

# High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips



### Teen privacy

Does your child sometimes close herself in her room? It's normal for teens to want time alone to think, listen to music, or talk on the phone. Try to give her the privacy she needs, with a few guidelines (don't lock the door, open it when a parent knocks).

### Talk about school

Show interest in what your high schooler is learning by asking specific questions. Instead of, "What'd you do in school today?" try, "What did you work on in biology?" As you look through papers he brings home, get him to "teach" you about an interesting topic ("So, what exactly is DNA?").

### Shoplifting warning

Some teens think stealing is a harmless thrill. They may be dared by friends to try it (or to distract store clerks while their friends do it). Make sure your children understand that taking anything without paying for it is dishonest and illegal. Remind them that if they shoplift, they could be arrested.

### Worth quoting

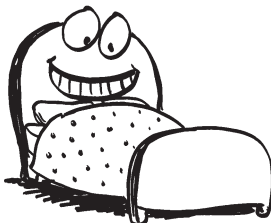
"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant."

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What has a head and foot but no arms?

**A:** A bed.



## Make class time count

Your child probably spends about six hours a day in class. Encourage him to make the most of that time by being prepared, paying attention, and taking part in class discussions. Share these tips.



**Be prepared.** Encourage your high schooler to do homework on time and keep up with outside reading. When he is familiar with the material, he'll be able to follow lectures more closely and understand the points being made. Plus, he'll be more likely to know the answers if the teacher calls on him with a question.

**Pay attention.** Remind your child to listen carefully throughout class. One good way is to take notes, as writing down key points will help him stay focused on what the teacher is saying. Does he talk in class or daydream? Recommend that he sit close to the

front—and away from friends—so he's not distracted.

**Join in.** Participating in classroom discussions shows the teacher that your child understands the material. Suggest that he ask questions or add his own comments. You can give him confidence to raise his hand at school by valuing the opinions he expresses at home. ("That's a very good point. Have you mentioned that idea in class?")

## Project planning

When your teen has a group project, being organized can make all the difference. Suggest these ideas for getting started:

- Get everyone's phone number and e-mail address. Group members might put numbers in their cell phones or write e-mail addresses in their assignment books.
- At the first meeting, go over the project. Discuss ideas for the format (poster, video, debate), and decide on one that everybody thinks will work best.
- Have each team member volunteer for a task (research a section, design a brochure, write a script). Set due dates for each job.
- Decide where and when the group will meet (at the library, Thursdays after school).



# License to drive

Teens need lots of practice behind the wheel when they're learning to drive. Here are some ways to help your child become a safe driver.

## Know the car

First, go over the dashboard. Your teen should know how to use the turn signals, lights, emergency flashers, and other features. Have her adjust the seat so she can reach the pedals comfortably and the rearview and side mirrors so she can see properly. Make sure she has her seat belt on, and teach her to check that her passengers are wearing theirs, too.



## Begin slowly

Let her learn to handle a car by driving in empty parking lots (for example, a school parking lot on Sunday) or on uncrowded back roads. Move onto busier roads when you feel she's ready. While driving, give directions clearly and calmly. *Example:* "When it's safe, get in the right lane."

## Vary the conditions

Once your high schooler has mastered driving in smooth traffic during daylight hours and dry weather, have her practice driving at night, in rain or snow, and on congested highways. The more time she spends behind the wheel in different conditions, the better driver she will become.

*Note:* Your teen learns from your driving habits. Be a good role model by following all traffic laws. 👍

# Guide to college testing

Your child's college test scores will help determine which schools accept him. He can get a head start by getting acquainted with the tests:

- Juniors should begin signing up for the SAT and ACT now. Students can take them as many times as they want and send their best scores to the colleges they apply to. The tests are usually taken during winter or spring of junior year and fall of senior year. Have your youngster check for dates in the school guidance office or on the testing Web sites ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for the SAT and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT).



- Encourage your child to look over the results of any practice versions of the SAT (called the PSAT) or ACT (called PLAN) that he took in the fall. He can see which format suits him better. The score reports will show the number and types of questions answered correctly and incorrectly, so he can focus his efforts when studying for the real thing. 👍



# Q & A Teen depression

**Q** My daughter hasn't been seeing her friends lately, and she sleeps until 3 p.m. on weekends. Could she be depressed?

**A** Teen depression can be hard to diagnose since teens' moods change. But symptoms that last longer than two weeks can signal a problem. Isolating herself from friends and excessive sleeping are both signs of depression. So are major changes in eating habits, suddenly poor grades, and "risky" behavior like sexual activity or using drugs.

Your child may be more vulnerable if you have a family history of depression, she suffers from low self-esteem, or she's dealing with a loss, such as her parents' divorce or a breakup with her boyfriend.

Talk to your teen. Let her know that you're there for her if she wants to confide in you. Also, contact her pediatrician or a local health clinic. They may be able to screen your child for depression or refer her to a mental health professional. 👍



# Parent to Parent Better reports

Recently, my son was disappointed when he got a C on an English report. I encouraged him to talk to his teacher and find out why.

Mr. Brooks started by telling Amit that he liked his thesis. Then, he pointed out several weak points and gave my son ideas for improving his writing, such as using examples to back up his opinions. The teacher also said he needed to include transitions, such as "Therefore" and "In addition," between

paragraphs to help his paper flow better. Finally, he told Amit to be careful about switching from present to past tense in the middle of the paper.

Mr. Brooks recommended that Amit bring a draft in for review the next time he writes a report. And he suggested going to the school's writing center for help after school. Amit thought both were good ideas—and he plans to try them the next time around. 👍



**O U R P U R P O S E**

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

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