

# High School YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips



### Sticky incentive

To encourage family members to persevere, create a “stick with it” award. This can be a household item that represents “stick-to-it-iveness” (broomstick, bottle of glue). Once a week—maybe during a family dinner—give the prize to someone who stuck with something (a losing team, a job search).

### Following directions

When your child has homework assignments or tests, suggest that she read directions carefully and then highlight key instructions (“round up,” “list examples”). If she has questions, she can ask the teacher before she starts. She’ll save time by doing it right from the start.

### Help with chores

Next time you need your teen to lend a hand, try “inviting” him to help. You might say, “I’ve got so much to do. I’d really appreciate it if you could fold the laundry.” He’s more likely to cooperate if you ask instead of simply telling him to do it.

### Worth quoting

“We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path without brightening our own.”

*Ben Sweetland*

### Just for fun



**Q:** What’s always in the middle of a table on Thanksgiving?

**A:** The letter *b*.

## Great group projects

Group projects are not only a regular part of high school today, they’re an excellent way to prepare your child for life in college or on the job.

Working with other students gives your teen valuable practice communicating, negotiating, and solving problems while exploring a topic in depth. Here are pointers to help her make the most of group projects.



**Pick wisely.** Teachers may assign partners. If not, encourage your high schooler to choose people she feels she can work well with and whose strengths offset her weaknesses. For example, a strong researcher may want to partner with a student who is a creative designer. Remind her that close friends may not be the right fit.

**Lay the framework.** Suggest that the group agree on the best times and places to work together. At the first meeting, they can divvy up parts and list resources

they’ll need (library books, maps, poster board). They might also set up a way to report their progress regularly, such as communicating daily online or meeting weekly. This will help ensure that each person does her part.

**Create a timeline.** Setting deadlines will keep everyone on track. Group members can start by estimating how long their piece will take. Then, the group can build a schedule leading up to the due date. *Tip:* They’ll need to leave time to put everyone’s contributions (bibliography, charts) into the finished project. 👍

## Say “yes” to conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are just as important now as they were when your child was younger. By attending, you can help your teen get the support he needs. How?

- You’re the expert on your high schooler. You can share valuable information (personal matters, his habits). This lets teachers get to know your child and learn how to work with him.
- Teachers are the experts on your teen’s schoolwork. They can tell you about his performance (on assignments, on tests, in class). They can also give you ways to support your youngster at home.
- Conferences can help you learn about your child’s social life. Ask teachers what kind of crowd he hangs out with and how he interacts with peers. You’ll find out if he needs help with social skills or peer pressure. 👍



# College prep work

Is your child thinking about applying to college? Help him get the process started now by keeping track of information he will need. Try these strategies.

## Colleges

Have your teen make a list of colleges he might want to attend. He can start by thinking about what's important to him, such as size, location, cost, academic programs, or sports. Then, have him talk to his school counselor, look at guidebooks in the library, visit college Web sites, or attend college fairs. Encourage him to take notes, save handouts, and place information in folders for easy reference. *Tip:*



awards. He can include information about projects, sports, clubs, jobs, and community service. *Idea:* Some students compile a resume to attach to college applications. This gives admission staffs an easy way to scan your teen's experiences. 👍

Suggest that he create a spreadsheet with data for each college.

## Activities

Encourage your high schooler to start a computer file listing his achievements and activities or a scrapbook containing work samples, newspaper articles, certificates, and



# As I recall...

Your child's study efforts can really pay off when it's time for a quiz or test—as long as she remembers what she learns. Suggest these methods to improve memory.

## Silly sentences

*Method:* Make up a sentence to remember facts, lists, or other information. The first letters of the main words should correspond with the first letters of the words you want to memorize.

*Example:* For the first five U.S. presidents, you might think of "Watermelon always gets juice on a monster's moustache." (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe)

## Flash cards

*Method:* Write a concept, an event, or a vocabulary term on one side of an index card. Write the description, key facts, or definition on the back. Quiz yourself, placing missed answers in a pile to review again.

*Example:* Put "optic nerve" on one side and a key fact on the other ("nerve that carries neural impulses from the eye to the brain"). 👍



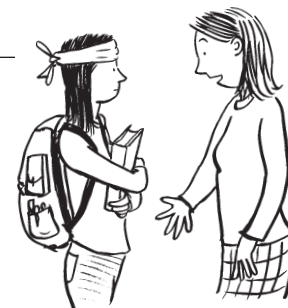
# Q & A Girls and gangs

**Q** My ninth-grade daughter has been wearing certain colors and has strange symbols on her notebooks. Could she be involved in a gang?

**A** Gangs can be found in the suburbs, rural areas, and inner cities. Girls *do* get involved in them, and some even form all-girl gangs.

Members often use colors and symbols to show they belong. They might also use hand "signals," have unexplained money or belongings, withdraw from friends and family, and be very secretive.

Talk to your daughter right away. Tell her about the dangers of gangs, such as being injured or arrested or becoming addicted to drugs. Let her know you want to help if she's approached by someone in a gang. Also, consider reaching out to police and school counselors. They can support you and your daughter if she is part of a gang and wants to leave. For more information, visit [www.safeyouth.gov](http://www.safeyouth.gov). 👍



# Parent to Parent Texting while driving

My son's friend was reading a text message at a stoplight when he accidentally bumped into another car. Thankfully, it was only a fender bender. But it made me think hard about our driving rules.

Since my son knows I like to text, too, I began by telling him that I know it's tempting to text while driving. But I made it clear that it is not safe—and it is not allowed in our family. To make my point stronger, I showed him an article that said texting while driving is

even more dangerous than driving while drunk. We agreed that was really scary.

Then, we talked about how we could avoid being tempted to text while driving. David suggested turning our phones

off, but I took that a step further and said we should put them in the trunk. He's not thrilled with this solution, but he understands the reason. And he has given me his word that he will follow it. 👍



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • [rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com](mailto:rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com)  
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