



For Parents: No Essay Hijacking

By Kevin McMullin, Collegewise Founder and President

It's not uncommon for parents to offer feedback on their kids' college essays (though I advise against that for the same reason the American Medical Association advises against doctors treating their own children—more on that [here](#)). Still, many parents insist on doing more than just correcting grammar and spelling. Some will suggest new material, insert their own rewrites, or even compose their own original paragraphs in the name of improving the essay.

I understand that this comes from a good place of wanting to help your son or daughter as much as you can. But please remember three things:

1. Admissions officers want to hear the student's version of the events.
2. When a parent gets over-involved, it's almost always glaringly apparent to an experienced reader.
3. It's your student who inevitably pays the price with a negative impact on their admissions chances.

Parents think and write differently than kids do. That's expected considering that kids have only been on the planet for seventeen years. Encourage them to seek help from outside the family circle—counselors and English teachers are great sources. And if you are called upon, remember that while feedback and even some proofreading are fair game in the name of helping, once you start inserting your own thoughts, words, or voice into the essay, you're hijacking, which can only hurt.

Want more expert essay tips from Kevin? Check out his blog at wiselikeus.com.

