



## **Boomerang Kids:** Challenges and Opportunities When Grown-Up Kids Come Home

Maybe your college kids are home for the summer, or perhaps you have young adult kids living with you while looking for work or saving for an apartment. Whatever the situation, you may find it hard to redefine your parenting role with these boomerang kids. How much privacy and independence should they have? To what extent can you still set limits and expectations while they are living under your roof?

### **I. Underlying issues**

- Kids have experienced independence away from your watchful eye and will chafe at your efforts to control or monitor their behavior
- You have a right to set the terms of respectful behavior within your own home
- You have an opportunity to help prepare your child for responsible, respectful adult living

### **II. Tips for parents**

- Sit down on Day One and anticipate together what will make this work  
*Acknowledge that your child has grown accustomed to a new level of freedom and so have you! Think out loud about what will be different and what will be the same about your relationship at this new stage of development. Anticipate situations that could be stressful and talk about how you can prevent those situations from arising.*
- Be clear up front about expectations  
*Building on the conversation above, get specific about expectations regarding money, household work, use of the family car, entertaining guests, hours (or notifying each other when you won't be home), and anything else important to you. For young adults who have graduated and are working, expectations may include a time limit on how long they may live with you or whether they will contribute to household costs. Be available to provide advice and guidance if your child is struggling, but hold firm on reasonable expectations for progress toward independent living.*
- Respect your adult child's privacy  
*It often is difficult for parents to accept that they do not have a right to know everything about their adult child's life. But as long as the adult child is meeting the expectations you have set for living in your household – and as long as you see no signs of serious problems that would warrant intervention (e.g. substance use, mental health problems) – you are wise to let your child take the lead on how much to share of his or her personal life. How parents handle these transitional times in their young adult children's lives often sets the tone for what can be warm, respectful adult-adult relationships throughout the rest of their lives.*