

Safely Off to College 101 in 2022



By Anthony Quatrochi,
Anthony Quatrochi's
Martial Arts Institute

Parenthood comes with its own odd milestones. Sending your child off to preschool or kindergarten is tough, but sending your child off to college, knowing you may not see them for weeks, or months, is a herculean emotional effort. It can be hard to find reassurance anywhere, and instead you need to rely on a lot of faith and hope.

Naturally, a prevailing concern in the whole endeavor is the safety of your child. No matter their strength, size, or life experience to that point – for likely the first time, they will be fully out of your hands and your control. You will not be their primary advisor, back-up or protector.

WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

Being frank with your child about the types of personalities and experiences they might encounter is a good start. Not everyone they meet or place they go will reflect what they've come to expect in their daily lives, and talking beforehand about what to say or do in a situation is a key first step to safely navigating new, unfamiliar ground and people. These conversations might not be enjoyable, but they can help build confidence and mitigate fear through imagining what could happen.

Unfortunately, because we cannot control others, sometimes simply imagining how to handle a situation is not enough to

prepare you to face one head on, especially if the encounter becomes physical. Your child might need to know how to protect themselves—with a hands-on method—from someone who means them harm.

Coming to a self-defense-oriented class can aid your student, as they will learn and actually try out techniques designed to verbally defuse a situation or physically break free

from another party. Physically practicing, repetitively, brings instinct and muscle memory into play and gives vital extra time to get away from danger. Preparing before the skills are needed helps your child to be fluid and ready to act instead of freezing in place.

At our school, we emphasize that you don't have to be the larger or stronger party to "win" an altercation and get away. Instead,



you need to hone confidence in yourself and be ready to face what you must. Remember that adage, "work smarter, not harder?"

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

We frequently get inquiries about a child taking a self-defense class just days before they leave for school. While we do teach many single night self-defense seminars, which are a good beginning, it's not the optimal way to instill a lasting, instinctual, defensive capability. As we all know, more practice is the way to feel comfortable with a new skill. We recommend that a student going away to school take a series of classes over the summer so they can repeatedly work scenarios and become comfortable in the motions.

Sending your child on to their next chapter shouldn't be scary for them, or for you. It should be embraced for the milestone and celebration that it is – for both of you. Just be sure to prepare for it, the same way you prepared them to go off to school the first time... only this time, instead of packing them off with school supplies, pack them off with safety supplies. You'll both breathe easier.

If you have any questions about our programs, we can be reached at AQMAI.com, aqkkjj@gmail.com, or 845-298-2177. The first month of classes is always free. We're happy to help. ♦

