

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Show kindness

Encourage your teenager to approach a student who is sitting alone in the cafeteria and ask to join him for lunch. Or he could invite the teen to eat at his table. Your high schooler will see how good it feels to do something kind, and he may even make a new friend.

Looking ahead

Strong letters of recommendation make job and college applications stand out. Throughout high school, help your teenager think of people who can write about her talents, skills, and character. She could ask teachers, coaches, and employers for letters and keep them in a file for the future.

DID YOU KNOW? September is National Preparedness Month. Ask your teen about emergency drills at school (fire, tornado), and discuss what you can do at home to stay safe in an emergency. You might have him create an evacuation plan or list supplies to stock up on (bottled water, canned goods, flashlight batteries).

Worth quoting

“What I am looking for is not out there, it is in me.” *Helen Keller*

Just for fun

Teacher:

Who invented fractions?

Student:

Henry the $\frac{1}{8}$!



A balancing act

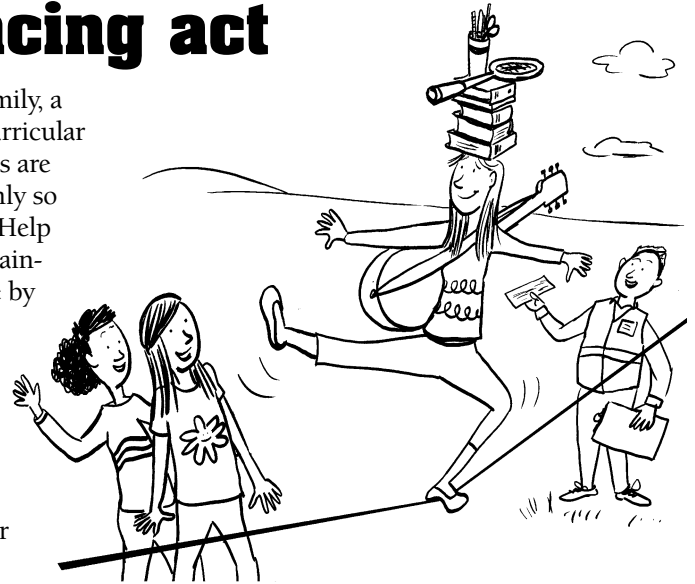
School, friends, family, a part-time job, extracurricular activities—teens' lives are busy! But there are only so many hours in a day. Help your high schooler maintain a healthy balance by working with her to develop a time “budget.” Here's how.

Color code

Have your high schooler set priorities in her student planner or on a calendar. She could highlight items in different colors, perhaps “must do” with pink, “would like to do” with yellow, and “if time permits” with green. She'll be able to tell at a glance what comes first—and if she has spare time to take on something new.

Think of time savers

Help your teenager come up with solutions for maximizing her time. One idea is to do homework on the bus ride to a game. Another is to use some of her time with friends for things she needs to



do like studying for a test or practicing chorus songs.

Cut back

Teens often feel like they must do *everything*, a feeling that's known these days as FOMO (“fear of missing out” on what others are doing). Suggest that your teen think “quality over quantity” instead to keep her activities at a comfortable level. If she is starting a part-time job, for example, she might decide to drop a bowling league she no longer loves. 👍

Variety is the spice of writing

Using specific words and varying sentence length can make your high schooler's writing more interesting. These tips will come in handy whether he's working on a short story for English class, a history paper, or a science lab report.

■ **Word choice.** Circle dull or repeated words, and replace them with synonyms to keep writing fresh. In a sentence like “The scent filled the room,” your teen might use a thesaurus (or *thesaurus.com*) to switch *filled* to *flooded* or *permeated*.

