

'Helicopter parents' keep a leash on their kids

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

At a Sacramento job fair last fall, the polished, well-dressed woman went from booth to booth, recruiter to recruiter, passing out résumés, asking about job openings. Not for herself, however. For her son.

“‘He just graduated. He has a degree. He’s sharp. He doesn’t know what he wants to do, but I think he’d be good at HR (human resources),’ ” recalls Preet Kuar, a Manpower company recruiter who spoke with the mom.

For baby boomer parents, who have diligently – some would say obsessively – followed their children from diapers to diplomas, that encounter was perhaps the next logical phase of so-called “helicopter parenting.”

Clearly, parental hovering doesn’t end at college graduation but continues well into the job hunt. According to a recent survey of more than 3,000 employers by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, or CERI, based at Michigan State University, about a third – 31 percent – of companies report that parents are more involved in their son’s or daughter’s career search than prior to the recession.

Mom and dad are chatting up their kids’ credentials with company officials, pestering college career staff, handing out their kids’ résumés at career fairs, even showing up at job interviews.

“It’s happening quite a bit, actually,” said Kuar, executive recruiter with Manpower’s Gold River office. “We see a lot more parent involvement,” everything from setting up job counseling appointments to forwarding their kid’s résumé.

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