



# Student Perception of Parental Involvement in College Orientation

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## Research Question

How are incoming first-year students affected by parental presence during new student orientation?

Prepared ● Anxious ● Support ● Independence ● Identity ● Relationships

### Methods

- Qualitative Lens & Constructivist Paradigm
- Narrative inquiry via individual interviews
- Stratified purposeful sampling
- Sample: First-year students at the chosen institution who went through the student and parent orientation following the move-in process
  - 5 whose parents DID attend orientation
  - 6 whose parents DID NOT attend orientation

### Conclusions

- Relationship with parent(s): 8 close, 2 average, 1 not close
- Those with parents felt *more* supported. Those without felt supported from afar unless they did not know when parents were leaving.
- Students without parents felt they grew in their independence and formed their identity *quicker* than others.
- Most felt *less* anxious with parents. Those without had varied responses.
- 8 of 11 students *would not* change whether or not their parents came. The 3 other students' parents were not present or did not stay, and they would have their parents come or stay longer next time.
- Ability to meet people and overall level of anxiousness had varied results and were *situation dependent*.
- Many agreed the optional pre-orientation leadership camp was *extremely helpful* in making them feel prepared and less anxious about the transition regardless of parents attendance at official orientation.
- Parent involvement in high school *was not* an indicator in their involvement in orientation.

### Student Views

“Our goodbye was in the Rec Center for two minutes. I think it kind of ripped off the Band-Aid in a way. But at the time I really didn't want to rip off the Band-Aid.”



“It really doesn't get to me that much. Like ‘Oh no, they were here one day or they weren't here another day.’ It's more the long term of were they there for me when I call them? Can they be there if I get hurt or something? Knowing that versus I guess just one day like giving a goodbye hug or anything.”



“Just the fact that you're starting on your own from day one is already giving you that two steps ahead of others who have their parents there. So, you already get like the initial sense of anxiety so you have more time for that to like subside.”



“I definitely feel like I was more anxious and they were the one thing I'm most familiar with, so not having them there was kind of like ‘what do I do?’”



“I'd say harder [meeting people] because when I met someone it was always them and their parents. So it's kind of like ‘Hi’ talking to the kids, then ‘Hi’ to the parents, when normally my parents would talk to the parent. But I had to introduce myself to everyone instead of doing a joint introduction.”

### Implications

- Vital for parents to communicate with students their ability to attend orientation. Schools should look to encourage this discussion as students who did not know their parents were not coming or staying were affected the most by their lack of parental presence.
- If not already, get parent information on file to reach out to them separately about their role in orienting their child to college.
- Consider opening up more slots for pre-orientation camp or a second time frame, and promoting it even more to draw students in.
- Consider providing activities or babysitting for younger siblings so parents can focus on the child going to college and not worry about children staying behind at home or having to get back early.