

High School **1** YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Brainy gifts

This holiday season, try giving your teenager inexpensive gifts that can boost her academic skills. For instance, word-a-day or history-a-day calendars will expose her to new vocabulary or facts. Sudoku books will let her practice math and logic. Look for items like these at dollar or discount stores.

Outdoor safety

With short winter days setting in, make sure your teen is safe if he runs, walks, or bikes after dark. He should wear light-colored or reflective clothing, attach a light to his bike, and take a cell phone and his ID in case of emergency. Suggest that he plan routes during the daytime so he can find side-walks and check for obstacles.

DID YOU KNOW?

High school graduation rates are the highest they've been in decades. Still, about a quarter of students won't graduate on time this year—or at all. Keep your high schooler on track by showing an interest in what she's learning, finding help when she needs it, and making sure she's taking required courses.

Worth quoting

"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another." *William James*

Just for fun

Q: Why did the boy wear one boot?

A: Because there was a 50 percent chance of snow!



Make a difference

Volunteering is not only good for the organizations your teen helps—it's also good for your teen.

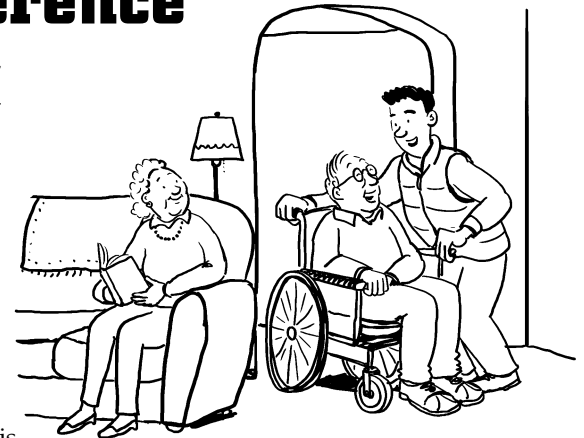
Doing community service can boost his self-confidence, provide valuable work experience, and put him in contact with professionals who might be mentors in the future. Encourage him to take action with these ideas.

Choose a cause

No matter what cause your child is interested in, he can find a group that needs assistance. If he wants to help people in developing nations, he could raise funds for clean drinking water. If he is passionate about the environment, he might clear brush from trails in state parks. Suggest that he join a service club at school or contact local nonprofits for opportunities.

Play on strengths

Ask your high schooler to think about the strengths he can bring to a volunteer position. If he's good at organization, he might log inventory at a food bank. If he's outgoing, he could visit seniors in assisted living facilities or patients in hospitals. When he feels



successful in his community service, his self-confidence will soar.

Meet obligations

Your adolescent should be honest about the time he has available—and once he makes a commitment, he should be prepared to keep it. Have him schedule his volunteer work into his calendar, be on time, and not miss days. He will get experience not only with the tasks he does, but also in being responsible on the job.

Note: Suggest that your teen ask supervisors if they would be willing to write college recommendations or provide job references. 👍

'Tis the season (to concentrate!)

With reminders of the season all around, students can easily get distracted. Share these tips to keep your high schooler focused:

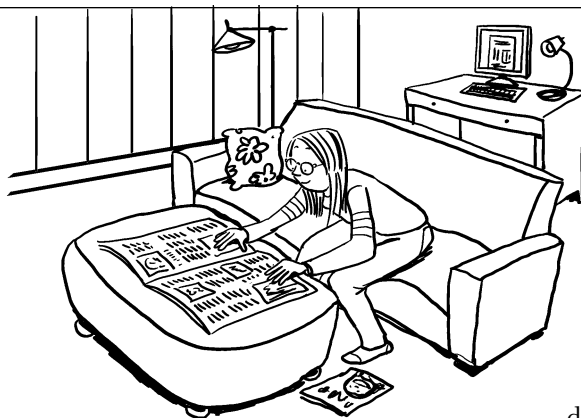
- Encourage your teen to take short homework breaks to practice cheers, dance to a song, or walk the dog. She'll find that exercise boosts concentration.
- Have her build in her own rewards for finishing tough assignments. Knowing she will watch a holiday movie or bake cookies when she's done could provide the push she needs.
- Ask her to find a friend as an "accountability partner." They might text each other their to-do lists before beginning homework and then let each other know when they've finished. 👍



Sharper reading

High school reading is designed to prepare students for college, the workforce, and beyond. Here are ways your teen could practice critical reading at home so she can tackle more complicated texts.

Compare approaches. When a topic or news story captures her interest, encourage her to read about it in multiple sources and see how the accounts differ. For instance, a newspaper article will focus on the facts, while different bloggers may offer opposing viewpoints. A fashion article in a business magazine will use formal, industry language, while coverage



of the same topic in a consumer magazine may have a more casual tone. What does each approach achieve?

Analyze evidence. No matter what she reads, your high schooler will draw more accurate conclusions by finding supporting details. In a crime novel, she could look for passages agreeing or conflicting with a character's claim of innocence. Or when she comes across statistics in a financial piece, suggest that she investigate the source and try to decide if the numbers make sense. 👍

Coping with anxiety

Your teenager may worry about how well he'll do on a test or feel nervous when asking someone out on a date. Try these steps.

1. Encourage him to pay attention to signs he's feeling anxious, such as a rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, or an upset stomach. Being aware of the emotion will help him deal with it.

2. Suggest relaxation exercises. He might practice closing his eyes and taking deep breaths. Or he can tense and relax his muscles one area at a time (shoulders, legs).



3. Talk about how you face your own fears. For example, when you're nervous about a meeting, maybe you focus on how prepared you are. Or perhaps you talk things over with a friend when you're making a hard decision.

Note: If you're worried that your child is overly anxious, ask his school counselor or pediatrician for advice. 👍



Q & A

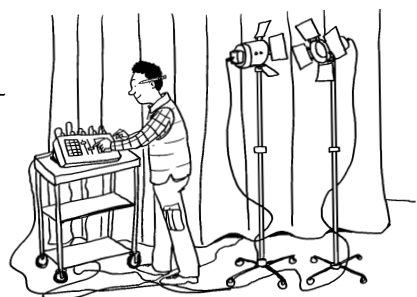
Jobs that compute

Q My son is considering a computer science career. What kinds of opportunities are out there, and how should he prepare?

A Workers with computer science skills are in great demand today. Your son could go into systems and software engineering, web development, systems administration, or network engineering, to name a few possibilities.

Encourage him to take all the computer science courses he can. There is even a new AP computer science course—have him see if his school offers it. Also, he should go as high as possible in math and science classes. And since computer scientists often write reports and make presentations, he needs to do well in language arts and public speaking courses.

Finally, suggest that he look for chances to use his computer skills while he's in school. He might help teachers with troubleshooting, do the lighting or sound for school plays, or get an internship at a local business. 👍



Parent to Parent

A vision for the future

Recently I was invited to a "vision board party" where we created posters showing what we envisioned for our futures. I thought this was such a great idea that I decided to try it with my teenage daughter, Amanda.

I put out a stack of old magazines, and we each looked for photos and words to represent things we want to do. For instance, Amanda cut out a picture of a guitar because she wants to learn to play. And I found a photo of a

college campus because I would like to get my degree one day.

We each glued our selections into a collage on our own poster boards. Amanda put her vision board on her nightstand, and mine is in the kitchen. I'm hoping our boards will help us stick to our plans—but either way, it was nice spending time together talking about our dreams for the future! 👍



O U R P U R P O S E

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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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