

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Dangers of e-cigs

Although e-cigarettes may be marketed as a safer way to smoke, they're not. E-cigs, vapors, or "vapes" as they're sometimes called, are simply a different way to put nicotine into the bloodstream. And they are illegal for anyone under 18 years old. Let your teen know these facts, especially if you suspect that her friends might be "vaping."

Mixed-age classes

Your freshman may be surprised to find himself in class with older students. Remind him that not long ago these upperclassmen were freshmen just like him. If your teen is older, encourage him to be welcoming by talking to younger students and offering help. Remind him that in college or on the job, he'll be the "new kid" again one day.

Bonding time

Getting "together time" with your teenager can be challenging. Try using your time in the car. Start friendly conversations—and be sure she turns off cell phones and video games. Also, create "no argument" zones—specific places in your house or certain times of the day when everyone is only allowed to say positive things.

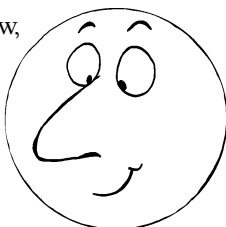
Worth quoting

"Kindness is always fashionable."
Amelia Barr

Just for fun

Q: What did one eye say to the other?

A: Don't look now, but between us, something smells.



Routines for a successful year

Developing just a few good habits can help your teenager get off to a strong start this school year. Suggest these three routines.

1. First things first

Writing to-do lists lets your high schooler focus on what needs to be done right away and shows him what can wait. Suggest that he write a to-do list when he gets home every day. As he accomplishes each task, he'll find it satisfying to cross an item off—and even more satisfying to see all the items crossed off!



2. Everything in its place

Your teenager will save time and reduce stress if he establishes daily routines for packing and unpacking his backpack. He could put homework in a set location on a desk or table (not the middle of the floor!). Then, when he finishes, he should return assignments, books, and materials to his backpack and replenish supplies like pens, pencils, and paper. *Tip:* Ask him to set up an

"inbox" and "outbox" for papers you need to sign.

3. Set a bedtime

This is something teens naturally resist, but sleep is crucial to successful school days. Students who arrive tired simply don't do as well as those who get a good night's rest. Establish a lights-out time that allows 8–10 hours of sleep. To help your teen fall asleep, have him shut off all electronic devices and leave them outside his room. Also, suggest that he avoid coffee or other caffeinated drinks in the afternoon and evening. 👍

Know your child's school

When you are familiar with your child's school, it shows you care about her education and encourages her to care as well.

Attend open houses and back-to-school events to meet her teachers. Where possible, go to after-school and weekend events like concerts, plays, or football games.

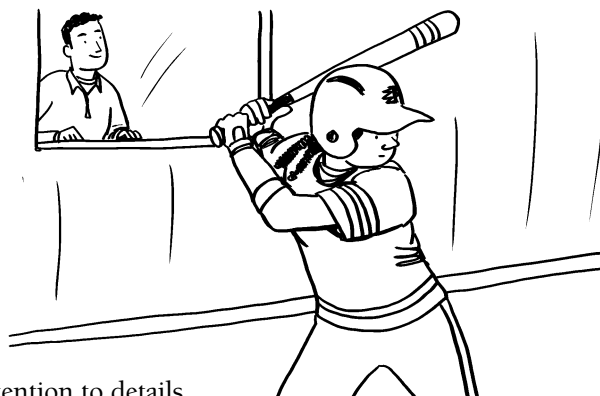
Also, read flyers and other materials that come home, and check the school's website regularly. *Idea:* Help school secretaries and other staff get to know you *and* your high schooler better by stopping in the office and introducing yourself. 👍



The nitty-gritty on grit

Grit—the ability to stick to something even when faced with difficulties—is considered a cornerstone for success in school and on the job. Consider these strategies for developing grit in your child.

Practice with purpose. Breaking tasks into smaller chunks will let your teen pay attention to details in ways she might not otherwise. A softball player could practice her stride one week and her swing the next. Or a musician might play parts of a song out of order, even backward, until she gets the notes right.



Do what you love.

It is much easier to persevere when your teen enjoys what she's doing. Have her cultivate grit-related traits, such as maintaining focus and finishing what she starts, by pursuing the things she's interested in. Then, show interest in *her* interests.

Ask questions, praise her effort (not her talent), and offer help where possible. Once she understands what it means to “give her all” in the things she loves, that effort can carry over into other areas of her life. 👍



Get ready to vote

Your teenager is getting close to voting age, or he may even be old enough this fall. Prepare him for this important responsibility with these tips.

Learn about the nominees

Encourage your teen to read about the candidates' positions on key issues and to watch their speeches. Spark discussions by listening to news radio together in the car.

Be involved

Suggest that your high schooler volunteer in the campaign of a local or national candidate he supports. He'll learn how elections work, how campaigns attract voters, and how he can have an impact.



Follow the results

As a family, view the results on election night. How did his candidates do? *Idea:* Watch the results on multiple channels, read online in real time, and follow up with next-day stories in the newspaper. He'll see how different sources provide the information. 👍

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent

Great expectations

Our daughter Dominique significantly improved her grades last year, and I'm convinced that the expectations we set for her at home made a difference.

Rather than telling her to “do well” or “get all As,” we came up with specific expectations that we thought were high, but reasonable. For example, we said we expected her grades to trend up throughout the school year. That way, if she got off to a rough start, she knew what she had to do. We sat down in September to explain our expectations, and we kept the conversation going as the year went on.

This school year we've begun with a new set of expectations—and Dominique even said that knowing what we expect helps her to work toward it. When I think about it, that's how I feel at work, too: It certainly helps to know what my boss expects of *me!* 👍



Q&A

Fitting in extracurriculars

Q I know extracurricular activities are important, but last year my son went overboard and wound up way too busy. What do you suggest for this year?

A It's great that your son wants to be involved. Extracurriculars help teens form connections to school and stay safe. Plus, they provide skills for the workplace and a boost on college applications.

You can nudge him toward a realistic

number of activities with this idea. Have him list his favorites and then order them from first choice to last. Next, he could write down his expected hours of homework and any hours for a part-time job.

Make sure he also pencils in time for hanging with friends, reading and relaxing on his own, and being with family.

Finally, help him consider the time commitments for the extracurriculars—and decide on the best fits. 👍

