

Back to School? What Every Parent Should Add to Their College-Aged Student's Packing List

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It's back to school season and parents across the country are gearing up to send their 18+ year olds off for their fall semester. While most parents fill their shopping carts with notebooks, binders, and dorm room essentials, there are two items many unintentionally leave off their packing list: Durable Powers of Attorney.

Until age 18, parents have almost unrestricted access to their child's health and financial information. This allows them to easily talk to their child's doctors and assist in making wise financial decisions (hello, FAFSA). However, what many parents fail to realize is that once their child turns 18, they no longer have an automatic seat at the table to help their child make medical and financial decisions. Student health facilities will deny access to medical records and in emergency situations, parents may be left in the dark regarding the status of their child's wellbeing. Even in non-emergency situations, college-aged students often want the flexibility to rely on their parents to assist with everyday tasks, like ensuring their immunization records were properly transferred to the school's health facility. Without a legal mechanism to allow these conversations, parents' hands are tied.

One simple step parents can take to avoid these situations is to send their students back to school with Durable Powers of Attorney - one for health care and one for finances. These small but mighty documents allow parents to continue to be part of their child's care, without jumping through hoops.

Every situation and family dynamic is unique, so it is important for parents to have a conversation with their child and a licensed attorney to discuss the benefits of Durable Powers of Attorney for their family.