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Leave Your Mom at Home

04.20.2007 | Culture and Society, Students They became known as "helicopter parents" a few years ago for their intense involvement in their college-age children's lives. Apparently, they're still "hovering," even as their students head out into the job force.

A recent survey of more than 700 employers by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, a national organization which studies the transition from college to work, found that parents are making calls to employers and sending in resumes on behalf of their children in increasing numbers.

Career service experts at the University of Dayton said parental involvement in job searches has become a trend.

"When parents get this involved, I think it hurts the students' chances because they (employers) want to hire people who are independent and think on their own," said Greg Hayes, executive director of career services at UD. "I would say to parents to stay involved with their son's or daughter's career progress - not just what they're doing in school, but to encourage them to schedule an appointment with a career adviser as soon as they get to campus. The sooner they come into our office, the better we can assist them."

What kind of activities do parents engage in with employers on behalf of their children? According to the survey:

- * 40 percent obtain information on companies
- * 31 percent submit resumes on behalf of their children
- * 26 percent promote their sons or daughters for positions
- * 15 percent complain to a company that doesn't hire their child
- * 12 percent make interview arrangements
- * 9 percent negotiate salary and benefits
- * 4 percent attend interviews

Mary Miller is a human resources professional at Delphi Corp. and the mother of a graduating college senior. She's been encouraging her daughter, Maureen, to network with people they both know in her quest to find that first job, but that's where she draws the line.

"It's amazing. Some parents really cast a long shadow over their kids," Miller said. "I've had kids in my own office who say they need to go home and talk to their parents about the job I just offered them. It really diminishes their potential to be independent, and I see it as a negative."

Not all students have succumbed to the trend of parental involvement in their job searches. Tessia Pierce, a UD senior graduating with a degree in public relations, sees many of her peers being "herded" by their parents, but it's an idea that's very alien to her.

"I think a lot of parents won't let their kids grow up, which inhibits their ability to function," Pierce said. "It's just a very strange concept to me. I've been very motivated to get jobs on my own because it makes me feel independent. My parents are there to support my decisions or offer some advice, but not to hold my hand. Some parents really need to let their kids go."

Hayes offers these tips for graduating seniors - and their parents:

- * Pay attention to local resources, such as the chamber of commerce
- * Attend city job fairs

- * Tap in to university career services offices. Most have reciprocity agreements to hook up students with job opportunities in their hometown
- * Place a resume on file with university career services departments
- * Schedule an appointment with career services for mock interviews
- * Meet with a career adviser
- * Attend college career fairs

Mary Miller agrees with these tips, and adds one of her own. "Create independence early on," Miller said. "I've had parents call me about internships for their son or daughter during their college years, and I say 'Have your kids call me.' It sets a good precedent."

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