Most college students will make mistakes and most will learn from those mistakes.  Wise students and their parents recognize that mistakes are part of the learning curve.  As a parent, you may want to anticipate and watch for potential poor decisions and talk to your student about his choices.  Remember, however, that he will ultimately need to make his own decisions – and live with the consequences – but that he will learn from experience.

**Poor Decision – Not going to class.**

Although some college professors may never take attendance, going to class is important.  It may feel to some students that they can learn all they need by reading the textbook, but class time is an important time for additional information, clarification, and a chance to show the professor that you know the material.

**Poor Decision  – Not getting involved on campus.**

Many dorm rooms have all of the comforts of home, and students may be tempted to settle in.  However, research shows that students who are involved on campus – attending lectures and events, participating in clubs and activities, helping with service projects, and taking on leadership roles are both happier and do better academically.

**Poor Decision – Not buying textbooks.**

College textbooks are expensive.  It may be tempting for some students to skip the textbook purchase and just listen to the class lectures.  Students need to remember that they will be held responsible for material in textbooks and that although they are expensive, they are a fraction of the tuition money the student is wasting if she doesn’t take advantage of her total education.

**Poor Decision – Working too many hours at a job.**

Many college students need to have a job in order to make ends meet.  However, students who work too many hours (some studies suggest 20 hours per week as the breaking point) often do not do as well academically and do not have time to become engaged in college life and culture.

**Poor Decision – Hoping to find****enough time to study.**

College students need to spend many hours outside of class studying and preparing for the fewer number of hours spent in class.  Many students go through each day hoping they will find some time to study rather than planning study time and organizing around that.  Your student may need a planner and should block out study time.

**Poor Decision – Failing to connect with his professors and advisor.**

College professors may seem intimidating, but most professors are teaching because they love their subject and want to share it with their students.  Whether or not your student is struggling in a class, it’s a good idea for her to visit the professor during office hours and get to know him.

**Poor Decision – Not getting help.**

Most students struggle with something at some time during their college career.  The difficulty may be academic, social, psychological, or physical.  Most colleges provide professional help and support in all of the above areas.  Too many students feel they need to do everything themselves, or they rely continually on family members at home.  Although support from family is important, your student should learn to take advantage of all of the resources provided by his college.

**Poor Decision – Not taking ownership of his choices and his life.**

Many college students are just learning what it means to be an adult in our society.  Part of that adulthood is taking ownership for your own decisions and their consequences.  Students who continually blame other students, professors, the college, the system, or their family for their situation, have a long way to go.  Students who step up and take ownership begin to take control of their lives.

**Poor Decision – Avoiding “hard” things.**

Many students look for easy classes, easy professors, easy assignments, and ways to avoid requirements.  Students who have avoided “hard” have missed the opportunity to face and overcome a challenge and grow and feel pride from the situation.

Most college students make wise decisions most of the time.  They learn to make more and more wise decisions as they progress through their college career.  However, many students may make one or more of these poor decisions at some time in their career.  As college parents, it is important that we help students value their mistakes and learn from them.

http://www.collegeparents.org/members/resources/articles/your-college-student-making-some-poor-decisions