It’s your time now!

Learn to beat the empty nester syndrome

Date of issue 18.02.08
Publication number 503
Embargo until 18.02.08

Your children have flown the nest, the house is very quiet, you may feel lonely and lost but the truth is, it’s your time to fly now too, time to pursue your dreams and achieve your ambitions. If you’ve thought about going back to college, it’s not too late. It’s your time now!

The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) has been designed by the Learning and Skills Council to help you achieve these goals. ALG gives eligible adult learners up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs that learning can bring.

Perhaps the first time round you were easily distracted, or wanted to get out and get a job rather than staying on in learning. If you want to study for your first full level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSES) or first full level 3 (equivalent to 2 A levels) you could be eligible for ALG. And with additional qualifications you not only become more employable, but you will also feel better about yourself and will have a new lease of life!

According to expert psychologist Dr Gary Wood, adults make great learners, he says: “It’s true that mature students make good learners and are more likely to stick with their course. They are more focused and committed as usually they have gone back to college to study something they’ve always wanted to do and have taken time to make the decision. If you’ve found yourself to be an ‘empty nester’ it’s the perfect opportunity to engage in learning and activities that are stimulating for the mind.”

This September, mother of five Deborah Hickson, from Partington, Manchester, will follow in her sons’ footsteps and go to university to study for a dream career in criminology. The 42-year-old
was inspired to undertake an access course at Trafford College after her eldest son flew the nest to continue his studies. Now she is in the situation of applying for university courses at the same time as her second eldest child.

She said: “My eldest two sons leaving home helped give me the extra push I needed to think about my own future. When I first went for an interview at college, I was worried about my age but I soon realised that people of every age are out there studying. There are so many possibilities and the world really is my oyster. I use ALG to pay for my travel costs of getting to college, it’s made a big difference to my budget and I see it as a personal reward for going back into education.”

If you are thinking about going back to college in September, then it’s your time to start planning ahead now. ALG is there to help with any financial worries you may have.

Trevor Fellowes, Director of Learner Support of the Learning and Skills Council, says: “The Adult Learning Grant offers learners a helping hand in education; it can be used to help with anything from the cost of books and materials through to childcare costs. We’re not too far into the new year and it’s the perfect time to start thinking about your future opportunities. ALG is there to ease the financial pressures of these important decisions”

Since the national roll out in September 2007 over 16,000 have received ALG.

Call 0800 100 900 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/alg to see if you are eligible.

**Top tips from Dr Gary Wood to help you though the empty nest syndrome:**

- Go back to college and study something that interested you first time around, but perhaps you weren’t ready to study back then. There are vocational courses such as childcare and law, as well as more traditional courses such as Maths and English
- Accept support from your family and friends. Just because your house is empty does not mean that you are alone
- Have a big clear out and eliminate some of the clutter, your house can be anything you want it to be now. Carefully place your child’s keepsakes in safe storage
- Build new friendships. Going to college can be a great opportunity to meet new people
Notes to editors:

(Case study) is available for interview along with a variety of different case studies from around the country, please contact Kate Lupton 0207 413 3769 kate.lupton@hillandknowlton.com for further media enquiries.

ALG is available to adults in England aged 19 or over who are studying full time for a first full level 2 (5 GCSE’s at grades A* to C or an NVQ2 or its equivalent) or a first full level 3 (2 A levels or an NVQ3 or its equivalent) qualification.

Notes to editors:

To interview [case study] or for further media enquiries please contact: [contact details]

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