

High School **YEARS**

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Some assembly required

Putting together furniture or toys can make your teen a better problem-solver. When your family needs a bookshelf or dollhouse assembled, let your high schooler take the lead. She will practice reading diagrams, following steps, and fixing mistakes—all of which can help her in school and in the future.

Kindness is easy

Being kind in small ways shows others that you care—and it's simple. Encourage your teen to exhibit kindness throughout the day. For instance, he might make a snack for his sister when she's studying. Or he could rake your neighbor's lawn after raking yours.

Dangers of vaping

Teens may believe that vapes are safer than regular cigarettes, but they're not. Scientists are in fact still learning about the dangers of vaping. Regardless, both types of cigarettes are addictive—and illegal for children. Let your teen know these facts, especially if you suspect that her friends might be vaping.

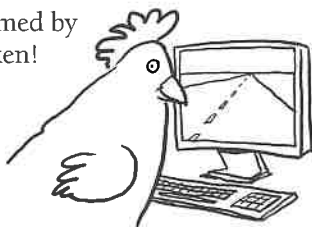
Worth quoting

"The things that make me different are the things that make me me."
A.A. Milne

Just for fun

Q: Why did the computer cross the road?

A: Because it was programmed by the chicken!



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.

Catch up with him after he finishes his homework, or knock on his door before he goes to bed.

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 on an errand 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 pick up dinner. 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 work call, for instance, let your teen know you still want to talk. ("I'll be off in 30 minutes. Can we talk more then?") Be sure to follow through when you are free. 👍

Goal for it!

Academic goals help your busy high schooler focus on what matters the most. Share this advice for setting goals.

■ **Be specific and realistic.** Your teenager is more apt to meet a goal like "I will get an A on my next geometry test" rather than "I will ace geometry this semester!" Or instead of a general goal ("I will be more organized"), she might concentrate on updating her planner daily.

■ **Make a plan.** Your child should decide what she'll do to reach each goal, such as starting a study group or consulting her planner every day.

Idea: Suggest that she write and display each goal on a separate slip of colored paper. 👍



Q & A The opioid epidemic and teenagers

You may have heard news reports about the opioid epidemic and wondered whether it could affect your teenager. Here are answers to questions about opioids, which include heroin and prescription pain relievers like OxyContin, Vicodin, and codeine.

Q: How can I talk to my teen about opioids?

A: Explain the dangers, including such serious consequences as addiction and even fatal overdose. When you hear sobering statistics in the news, like the number of overdoses in your state, share them with your high schooler.



Q: What if a doctor prescribes an opioid for one of us?

A: Keep all medications locked up between doses. Also, promptly dispose of any leftovers. That will keep them away from teens who are tempted to explore medicine cabinets or face peer pressure from friends to do so.

Q: What are the signs of opioid use, and what should

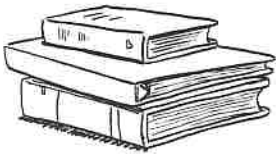
I do if I think my child has tried these drugs?

A: Signs of opioid use include shifts in relationships with family and friends, not caring about one's appearance, changes in sleep habits, and poor concentration. If you suspect or discover your teen is using drugs, contact her pediatrician immediately. 🍊



Reading: The best vocabulary builder

Spot a teenager with a good vocabulary, and you've likely spotted a teenager who reads a lot. In fact, reading is the best way to build a strong speaking and writing vocabulary. Share these ideas.



■ **Seek out variety.** Books set in other places and time periods expose your teen to

words he might not otherwise come across. Suggest that he read a book set on every continent. Or hang up a world map where he can mark locations he reads about. He might also read historical fiction to match topics he's studying.

■ **Absorb meanings.** Encourage your high schooler to learn new words as he reads. He could figure out definitions from the context or use a dictionary, an app, or an e-reader's look-up feature. To make the words "stick," have him post them on sticky notes with their definitions—and remove each one when he knows the word. 🍊

Parent to Parent

Does multitasking work?

My son regularly scanned Twitter and texted his friends while doing homework. James told me not to worry—that he could "multitask"—but I wasn't so sure.

I asked his homeroom teacher about this, and she said kids tend to make more mistakes and take longer to finish work when they multitask. To show my son the difference, she suggested this. I asked him to track how long it took him to do homework for a week and the number of errors marked when the work was returned. Then, he tracked the same things for a week of homework without tweeting and texting.

He was surprised by the results! Once James saw he could finish more quickly and do better work, he decided on his own to cut down on multitasking—giving him more time for chatting with friends afterward. 🍊



How to increase confidence

Feeling confident can pave the way for your high schooler's future success, both in and out of the classroom. Use these suggestions to boost her self-esteem.

■ **Stay upbeat.** Encourage your teen with positive statements like "I know you'll rock your presentation today!" Also, share what gives you confidence. "I was a little nervous about my presentation at work, but I felt good because I had backed up my points with solid information."

■ **Give her responsibility.** Put your teenager in charge of home projects like replacing a water filter or

a printer cartridge. Accomplishing tasks successfully, and seeing family members benefit from her efforts, will boost her confidence.

■ **Focus on what your teen can do.** Shine the spotlight on what your child is good at. Say she has a knack for explaining complicated ideas in simple language. Ask her to help her younger brother with his fractions homework or to teach the whole family how to play a challenging board game. 🍊



OUR PURPOSE

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

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