
- Compact vacuum ?
- Coffeemaker ?
- Iron & small ironing board

Organization

- Storage cubes/ plastic crates
- Risers for bed (check dorm specs)
- Trash can
- *Laundry bin/ bag
- *Hangers
- *Shower caddy to take to bathroom
- Bulletin/ dry erase board
- Small organizer for desk drawer
- Basket/ bin for kitchen stuff
- Hooks that stick on the wall
- Door wedge
- Shoe rack

Technology/ Electric

- Laptop & lock
- *Power strip/ surge protector
- Printer (or use campus printers)

Food

- Dishes (start w/ 2 plates, 2 bowls)
- Flatware (2 ea. fork, knife, spoon)
- Cups/ glasses
- Water bottle, insulated mug
- Food storage containers
- Can/ bottle opener
- Sponge for cleaning
- Dish towel
- Paring knife & small cutting board
- Nonperishable food items

Body Stuff

- *Shampoo & conditioner
- *Facial cleanser, body wash
- *Personal products
- *Toothbrush & paste (plus extra)
- *Flip flops (wear in shower!)
- Razor, hair dryer

Desk

- Needs & habits vary!*
- *Scissors
- Envelopes, stamps (only a few)
- Pens, highlighters
- Small stapler, few paper clips
- Post-its
- Few rubber bands
- Ruler (depends on classes)
- Notebooks, binders, paper (style & quantity depend on classes)
- Index cards

Tools

- Small tool kit
- Duct or masking tape
- Batteries
- Small sewing kit, safety pins

Cleaning Stuff

- Disinfecting wipes
- Dish detergent
- *Laundry detergent
- *Laundry stain remover
- *Dryer sheets

Comfort/ Decor

- Area rug
- *Posters (may be best to order later)
- Photos
- Desk lamp (might be built in)
- Strings of lights

Paper Products

- Paper towel roll
- Tissue box + one extra

Optional

- Bicycle? some schools have bike share programs or used bike sales
- Small locking document safe for passport, birth certificate, etc.
- Cleaning supplies if your student will be in an apartment

