

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### School spirit as a family

Cheering for the same sports team can bring families closer. The same holds true when it comes to rooting for your teen and her school. Whether you attend the high school football game or go to her poetry reading, build family bonds by showing your interest.

### Know your teen's teachers

September ushers in a chance to meet your child's new teachers. Use open house or back-to-school night to introduce yourself. Find out how you might help the school, perhaps by donating supplies or chaperoning a class field trip.

### Have a phone-free day

To cut down on screen time, try going phone-free for an entire day this weekend. Plan activities, such as taking a family hike followed by a board-game night—with devices silenced and put away. Consider making this a new weekly or monthly tradition!

### Worth quoting

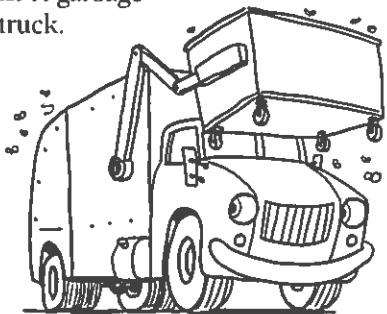
"Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out."

Robert Collier

### Just for fun

**Q:** What has four wheels and flies?

**A:** A garbage truck.



## Expect the best

What's one of the best ways to help your teen succeed in school? Expect a lot from him! If you make your expectations clear from the start, he will work harder to meet them. Try these strategies.

### Be clear

Think about what you want your teenager to accomplish this year. For example, you probably expect him to attend school every day, complete all assignments, and do his best. Be sure to set expectations that are high—but doable for him. (Anticipating all As, for instance, could set him up for failure.) Then, clearly communicate your expectations to him.

### Mention regularly

Weave your expectations into daily conversations. *Example:* "Do you want to watch a movie when you finish studying?" rather than "Do you want to watch a movie?" Also, don't give in if he begs for "exceptions" like staying home from school to catch up on sleep. You might respond, "You can sleep in this weekend,



but you have to go to school every day unless you're sick."

### Follow through

Support your teen in ways that will help him meet your expectations. Say he has a big project due Monday. Ask about his weekend plans, and mention that you know he needs time to work. Then, before he leaves for a talent show or a party, check on his progress. Discuss whether his plan for finishing the project is viable. Finally, when your teen meets your expectations, let him know you've noticed. 👍

## Get smart with time management

Projects, tests, practices, and a part-time job...your high schooler's life can get busy. Here's how to help her take control of her time and feel less stressed.

■ **Pick—and use—a planner.** She might try both a paper planner and an online tool. Which one does she remember to fill in and consult more consistently? After a week she could evaluate and then stick with her preferred format.

■ **Avoid time wasters.** Encourage your high schooler to be aware of activities that take up time but don't have any real benefits. For instance, if she gets addicted to popular phone games, she may decide to play for a certain period of time and set an alarm to remind herself to stop. 👍



# Open the lines of communication

As your teen spends more time with friends and grows more independent, the two of you might not talk as much as you used to. Consider these suggestions to keep the conversation flowing.

**Plan one-on-one time.** Your high schooler may be more likely to open up if her siblings aren't around. You could walk around the block together or invite her along when you run errands.



**Chat casually.** Get in the habit of talking to your teen about everyday things like current events or weekend plans. If she's comfortable chatting with you about ordinary topics, perhaps she'll feel more comfortable bringing up bigger issues like dating or a test she's nervous about.

## Build a digital portfolio



An online collection of your teen's work can be a great showcase when he looks for jobs, seeks internships, or applies to college. Share these tips:

- Suggest that your child gather work samples related to his goals. If he hopes to go to art school, he could



include his sketches or paintings. If he wants to be a journalist, he might save his articles from the school newspaper. Not sure what he wants to do? He can collect work like a history paper or geometry proof he's proud of.

- Have your high schooler choose a portfolio tool. Some students upload their work into a Google Drive or Dropbox folder. Other options include starting a blog or creating a website.

- Your teenager's portfolio is a work in progress. Encourage him to review it regularly to add, revise, or remove items—with an eye toward the future employer or college admissions officer who will see it. 👍

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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**Pay attention.** It's easy to get distracted with making dinner, texting a friend, or writing your to-do list. When your high schooler *does* talk to you, focus on her. If you can't stop what you're doing right away, tell her when you can. ("As soon as the chicken is in the oven, let's chat.") 👍

## Q & A Raise a responsible teen

**Q** Our son can be so irresponsible! For example, he'll bring our car home with the fuel light on or forget to tell me when his plans change. What should I do?

**A** Teenagers don't always stop to think about the consequences of their actions. Help your son by explaining how his behavior affects you.

You might say, "I was almost late for work because I had to stop for gas." Then, talk about what he could do differently in the future, like keeping an eye on how much gas is left and refilling it when it hits the quarter-tank mark.

Finally, let your teen know what the consequences will be if he's irresponsible. Maybe he has to come straight home from school for a certain number of days if he doesn't notify you of his plans. 👍



## Parent to Parent Choosing an activity

When my daughter, Jennifer, couldn't decide on an extracurricular activity for this school year, her counselor suggested that she join a club that might help with a career. Activities like these let her meet students with similar interests and learn skills for the future, the counselor explained.

Since Jennifer thinks she'd like to major in business in college, she opted for

the Future Business Leaders of America. She went to the first meeting last week and was excited to hear about an upcoming marketing campaign competition.

Even if Jennifer changes her mind about her major, she'll still get a lot out of the club. For example, they're planning field trips to see different types of businesses, and she'll get to meet business leaders in our town. 👍

