

High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success



Short Stops

Smart break

Study halls give high schoolers a chance to get work done so they don't have to do as much at home. Encourage your teen to use the time to do homework, review notes, read textbooks, or make study guides. Completing work in even one subject will free up more time in the evening for him to relax.

Creating compassion

Foster empathy in your child by helping her relate to experiences she hears about. For example, say she sees a documentary or reads an article about African women who have to walk miles every day to get clean water and carry it home. Fill a large bucket with water, and have family members try carrying it. How far can they go?

Reasons not to smoke

Each day almost 4,000 teenagers start smoking. Talk to your child about why he shouldn't be one of them. Beyond increasing his risk for cancer, smoking can cost him friends who don't like the smell of smoke. It can also make his teeth yellow and cause bad breath. Plus, spending money on cigarettes means he wouldn't have it for other things he wants.

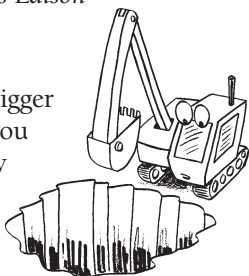
Worth quoting

"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves." *Thomas Edison*

Just for fun

Q: What gets bigger and bigger as you take more away from it?

A: A hole!



The right fit

"What am I good at?" The answer to that question can help your teen think about her abilities and passions—and find ways to combine them into career choices. Share these approaches to encourage her to capitalize on her strengths and begin planning for the future.

1. Make connections

Encourage her to think about what she does best in school (writing), where she excels in activities (planning), and what people like about her (sense of humor). Then, have her jot down those strengths in a column or write them on separate index cards.

Next, have her list her interests (computers, music) in a second column or on different-colored index cards. When she's finished, help her look for ways her skills and interests could connect. For example, if she's a strong writer and enjoys computers, she might consider being a technical writer. Or she could combine a love of music with her planning skills to go into theater production.



2. Focus here

Knowing one thing she shines at can build self-esteem and point her toward a future profession. If your child stands out in swimming or softball, for instance, she might become an athletic trainer or explore sports marketing. If she has an eye for design, she could work toward a career in fashion or home decorating.

Together, try to come up with four or five careers that would take advantage of her strong points. She could look into those possibilities by talking to people in the field or finding a related internship. 👍

Up for debate

Should teens under 18 be allowed to vote? Is it a good idea to ban skateboarding on sidewalks?

Debating topics like these at home can help your high schooler practice research and communication skills and improve his critical thinking. Here's how to host a debate night at home:

- Choose a topic your teenager has discussed and seems to care about. Divide into teams.
- Have the debaters research both points of view. At the debate, one person can argue "for" and the other "against." Then, they should switch sides and argue the opposite viewpoint.
- Let family members vote on the outcome. Which side won them over?

Idea: Consider having a weekly or monthly debate. You'll establish a family tradition—and create a learning opportunity for everyone. 👍



Be polite

No matter how much times change, good manners never go out of style. Being polite can help your teenager make a good impression and give him confidence in various situations. Encourage your child to improve his manners with these tips.



Use real-life examples. If you see someone display bad manners, mention the behavior and how it affects others. (“The woman kept texting while her friend was trying to get her attention. The friend probably felt ignored and

unimportant.”) Talk about more polite ways to act. (“You could respond to texts later. If you have to answer, apologize for the interruption and do it quickly.”)

Discuss specific scenarios. When your family has an event to attend, go over how to behave politely. For example, at a wed-

dning, your teen should congratulate the bride and groom and make a point of mingling with relatives. You might also tell him how to greet someone he meets there (offer a handshake; say, “Hello. It’s nice to meet you”) and how to use good manners at dinner (wait to eat until everyone is served, use the correct utensils). 👍



Spring into action

Experts say children need to be active an hour a day to stay healthy and fit. Help your teen take advantage of warmer weather to get outside and get moving with these ideas:

■ Suggest that she start a walking or running group with friends. To keep everyone motivated, they can set a group goal (“We will walk 100 miles by June 1”) and track their progress. Or your family could train for a charity run together. *Tip:* Try a training schedule for beginners like the one at c25k.com.



■ Explain to your teen that she doesn’t have to do formal exercise to get a workout. She might wash the car, weed and mulch flower beds, or paint the front door and porch. Walking or playing outside with a dog (your own or one borrowed from a neighbor) is a great way to get exercise, too. 👍

Parent to Parent

No complaints!

When my son Braden walked in the door after school, he would automatically start talking about all the bad things that had happened that day. His calculus teacher was confusing, a friend annoyed him, and the bus was late. His frustration soured everyone’s mood.

To improve his outlook, I told him I wanted him to start telling me one good thing about his day *before* he mentioned a bad one. I explained that his complaints were not a fun way to be greeted when I hadn’t seen him all day. And while I wanted him to share his feelings, he needed to focus on positive things to put negative ones in perspective.

Braden seems more aware now when he starts to complain. Sometimes he seems on the verge of venting when he walks in the door, but he usually catches himself and thinks of something good to say first. 👍



Q & A

Staying in school

Q My high school junior wants to drop out of school. How can I get her to stay?

A While you can’t force her to continue if she’s over 16, you can help her think carefully about her decision. Make sure she understands how quitting would affect her down the road. For example, let her know that high school dropouts make less than graduates. In 2009, the average annual income for a high school dropout was about \$20,000 versus \$27,000 for a student who graduates. Also, tell your teen that many job options would be closed to her without a diploma.

Then, talk about why she wants to leave. She may feel she’s too far behind, or she just doesn’t see the point of school. Help her think her reasons through and look for ways to address them.

If she’s doing poorly grade-wise, the school counselor can work with her to create a plan for getting on track. Or if traditional courses don’t appeal to her, the counselor might recommend programs like service learning, work/study, or vocational education. Seeing alternatives could convince her to stick with school until she graduates. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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