

November 2007

# High School **YEARS**

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips

### Involved in learning

To ignite your child's excitement about school, find ways to learn along with him. For example, if he's studying astronomy in science, share a report you saw on the news about an expected meteor shower. Better yet, suggest that the two of you stay up late to watch it together.

### Headphone dangers

Did you know that listening to loud music through headphones can cause hearing loss? The damage can build over time, although the effects may not be felt for years. Encourage your teen to keep the volume down (about halfway on the dial) and to listen no more than an hour a day.

### Workplace attitudes

Help your child approach work with enthusiasm by showing a positive attitude toward *your* job. Discuss the good parts of your day over dinner. Mention the things you like about what you do. Remember, the values you pass along today may show up in how your teen views her career tomorrow.

### Worth quoting

"It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it."  
*Albert Einstein*

### Just for fun

**Teacher:** Do you know the 20th president of the United States?

**Student:** No. We were never introduced!



## Working in a group

Group projects do more than help your child get a school assignment done. They show him how to work successfully with others — a crucial skill for college and the workplace.

Share with your teen these steps for working effectively in groups.



### Chart your course

- Have each group member review his schedule. Together, decide on a regular time and place to meet. Make it clear that everyone must attend.

- Divide the project into tasks (researching, fact-checking, writing). Give each person a role based on his interests and abilities.

- Set realistic deadlines for each job. Consider whether one person's part has to be done before another's can start. Be sure to leave time for revisions.

### Avoid pitfalls

- Be considerate of team members. Try to take all viewpoints into account. If your ideas are criticized, don't take it personally. And don't gossip about other team members — if there's a problem, talk to the person involved.

- Resolve conflicts sooner rather than later. Ask questions ("What's the status of your part?") instead of letting things stew.

- Approach the teacher as a last resort. If a group member is not pulling his weight, let him know that the team expects him to do his share. Seek the teacher's advice if he doesn't.

## Helping others

Encourage your teenager to make a difference in the world by sharing her time and energy with people in need. Here are two ideas.

**Give the gift of warmth.** Homeless people are especially at risk during cold weather. Your high schooler can put up posters, distribute flyers, or send e-mails seeking donations of new or gently used blankets, hats, and gloves. Help her collect the items and take them to a local shelter.

**Share the language.** Many immigrants struggle to learn English. Suggest that your teen support them by joining a "conversation club" at the library or community center. She'll get practice with her own language skills as she helps these children or adults improve theirs.



## Ready to write

Describing, comparing, and explaining—writing in high school can take many forms. But no matter what shape a paper takes, writing well starts with questions like these.

### What do I already know?

Encourage your teen to write down everything she knows about the topic (World War II, for example). She could write who, what, when, where, why, and how on a piece of paper and jot down facts about each one. Then, she can figure out what she still needs to learn.



### What approach should I use?

Does the assignment call for personal opinion, facts, or evidence? Suggest that your child consider different angles. For example, she might explore why the war broke out or look at how the war affected society.

### How can I learn more?

The resources your teenager uses depend on what she needs to find out. Newspapers and magazines offer current information. Journals explain research results. Reference books provide background and statistics. Interviews and personal letters give first-hand accounts. The Web contains many different kinds of sources. ☞



## Know your guidance counselor

**Q** What's the best way to develop a relationship with my high schooler's guidance counselor?



**A** You can introduce yourself to the guidance counselor with a phone call, an e-mail, or an in-person meeting. Let her know your main concerns for your child, whether they involve course planning, career testing, or learning and behavioral issues. Ask what resources the office has to help your teen and what you can do at home.

Then, encourage your teen to visit the guidance office regularly. He can get help with current problems, as well as advice for the future.

Also, if you and your high schooler have established a connection with the counselor, she'll be more likely to remember him when opportunities arise for a new program, a leadership position, or a support group. ☞

### 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 Rules for messy rooms

When my daughter Whitney's room started looking like a tornado had struck, I decided we needed a few rules for safety. For starters, no drink containers or leftover food should be lying around, since they can invite bugs and mold. To help solve that problem, we got Whitney a trash can so she'd have a place for garbage.

Second, we put a laundry basket in her room so she—and I—could stop tripping over clothes on the floor. Finally, we agreed she wouldn't have any candles in her room, and we discussed ways to keep her appliances and electronics safe from fires also. For example, her hair dryer should be in the bathroom, not buried under papers, and computer cords should not be tangled.

Whitney's room is still messier than I'd like, but at least now I know it's safe! ☞



## Community colleges

Did you know that half of college undergraduates attend community colleges? Consider this option if your child:

- prefers to live at or near home;
- cannot afford a four-year university (yearly tuition at community colleges generally is less than half that of four-year schools);
- needs flexible scheduling because of job or family commitments;
- doesn't have strong enough grades or college test scores to get into a four-year school;

- needs remedial courses in reading, writing, or math;
- would benefit from smaller classes and a personal relationship with faculty;
- wants training in certain careers like nursing, radiology, computer technology, and law enforcement.

*Note:* Since community college credits often transfer to four-year universities, your teen can start at a community

college and move later. Have him check with the four-year school of his choice to be sure the credits will be accepted. ☞

