

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Winter work

Over winter break, your child may have assigned reading or projects that are due when school reopens. Encourage her to create a schedule for doing the work and to get started right away. That way, she won't feel rushed and will do a better job.

Mealtime manners

When your teen is invited to a friend's house for dinner, remind him to use good table manners. He should place the napkin in his lap and wait for others to be served before eating. If he doesn't like a particular food, he can refuse it by politely saying, "No, thank you."

Outdoor fun

Cold weather doesn't have to keep your high schooler from getting outside for fresh air and exercise. She might gather friends for a game of Frisbee or kickball. Or she could go running or biking. If it snows, suggest that she help younger siblings build a snowman.

Worth quoting

"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn." *Harriet Beecher Stowe*

Just for fun

Q: What animal never needs a haircut?

A: A bald eagle!



Time to talk

Fifteen minutes may not seem like much. But research shows spending that amount of time each day talking with your teen can keep your lines of communication open. Try these four ways to make the minutes count.

1. Chat with your teenager when he's relaxed and in a good mood.

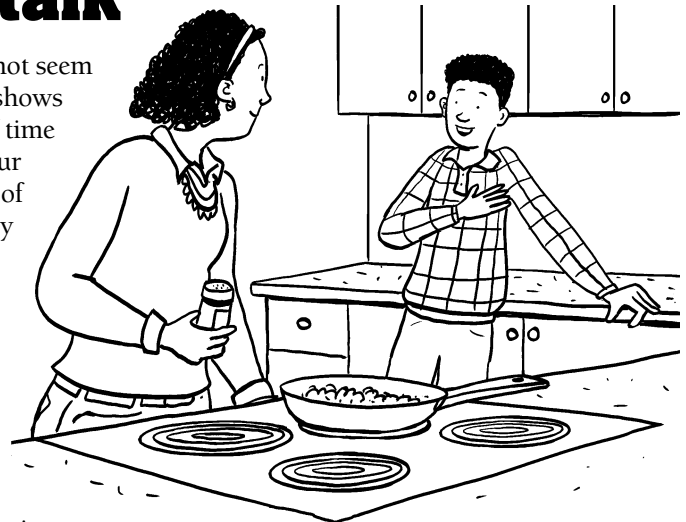
Knock on his door before he goes to bed, or greet him when he comes home from an evening out with friends. Start a conversation about your night and his, rather than asking him a lot of questions.

2. Watch for cues that your teen wants to talk.

If he has something on his mind—or just feels like talking—he may linger nearby while you cook or offer to go along to the grocery store with you. Encourage him to open up by casually asking how things are going.

3. Do an activity together.

Your high schooler may feel more comfortable



discussing his life while you're taking a walk or driving to the mall. Be ready to listen extra closely if he mentions a serious topic like a new relationship or a friend who is in trouble.

4. Reconnect after interruptions.

If you have to stop a conversation to take a younger child to soccer practice, for instance, let your teen know you still want to talk. ("I'll be back in 30 minutes. Can we talk more then?") Be sure to follow through when you get home. 👍

Spark creativity

Creative thinking can help your high schooler succeed in all subjects. Share these ideas to get her imagination flowing:

- Suggest that she choose a theme (animals, flowers) and snap photos. Then, she could make a digital photo collage, add music and create a movie, or print the photos and arrange them on poster board.

- Encourage your teen to invent new uses for items. *Example:* She might line an old napkin basket with fabric and use it to store jewelry.

- Have her sketch pictures while listening to favorite songs. How do her drawings change with different types of music? 👍



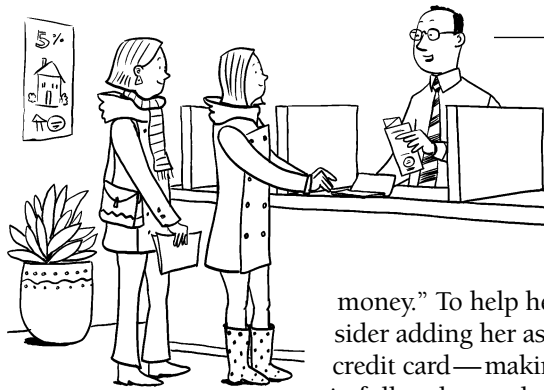
Managing money

High school is a good time to give your teenager real-life lessons in money management. Here's how.

Banking

Lesson: Setting up and monitoring an account

Homework: Have your teen establish her own checking account. Let her look online or talk to a bank officer about account options. Discuss the importance of keeping receipts and matching them against her statement. Help her check her funds to prevent overdrafts and to watch out for suspicious activity.



Credit

Lesson: Using credit responsibly

Homework: Explain that credit is a loan that you pay back with interest, not “free money.” To help her build her own credit, consider adding her as an authorized user on your credit card—making sure she pays off any balance in full each month. Don't forget to talk about credit scores and how being irresponsible with money in her teen years could affect her as an adult.

Saving

Lesson: Saving for the long term

Homework: Encourage your high schooler to set financial goals. Then, have her put a percentage of each paycheck or other money she receives into a savings or investment account. She can earn interest, and she'll get in the habit of saving. 👍

How to survive the holidays

For an already busy family's schedule, the holidays can be especially hectic. Use these tips for keeping things under control now—or at any time of year.

Keep a master plan. Post a calendar in a central area at home, and have everyone update it daily. You'll avoid the hassle of unexpected conflicts, and it will be easier to coordinate rides and combine errands.



Decide what's essential. Ask yourself whether baking homemade cookies for your office party is really necessary. Encourage your teen to consider whether he has to accept every invitation he receives.

Schedule downtime. Include time to do nothing. For example, plan for two free hours on a weekend morning. Your family can use it to sleep in or have a leisurely breakfast. Everyone will feel renewed and ready to handle the rest of the week. 👍



Parent to Parent

Bullying: Advice for bystanders

My daughter Nicky came home upset last week. She had seen another student being called names and treated in a mean way by a classmate several days in a row.

At the school counselor's suggestion, I encouraged Nicky to let an adult know if she sees bullying like this. That way, she won't put herself in harm's way, but she also won't be standing by and doing nothing. I also told Nicky she needs to be willing to tell the truth if administrators investigate.

I got another good piece of advice from my neighbor. She suggested that Nicky try to befriend the person being bullied. For example, she could walk with him to class or sit with him at lunch, since hallways and the cafeteria are places where kids can be vulnerable to bullies.

My daughter and I both feel better knowing there are things she can do to help if she witnesses bullying again. 👍



Reach your potential

Q My teen could do much better at school. How can I get him to work to his potential?

A Try asking your son his opinion. How does he feel about his performance? If he's bored, maybe he needs more challenging courses. If he says he doesn't care, remind him that being successful in school will help him get the college spot or job he wants.

Then, help your high schooler find ways to enjoy his classes more. Look for movies on subjects he's studying, or suggest a related volunteer opportunity.

Also, talk with your teen's counselor about locating a mentor for him within the school. A teacher he likes, a coach, or his drama club advisor could provide an important connection that will motivate him to work harder. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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