

THE ULTIMATE CHECKLIST

College Care Package Essentials

Practical, comforting, and fun things to send from home.

Build a care package your student will actually use. Start with the basics, add a few comforts from home, and keep the box light enough that shipping stays reasonable.

CHECK

Snacks & Drinks

- ☐ Protein or granola bars
- ☐ Trail mix or nuts
- ☐ Popcorn
- ☐ Crackers or pretzels
- ☐ Beef jerky
- ☐ Cookies or candy
- ☐ Fruit snacks
- ☐ Instant oatmeal
- ☐ Coffee, tea, or hot chocolate
- ☐ Electrolyte drink packets

CHECK

Toiletries & Everyday Basics

- ☐ Toothpaste and toothbrush
- ☐ Shampoo and conditioner
- ☐ Body wash
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Razors
- ☐ Face wash
- ☐ Lip balm
- ☐ Lotion
- ☐ Hair ties or clips
- ☐ Dry shampoo

CHECK

Laundry & Dorm Essentials

- ☐ Laundry detergent sheets or pods
- ☐ Dryer sheets
- ☐ Stain remover
- ☐ Fabric refresher
- ☐ Mesh laundry bag
- ☐ Reusable water bottle
- ☐ Bedside caddy
- ☐ Command hooks
- ☐ Phone stand
- ☐ Reusable food-storage bags

CHECK

Study & School Supplies

- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Sticky notes
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Mechanical pencils
- ☐ Notebook
- ☐ Page flags
- ☐ Charging cable
- ☐ Portable charger
- ☐ Screen-cleaning wipes

MAKE IT FEEL LIKE HOME

Comfort + Thoughtful Extras

Useful additions plus the little things that make the box feel personal.

CHECK

Cold & Flu Comfort

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ Tissues | ☐ Cough drops | ☐ Tea |
| ☐ Honey sticks | ☐ Soup cups | ☐ Thermometer |
| ☐ Hand sanitizer | ☐ Electrolyte packets | ☐ Comfort snacks |

CHECK

A Little Piece of Home

- ☐ Favorite homemade treat
- ☐ Family or pet photo
- ☐ Hometown snack
- ☐ Cozy socks
- ☐ Small seasonal decoration
- ☐ Family recipe
- ☐ Inside joke or funny note
- ☐ Handwritten letter

CHECK

Gift Card Ideas

- ☐ Amazon
- ☐ Target
- ☐ Starbucks or local coffee shop
- ☐ DoorDash or Uber Eats
- ☐ Grocery store
- ☐ Favorite restaurant

Easy Care Package Themes

Choose one theme when you want the box to feel especially intentional.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Midterm Survival Box
Coffee, snacks, highlighters, sticky notes | ☐ Birthday Box
Treats, decorations, gift card, surprises |
| ☐ Homesick Box
Favorite foods, photos, cozy socks, a note | ☐ Finals Week Box
Study supplies, coffee, snacks, encouragement |
| ☐ Sick Day Box
Tea, soup, tissues, cough drops, electrolytes | ☐ Cozy Fall Box
Hot chocolate, popcorn, tea, seasonal treats |

BEFORE YOU SHIP

Know Your Student's Mailroom

A little planning can prevent a care package from getting delayed or missed.

Dorm and campus package procedures vary by school. Before sending your first box, check the residence hall or university mail-services instructions so you know exactly how packages are addressed, received, and picked up.

IMPORTANT: ASK HOW PACKAGE PICKUP WORKS

Some residence halls accept packages at a central desk, while others route them through a campus mailroom or package center. Students may need to wait for an email, text, locker code, or pickup notice before the package is available.

Allow extra time after delivery

A carrier may mark a package as delivered when it reaches the university, but that does not always mean your student can pick it up immediately. Packages may still need to be sorted, scanned, transferred to a residence hall, or placed in a package locker. During move-in, holidays, midterms, and other busy periods, that internal processing can take longer.

Before Mailing the Box

- ☐ Confirm the student's complete campus mailing address.
- ☐ Check whether the school requires a residence hall name, room number, mailbox number, or student ID.
- ☐ Ask whether packages go to the dorm desk, central mailroom, or package lockers.
- ☐ Find out how the student is notified when a package is ready.
- ☐ Do not assume the carrier's delivery scan means the package is ready for pickup.
- ☐ Avoid sending highly perishable foods unless the school's package system can handle them.
- ☐ Add the student's phone number inside the box in case the exterior label is damaged.
- ☐ Send time-sensitive packages early enough to allow for campus processing.

Best rule: send it a little earlier than you think you need to.

Campus mailrooms add one more step between the shipping carrier and your student's hands.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Care Package Formula + Tracker

A reusable page for planning future boxes throughout the school year.

THE SIMPLE FORMULA

Something to eat + something useful + something comforting + something from home

And always tuck in a handwritten note.

Keep Track of What You Sent

Use this page to remember what you sent, why you sent it, and what your student liked best.

Date	Theme / Reason	Favorite Item / Notes