

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Update house rules

The start of the school year is a good time to talk with your teenager about your rules and to make any changes. Discuss reasons behind rules (keeping her safe, making sure schoolwork gets done) and consequences for breaking them. Then, post the rules on the refrigerator so she's clear about expectations.

### Nice to meet you!

Getting to know your high schooler's teachers now opens the door to communication throughout the year. Email each teacher to introduce yourself. And let your teen know you're doing this—he'll see that you're working with his teachers to help him succeed.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Coloring books aren't just for little kids. They're available for all ages and on just about every subject, from Shakespeare to science. To find coloring books or printable pages, your teen can type a topic she's studying (say, "cells") and "coloring pages" into a search engine. It's a fun and relaxing way to learn new things.

### Worth quoting

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."  
*Albert Einstein*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why do pelicans carry fish in their beaks?

**A:** Because they don't have pockets.



## In gear for a new year

Whether your teen is an incoming freshman or a rising senior, you probably have questions about the new school year. These answers can help you get your high schooler off to a good start—during a challenging time.

**Q: How can I support my child when he does schoolwork online?**

**A:** Suggest that he start by organizing files on the device he uses for school. Also make sure he knows how to access online materials for every class. If a class meets via video chat, remind him to avoid off-topic private messages and to follow rules for using his microphone.

**Q: My teen was taking algebra I when the pandemic hit, and he's worried algebra II will be too hard. What can he do?**

**A:** Reassure him that everyone's probably a little rusty, and his teacher will help to bring students up to speed. Encourage him to pay attention when the teacher reviews algebra I material. He might also look at last year's assignments to brush up on formulas or terms he isn't clear on.



**Q: What is the college search and application process like now?**

**A:** The situation is changing rapidly, and each college is different. At [nacacnet.org/news--publications/coronavirus/](http://nacacnet.org/news--publications/coronavirus/), your child will find current information from individual schools about testing requirements, campus tours, and application dates. Regardless of any changes, he should continue working with the school counselor to ensure he takes the right courses to reach his goals. 👍

## A family STEM lab

Make STEM an ongoing family affair with these ideas for creating a lab that your high schooler can take the lead on.

**1. Collect items.** Have your high schooler fill a large bin with project supplies like cardboard boxes and tubes, paper clips, rubber bands, string, tape, glue—and anything else for building or creating.

**2. Do projects.** Let your teen post a list of ideas to try. She might design a rubber-band helicopter while you build a model cantilever house.

**3. Hold a STEM fair.** Set aside a night to share your projects. Your child can show how her helicopter flies, and you could explain how a cantilever works. 👍



# Build strong work habits

Why do some teenagers put in the effort to see a project through while others give up or don't give it their all? The difference often lies in their work habits. Motivate your high schooler to strengthen hers with these tips.

**Connect the dots.** Have your teen think about the “Why?” behind hard work. Say she’s tackling a tough AP biology paper. Suggest that she consider how the assignment will help her reach her goal of becoming a medical researcher. She’ll start to see that choosing to put in the work now will pay off later.



**Own your decisions.** If your high schooler puts off her history project until the last minute, resist the urge to stay up late to help. By allowing her to experience the natural result of slacking off, she’ll learn that hard work does matter. And she might make different decisions next time.

**Enjoy the rewards.** A job well done is valuable in itself. When your child finishes a challenging assignment and is happy with the result, encourage her to remember the moment. The next time she’s working hard, she’ll know that those feelings of pride and satisfaction are just around the corner. 👍



## Boost your well-being

Most teens know they need to maintain their physical health. But they may not know how to take care of their emotional well-being. Share these strategies.

### Find comforting activities

Encourage your high schooler to devote time each day to something that makes him happy. Maybe that’s writing in his journal or playing his guitar. Or perhaps going for a run or meditating lets him work through his thoughts and quiet his mind.



### Use stress-relief techniques

Taking slow, deep breaths (in through the nose, out through the mouth) eases anxiety. Your teen could imagine blowing out negative thoughts on his exhale. Or he might recall a time he felt peaceful—such as when he was on a hike or at the beach—and then picture it when he’s stressed. 👍

## Q & A Teens and screens

**Q** I used to limit my son’s screen time. But as he has gotten older, I’ve gotten lax about enforcing the limit. What do you suggest?

**A** The key thing to consider is whether your teen’s screen time is keeping him from doing other important things. After all, there are only so many hours in the day. Is he getting at least an hour of daily physical activity? Eight to 10 hours of sleep? Is he finishing his homework and spending time with family? If not, you’ll probably want to help him dial down his screen time.

You could start by creating guidelines like no phones during meals and no TV or video games after a certain time at night. Filling in his schedule can also squeeze out screen time. So walk the dog together after dinner, and encourage screen-free hobbies. And don’t underestimate the effectiveness of simple reminders: “Hey, you’ve been sitting there a long time. Maybe you could kick a soccer ball around.” 👍



## Parent to Parent Helping others—from home

My daughter Leanne missed her volunteer work at our local animal shelter during the spring, so she poked around online and discovered that she can help animals from home.

At [dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org), Leanne signed up to do “Shelter pet PR.” She searches online for local pets that need homes. Then, she posts their pictures and details (name, age, shelter contact information) on her social media accounts.

Now Leanne is exploring other online volunteer opportunities. She loves history, so next she plans to transcribe documents for the Library of Congress at [crowd.loc.gov](http://crowd.loc.gov). Anytime she wants, she can help out by hopping on the site and typing text from old newspapers and other historical papers that have been scanned in.

Leanne is adding to her résumé, which will help her on college and job applications. Plus she just heard that a cat she’s advertising has found a home! 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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