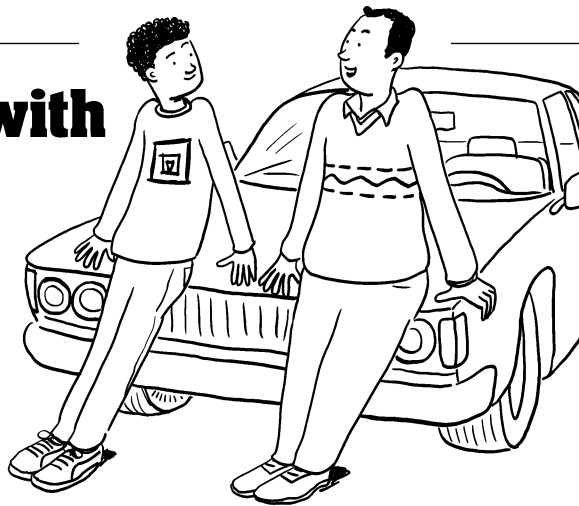
■ **Sentence length.** Sentences that are all the same length start to sound robotic after a while. He can read his work aloud and listen for places where cutting or adding to sentences will improve the overall flow. 👍



Rules that grow with your teenager

The start of the school year is an ideal time to do a check-in on rules for your teen. Use these suggestions to consider changes that address both his need for independence and his safety.

Adjust rules. Sit down with your high schooler, and talk about how your current rules are working. Think about any that he might be outgrowing, such as an early curfew or going on dates in a group only. Then, use a trial period to test adjustments. You could let him stay out 30 minutes later for one night each weekend this month, for instance. If he



comes home on time and isn't tired in the morning, maybe that will become his new curfew.

Add rules. New situations call for new rules. Say your teen opens a new social media account or gets his driver's license. At first, you might allow him to connect only with family members online or to drive just to and from school. Explain that once he is used to the new responsibility, you'll consider letting him add classmates on social media or drive to friends' homes. 👍



Q & A Ready, set, goal

Q My daughter often sets goals but doesn't put in the effort to reach them. How can I help?

A Knowing good goal-setting strategies can mean the difference between having dreams and achieving them.

Encourage your daughter to write down a goal she'd like to meet. To be effective, her goal must be realistic and specific. *Example:* "I want to save money for a tablet by March 1."



Then, have her list an action plan that breaks her goal into manageable steps. *Examples:* "I'll take the time to compare prices and find the best bargain. I'll set aside \$10 from each paycheck so I won't spend it."

Finally, remind your teen that goals are targets. For instance, if she ends up \$20 short of her goal, she didn't fail—she made progress. 👍

Parent to Parent

Ask what your teen is learning

Whenever I'd ask my son Ethan, "How was school?" he'd say, "Fine, Mom" and keep on walking. I wanted to *really* know about his day, so I've been brainstorming creative ways to get more information.

For instance, sometimes I ask Ethan to teach me something he learned that day. I enjoyed hearing how he built his birdhouse in shop class. Another day, he explained how he solved a problem in pre-calculus.

I'm also trying questions like "If a spaceship had landed in your class today, what would the aliens report back to their planet?" or "If your day were a movie, which movie would it be? Why?" I think my new approach helps Ethan think about his day in different ways—and I'm definitely getting more information from him! 👍



From my point of view

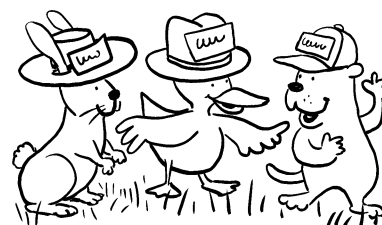
Understanding other perspectives can help your high schooler develop critical thinking skills. Enjoy this thought-provoking family activity.

1. Ask your teen to pick a topic to debate. She might choose "Should school cafeterias sell energy drinks?"
2. Brainstorm types of people who would care about the issue, and write each name or title on a separate index card (*examples:* parent, principal, student, doctor, energy drink salesperson).
3. Let each family member draw a card

at random. Use a paper clip to attach your card to a hat (or shirt).

4. Now, begin your debate. As you make your argument, think about the topic from "your" person's point of view. A doctor would focus on the health impact ("Energy drinks are full of sugar and caffeine"), while a salesperson might argue that the drinks keep students awake in class.

5. Switch hats, and debate again. Your teen will see how point of view can change based on a person's situation. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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