

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

On the up side...

With a teenager in the house, there are going to be times you don't get along. Try to keep things on an even keel—and your relationship strong—by being upbeat more often than not. Smile, share jokes, and do fun things together. Creating positive moments like these can help outweigh the other times.

Logic and art

Here's an interesting way for your high schooler to practice logical thinking: re-create an image with torn paper. She could choose a photograph, then tape or glue pieces of paper onto cardboard to reproduce it. By using colored paper or magazine and newspaper pages, she'll draw on logic to select matching shades and dimensions.

Don't be late

Being on time for school will keep your teen from missing valuable class minutes—and create a habit of punctuality to carry into his career. Plus, too many "tardies" can add up to lost class credit. Encourage him to wake up early enough to have a cushion. Also, he should make backup plans (ride with a neighbor if he misses the bus).

Worth quoting

"Believe you can, and you're halfway there." *Theodore Roosevelt*

Just for fun

Q: What do you call a best seller written on a cell phone?

A: A txt bk.



Well said!

Being able to speak clearly and confidently in school can boost your child's self-esteem and her grades. Plus, it will give her practice for real-life situations like being introduced to new people or going on job and college interviews. Share these strategies.

Class discussions

Teens are often reluctant to raise their hands in class for fear of sounding stupid. Encourage your high schooler to jot down thoughts and questions as she does homework or listens to her teacher and classmates speak. Then, she could use her notes to join in at a natural opening ("I noticed that the book said...").

Have her practice polite replies for views she doesn't agree with. ("I understand what you're saying. Here's another way to look at it.") Also, she should be careful not to hog conversation time so others can get a turn to speak. *Note:* Contributing to discussions might raise your child's GPA, as teachers often include a participation grade.



Speeches and presentations

Engaging your audience is a skill your teen can use in everyday life—and being front and center in class will help her to hone it. Suggest that she rehearse in front of family or friends. *Tip:* Work out hand signals in advance to alert her that her pace is too fast, too slow, or just right.

Also, ask her to focus on speaking in an enthusiastic tone and using good nonverbal communication (making eye contact, gesturing with her hands for emphasis). She might even videotape herself so she can see her performance and look for ways to improve. 👍

Road to responsibility

Goal: A responsible teenager. Try these tips to help your child get there.

1. Start with the end in mind. Picture the things you would like your teen to do as a responsible adult (handle home repairs, manage finances). That can help you think of tasks to hand off to him now.
2. Expect him to honor commitments. Casually notice when he does, but act like it's what you assumed all along. ("Glad you remembered to pick up Mrs. Jeffrey's mail.")
3. Don't cover for him. If he forgets a haircut appointment, he should be the one to call to apologize and reschedule. If he overspends on his debit card, have him pay the fee. Once your child realizes you won't pick up the slack, he'll be less apt to drop the ball. 👍



Involved in my school

Getting involved at school will help your teen build school spirit and connect with both classmates and staff. Encourage him to give his all with these ideas.



Clubs. Your teen's high school probably has a club to match his interests, from community service or foreign language to science or the arts. Mention that club meetings are a good way to meet people outside his normal friend group—and that leadership positions (club president, fund-raising committee chair) will boost his resume.

Tutoring. Does your high schooler excel in a subject like computer science or history? He could share his knowledge and passion as a tutor. Suggest that he sign up for his school's peer tutoring program or ask teachers to match him with students who need help.

Sports. Playing on a sports team can help your child stay fit and learn important traits like cooperation and perseverance. If he doesn't make the junior varsity or varsity team, there are alternatives. He might join a sport that doesn't require tryouts (perhaps cross country or track). Or he could serve as a team manager or videographer. 👍

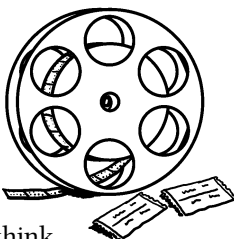


Ready for a job?

Having a job can show ambition to both colleges and future employers—and provide needed cash. But how do you know if working is right for your teen?

■ **Make a plan.**

Discuss her course load and other commitments, and figure out how much time she has left over.



This will help her think through whether getting a job is realistic.

■ **Consider a trial run.** She might try a job for three months. If she keeps up with her schoolwork and doesn't seem stressed, she could continue.

■ **Limit hours.** Suggest that she tell employers she could work 10 to 15 hours a week. Research shows that more than 20 hours can affect school performance.

Tip: Your teen is more likely to be successful on the job if she finds one that matches her interests as well as her availability. For instance, if she loves movies, she might work weekends at a theater and be able to see films for free. 👍

Writer's block

Q When my high schooler has papers to write, he often has trouble getting beyond the blank screen. How can he get started more easily?

A When this happens, tell him that he has a case of writer's block and that it can happen to anyone, including professional writers. Then, suggest that he try tips that writers use.

First, if he's been staring at the screen for a while, it might help just to get away from the computer. Encourage him to go for a walk or a run—physical activity is known to spur creative thinking. An idea for the perfect opening might spring into his mind as he rounds the block.

Or tell him to simply start writing. Remind him that a first draft doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to be written! Once he gets his thoughts on paper, he can do what all good writers do—review and revise. 👍



Parent to Parent Marijuana: Still not safe

When my daughter Noreen heard about marijuana becoming legal in several states, she began thinking it must be safe for her to try. This got me worried, so I did some reading online and sent her links with convincing facts.

For instance, websites pointed out that using marijuana for recreation is still against the law in most states, and experts disagree on its long-term (and short-term) effects. Even in places where it has been legalized, it's illegal for minors.

Also, I showed Noreen how marijuana is not considered safe for adolescents since their brains are still developing. The drug can damage attention and memory, which could in turn hurt her grades. It can also impair her judgment and cause her to take dangerous risks.

Noreen seemed surprised by this information. I'm hoping the facts will stick with her, but in the meantime, I intend to keep the conversation going. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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