

# High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips



### Standardized tests

When your high schooler takes a standardized test, suggest that he use any leftover time to double-check his answer sheet. He should erase stray marks and be sure that all circles are completely darkened. He can also make sure he's filled in only one answer per line.

### Dress codes

Before your teen buys or gets out warm-weather clothes from last season, look over the school's dress code together. You'll find it in the student handbook or on the school's Web site. There may be rules about skirt length, low-slung pants, or inappropriate language on T-shirts, for example.

### Show your interest

If you pick your teen up from after-school or evening activities like sports practices, band rehearsal, or drama club, try arriving a few minutes early whenever you can. You'll get a glimpse of what she's doing, and she'll get the message that you care.

### Worth quoting

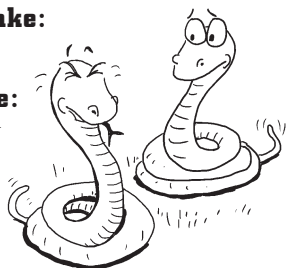
"Go as far as you can see; when you get there you'll be able to see farther."  
*Thomas Carlyle*

### Just for fun

**First snake:** I hope I'm not poisonous.

**Second snake:** Why?

**First snake:** I just bit my tongue!



## Think creatively

Your teenager can get a head start with employers by developing a skill that's in high demand: creative thinking. Encourage her to solve problems and think creatively with fun ideas like these.



### Tell a story

Choose an interesting photo in a magazine, newspaper, or family scrapbook, and ask your child to tell a story about it in 60 seconds or less. Suggest that she use details in the picture (clothing, facial expressions, background) for inspiration. Or she might think of questions to answer in her story (who, what, where, when, why, how). *Variation:* Take turns telling the story, a sentence at a time.

obvious (umbrella, raincoat), she could say: a towel to dry off the dog, a book of poetry to read inside, or an awning to stand under.

### Make a list

This game will spark unusual ideas and help your teen think abstractly. Ask her to name as many things as possible that fall into a given category. For example, if the category is "five things you use when it rains," in addition to the

### Invent something

Does your child have a problem to solve? Perhaps she'd like to read a book without having to hold it. Or maybe she can't find a purse with the right compartments. Encourage her to invent or design her own solution by looking at the problem from different angles or thinking about it in unexpected ways. For instance, she might consider how a cat would "read" a book (it can't hold it like a person can). 👍

## Make the most of spring break

Time away from school can be a chance for new experiences. Suggest that your teen check out these spring-break opportunities.

- *Discover nature and science.* Arboretums, nature preserves, conservatories, or botanical gardens are great places for your child to explore plant life, wildlife, and ecosystems. Some may offer free or low-cost student admission for tours and special exhibits.

- *Do community service.* Volunteering will give your child experience working with and helping others. It can also let him build up community-service hours if your state requires them for graduation. Encourage him to check in the school career office or call local nonprofit groups to find out how he can lend a hand. 👍



# Steps to self-confidence

Often the biggest difference between students who excel and those who struggle is a basic belief: "I can do it." Here are some strategies to strengthen your child's confidence.

**Start small.** Being successful at simple tasks will give your high schooler confidence that he can handle bigger challenges. Encourage him to set daily, concrete goals. If he's having trouble with civics, for instance, he might aim to complete his civics homework Monday night and write down questions to ask the teacher.



### Practice with pros.

Whether it's working calculus problems or giving a great speech, people with know-how can help your child improve his skills so he feels more confident. Together, identify someone who might be willing to help, such as a neighbor who is an engineer or an aunt who organizes conferences.

**Be positive.** Speaking to himself in a positive way can give your high schooler confidence. For example, encourage him to visualize himself giving a powerful presentation and looking his classmates in the eye. He can create phrases that will spur him on ("I'm going to give it a try!" "All I need to do is...").

## Parent to Parent

### Keeping a journal

My daughter Regina was having a hard time with a friend. I mentioned this to a neighbor who has raised three teens. She said I should encourage Regina to start a journal to help her work through her feelings and put things in perspective.

I took the advice and suggested that Regina write her thoughts in a notebook. I assured her I wouldn't peek at her entries. At first, I didn't think Regina would take to the idea. But she surprised me a few days later by saying she'd already written several pages. She told me that putting her feelings in writing helped her think about what was important, and she said she planned on writing a few minutes every night.



I hope my daughter has found a new outlet for dealing with problems. And, as a bonus, I figure she's getting extra writing practice, too!

### Bibliography basics

One of the most important parts of a research paper often gets the least attention: the bibliography. It gives credit to sources that contributed ideas and information to a work. Encourage your high schooler to:



- Create a bibliography rough draft. Whether she uses a book, an article, a Web site, or another source, she should write it down as she goes. Remind her to note a source's title, author, publisher, place and date of publication, Web address, and page numbers used.
- Know the style that's been assigned. For the commonly used MLA (Modern Language Association) style, see references at [www.aresearchguide.com/11guide.html](http://www.aresearchguide.com/11guide.html). Or check the library for the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

## Q & A Talking about sex

**Q** I spoke with my child about sex when he was younger. How should I follow up now that he's in high school?

**A** As your son gets older, it's a good idea to keep talking about this subject. Look for times to bring up the topic naturally. You might comment on a romantic scene after watching a movie together. Or you could talk about how his best friend seems to be serious about his girlfriend.

Explain where you stand on the issue, even if you've said it before. Remind your high schooler

of the risks associated with sexual activity, like pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. You can also discuss the strong emotions intimacy can bring.

Finally, let your teen know that he can come to you with questions—or just to talk—any time. Or, if he doesn't seem to feel comfortable discussing sex with you, suggest that he talk with someone you trust, such as a school counselor or teen group advisor.



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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