

High School **YEARS**

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Safety first

Your teen may want to make plans without having to clear them with you first. But to keep her safe, you still need to know where she's going and who she'll be with. Insist on details, and give her a curfew. She may scoff, but deep down she'll know you love her.

Reasons not to smoke

Each day almost 4,000 teenagers start smoking. Talk to your child about why he shouldn't be one of them. Beyond increasing his risk for cancer, smoking can make his teeth yellow and cause bad breath. Plus, spending money on cigarettes means he wouldn't have it for other things he wants.

Kindness is easy

Being kind in small ways shows others that you care—and it's simple. Encourage your high schooler to show kindness throughout the day. For instance, she could carry the lunch tray for a classmate on crutches. Or she might give a quarter to the cashier if the person in front of her comes up short.

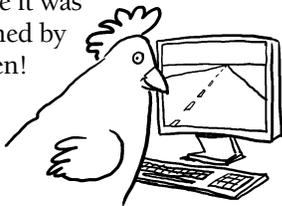
Worth quoting

"The things that make me different are the things that make me me."
A.A. Milne

Just for fun

Q: Why did the computer cross the road?

A: Because it was programmed by the chicken!



Thinking critically

When your high schooler learns new information, does he try to think about it from different perspectives? If so, he's learning to be a critical thinker.

Students who think critically can draw conclusions, evaluate arguments, and analyze what works or doesn't work—making them more ready for college and careers. Sharpen your teen's thinking skills with these activities.



Ask open-ended questions

Help him evaluate information by posing questions that have more than one right answer. ("Should we explore outer space?") Or encourage him to make a choice and explain it. ("Which Sherlock Holmes book has the most surprising ending? Why?")

Consider all the facts

Suggest that your child come up with positive, negative, and interesting points about an item in the news. *Example:* "Should school be year-round?" After reading several articles, he might say: "We could learn more" (positive). "It would be harder to get a summer job"

(negative). "Some schools already do this" (interesting). This approach will help him sort facts, clarify his thoughts, and reach a conclusion.

Organize information

Play this critical thinking game. Together, list 10 items in your family room (vase, television, sofa). Then, have each person put the objects in order from most useful to least useful for a made-up scenario (planting a garden, getting ready for a trip). There are no wrong answers—this activity just helps kids learn a different way of thinking. 👍

I wouldn't miss it!

Teens who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate. Good attendance also creates a habit that can carry over into work later. Consider these tips.

■ **Set expectations.** Being out for even a day or two a month means losing valuable learning time. Tell your child that the only acceptable excuses are illness, family emergencies, or pre-approved college visits.

■ **Discuss results.** Point out that missing school means she'll have to make up coursework. If she falls far behind, she may have to retake courses.

Note: Call attendance line or write notes for excused absences so the school knows your teen is not skipping. If she does skip, contact the school so you can create a plan to get her back on track. 👍



Encourage respect

Teaching your teen to be respectful at home can make her more considerate and improve her relationships with friends, teachers, and employers. Try these ways to promote respect.

Address the behavior. When your child sighs, stomps off, or talks back, it may seem easier to overlook it than to discuss it. But letting her get away with it won't help her—or you—in the long run. Take the time to talk about her behavior and to set consequences.

Offer strategies. Discuss appropriate ways for her to handle situations where she tends to be disrespectful. For instance, if



she asks for your input and then rolls her eyes at your suggestions, spell out what she could do instead (“Try saying, ‘Thanks, but I’m not sure that will work because...’”). Or agree on a look or gesture that quickly communicates to her, “Think of another way to react!”

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Tackling math

No matter how complex high school math becomes, having a plan of attack can simplify it for your teenager. Share these four ideas.

1. Find what is being asked

To understand a problem better, draw a diagram, highlight key words, or remove irrelevant information. Then, rephrase the question in your own words.

2. Choose a strategy

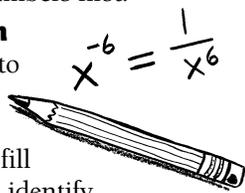
There may be more than one way to approach a problem. You might solve it backward, estimate an answer, or calculate with smaller numbers first.

3. Do the problem

Break it down into steps if it requires more than one (write an equation, fill in known numbers, identify variables). Show your work on each part so it's easier to check—and because teachers often require you to show work to get full credit.

4. Review your work

Does the answer make sense? If you estimated and the final answer is way off, go back over the steps to check for errors. 👍



Q&A

Does multitasking work?

Q My son scans Twitter and texts his friends while doing homework.

Can he really work effectively when he's multitasking?

A Experts say most people make more mistakes and take longer to finish a job when they multitask. So while your son may feel he's accomplishing his work without a problem, he could actually be taking longer to complete assignments and not even realize it. Also, he might not be doing them as well as he would otherwise.

To show your son the difference, encourage him to track how long it takes him to do his homework for a week and the number of errors marked when the work is returned. Then, have him do schoolwork for a week with electronic devices turned off and track the same things. He may be surprised by the results. 👍



Parent to Parent

Listen to your teen

As my daughter has gotten older, I've noticed that she doesn't talk to me as much. So when she does feel like chatting, I try to take advantage of the moment and listen to her.

I've noticed that it's best if I do less talking and more listening. Sometimes, if I sit quietly with her, she'll keep sharing. And other times, I'll simply ask questions like “What do you think?” or “What would you have done?”



Also, I make an effort to respond with what I think she is saying. The other day she was talking about the school play that she's in. I said something like, “It sounds like you're excited about the play but nervous about how you'll perform.” She said that she did feel nervous and that she felt a little better just admitting it out loud.

I told her I was looking forward to being part of the audience. And I let her know I'm here to talk about it—or about anything else she wants to share. 👍

OUR PURPOSE

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

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