When OLÉ! Weekend is over, the true transition period for both your student and family begins. When you waved good bye, you left your student in the very competent hands of an entire network whose only mission is your child's success at USD. The first six weeks of the semester or "transition period" are the hardest for the family and the student. Most students are living on their own for the first time without family close by, and at times it can be an overwhelming experience. For the families, it can be hard getting those tearful phone calls when everything isn’t going as expected. You want them to be happy at all times but this is a growing experience and things are not always perfect.

USD has many resources to help make this transition easier for both the student and the family. When my three children went to USD, I hoped they would make lots of friends immediately. The events the first week at school are planned to do just that. The first connection, of course, is with roommates. You hope they will all get along but there is a learning curve here and it does not always go smoothly. Schedules, personalities and habits all play a part in the roommate dynamic. This is a great opportunity to learn one of the most important life skills and that is getting along with others. If a conflict does arise, it is hard for a parent not to jump in immediately and fix it. According to Melissa Halter, PhD., at the USD Wellness Center, this is a great time for a parent to listen and offer tools and tips to alleviate the situation but let your student handle it on their own. Your student has acquired skills throughout high school to deal with situations and Dr. Halter believes that bringing up how your child dealt with a past problem and how that was successfully resolved will give them the confidence to deal with an issue on their own. The RA or resident assistant is also a great person for your child to talk to and get to know because they are living in the same area as your student. They are trained to deal with different situations which can be resolved easily.

Homesickness is also a very common feeling during these first six weeks. Feeling isolated and alone are very common at first. Dr. Halter says it is important for your child to make a connection right away. Encourage your student to get to know their RA who lives close to them and is a great resource for meeting other students in their residence hall or LLC. There are so many clubs and events to get involved with on campus that there should be something that interests your student. They should take advantage of their professor's office hours and get to know their professor. This will greatly enhance your child's classroom experience and success. I encourage you to read the W Curve which explains the rollercoaster ride your child may feel as he or she gets situated at USD <www.sandiego.edu/parents/torero-parents/first-year/index.php>. The goal of everyone at USD is for your student to become engaged in the USD community.

Connecting with your student can also be challenging. They will be very busy getting to classes, socializing and studying so they may not always have time to chat. At first when I would call my son and he would be busy and couldn't talk, I was a little hurt. I wanted to share in everything he was doing and hear about everything. I had to take a step back and realize that he was trying to
establish his own routines and friendships and I may not have called at the best time. We established a routine where he would call most evenings just to check in. Sometimes it would only be a text but at least we knew things were ok. Dr. Halter stresses that only you know how much contact your child needs. The last thing you want to happen is that they think you don't want to hear from them. Share with them things going on with the family but be careful that they don't feel like they are "missing out."

The transition period is trying for all involved. Just remember there are so many resources at USD to make this time a success for both the student and their families. If you are feeling uneasy about anything, current parents, your parent ambassador and the Office of Parent Relations are always there to help. The USD Parents Fan Page on Facebook is always monitored if you have a question. The USD Wellness Center offers counseling to both students and parents if an issue arises. The Office of Public Safety is always on campus to ensure your student has a safe environment to live and learn in.

Lastly, just remember what an exciting time this is for your student. This is such an important milestone at such an amazing university that each of us as parents and guardians should be proud that we did something right!