

High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success



Short Stops

Now hear this

Remind your teen to listen to morning announcements at school. She'll stay in the loop on upcoming events and important dates (course registration, ticket sales, sports tryouts). Asking your child what was announced will help you keep current, too.

Wellness? Check!

A yearly checkup continues to be a good idea as your child gets older. Doctors can catch physical problems early, discuss vaccinations, and monitor your teen's overall health. During private time with your high schooler, the doctor can ask about drug and alcohol use, discuss nutrition and fitness, and probe for mood or eating disorders.

Kindness is easy

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

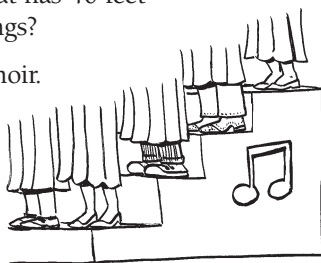
Worth quoting

"Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself." *Chinese proverb*

Just for fun

Q: What has 40 feet and sings?

A: A choir.



Managing your time

Adults aren't the only ones who have to balance more than one priority. High schoolers often have multiple things they need to juggle—school, activities, a part-time job, family, and social life. Help your teenager learn to manage his time wisely with these strategies.

Handle distractions

Talk about ways you plan your day. You can mention how you stay on task, for example ("I tell friends I can't take personal phone calls during the work day"). Discuss things that throw off your schedule (traffic) and how you make up lost time (leave the house earlier). What ideas does your child have for handling interruptions while he's working?

Make lists

Keeping a daily to-do list can help your teen get everything done. Suggest that he find a system that works for him. He and a friend might text a daily list to each other and then text again after finishing each item. He could also use an online tool like *tadalist.com* or set up a



page with a to-do "gadget" on iGoogle. Or he can keep a list on paper and cross off each item as he goes—that in itself is satisfying.

Stay motivated

Have your teenager think of ways to keep going so he accomplishes the things he needs to do. He might make a smoothie after he finishes his science homework or promise himself a break to shoot hoops when he completes a math assignment. *Idea:* Have him set a timer and then tell himself he can work for 10 minutes and stop if he wants. He's likely to get in the groove and keep going. 👍

Ready for standardized tests

'Tis the season for standardized testing. Your teen's school might require tests to move to the next grade or graduate. Or the tests may be used to measure the school's performance. Share these steps to encourage your child to prepare:

- Get sample questions or old tests—practicing will make you feel more confident.
- Read directions and questions completely before answering.
- For multiple-choice questions, eliminate answers that are obviously wrong. For essays, jot down an outline before starting.
- Save time by skipping questions you don't know and going back to them at the end.
- If there is no penalty for wrong answers, guess when you're not sure. 👍



How do you say...?

In today's increasingly diverse world, knowing a second language is becoming more important. It can give your child an advantage when looking for a job, help her communicate with neighbors, and expose her to other cultures. Suggest these ideas for your teen to build skills outside of her foreign-language class:

- Read sports articles in a foreign-language newspaper (try the Internet or the library). If she knows the gist of the story beforehand, like which team won, she'll be able to follow along better.
- Browse books in the language she's learning. She might try a German picture book for children or *The Travelers' Phrase*



Book (Barrons Educational Series).

- Form a conversation group with classmates and native speakers who want to improve their English. The group could spend half the time speaking in English and half in the other tongue.

- Look for a part-time job where she'll hear the language being spoken. She might clear tables at a Mexican restaurant or baby-sit for a Japanese family.
- Watch a television series on a foreign-language channel. As she gets to know the characters and the plot, she'll learn new vocabulary. 👍

Writing today, for tomorrow



Whether crafting a resume, writing papers for college, or preparing reports in the workplace, writing will be part of your teen's life. Here are ways he can enjoy practicing now.

To the point. Does he tweet? Twitter limits messages to 140 characters, so users have to make points quickly to capture attention. Challenge your teen to "tweet" about his favorite player's performance in a game. It will help him learn to be concise and to choose words carefully.



In my opinion. Encourage him to put his opinions in writing. This is good practice for when he has to write English papers, draft college application essays, or give his reasoning in a work proposal. Blogging about something he's interested in (music, politics) could help him clarify his viewpoint and delve deeply into a topic. Or he might write opinion pieces for a school or community newspaper and perhaps see his name in print. 👍

Q & A

Upbeat conversations

Q It seems that most of our family discussions wind up being about chores or complaints. How can I start conversations that are more upbeat and fun?

A Enjoying lighthearted chats with your children is a good way to strengthen your connection—and make for a more pleasant household. Help create those moments by mentioning good news or telling about funny things that happened in your day. Sharing your stories may encourage your teens to share theirs.



You can also ask questions that lead to interesting discussions. For example, at dinner ask each family member what stage name he would choose if he became an actor. Finding out can lead to more fun conversation. Or ask how each person would spend a "perfect" day. You just might get some good ideas for family activities—with more opportunities to enjoy family talk time. 👍

Parent to Parent

In charge of my IEP

My daughter Tamara has dyslexia. When she reached high school, I thought she should take a more active role in managing her disability to help her be more independent.

My neighbor told me her son, who has ADHD, led his own IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings in high school, and that really helped him to advocate for himself. I told Tamara about that, and she was willing to try. To prepare, she made a list of her strengths and

weaknesses and ideas that had helped her in the past, like having extra time to complete written assignments and getting books on tape.

As the school year progressed, I encouraged her to pay attention to which changes were working and which weren't.

That way, she could ask for adjustments at her next IEP meeting. With practice, Tamara has become much more comfortable communicating her needs. And that makes me feel better about how she'll do in the future. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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