

April 2021

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Old-school organization

Is your high schooler feeling overwhelmed by everything he needs to do? Share this tip to stay organized and tame stress: Make a giant to-do list on a big sheet of paper and hang it up. Draw a red line through items as he completes them. The visual reminder of his progress will feel good!

Sports + math

When your teen watches baseball, challenge her to estimate how high the ball flies. She can count the seconds as it falls (say, 4 seconds), then use the formula for acceleration of gravity (9.8 meters per second squared). So $9.8 \times 4^2 = 156.8$ meters. Suggest that she make calculations during backyard games, too. How high can she hit a ball?

Head off misunderstandings

Sometimes what you mean to say (“I want to know you got there safely”) is not what your teenager hears (“I need to know what you’re doing every second!”). If he starts getting upset when you’re talking, pause and ask what he *thinks* you’re saying. Clearing things up can keep your discussion from getting heated.

Worth quoting

“Nothing is impossible; the word itself says, ‘I’m possible!’” *Audrey Hepburn*

Just for fun

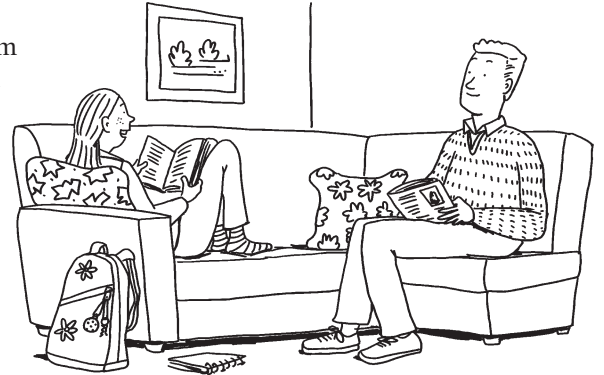
Q: What question can you never answer “yes” to?

A: Are you asleep?



Get the most out of reading

What’s the difference between just reading a novel, play, or poem and *comprehending* it? The secret is being able to pull meaning from the words on the page. That’s a valuable skill that takes practice. Share these strategies to boost your high schooler’s comprehension.



Consider authors’ choices

Recognizing how the writer put his or her work together can add to your teen’s understanding. Decisions writers make include point of view (who will tell the story) and word choice (writing *haggard* instead of *tired*). Encourage your teen to pay attention to these choices and the effect they have on her as the reader. How would the story change if the author had made different decisions?

Read between the lines

Stopping periodically to think “Is there something the author isn’t saying?” can help your child make inferences, or read between the lines. Say she’s reading Shakespeare’s *Julius*

Caesar. She might notice that Marc Antony says one thing (Brutus is honorable) but means something different (Brutus betrayed Caesar).

Make predictions

Suggest that your teenager predict what will happen next as she reads. This keeps her engaged and helps her notice details that deepen her understanding. For instance, throughout *Pride and Prejudice* (Jane Austen), she might predict who will marry whom. As she reads, she’ll likely revise her predictions! 👍

Be password smart

Your teen probably has plenty of online accounts. Share these tips for keeping them all secure.

Create strong passwords. Remind him not to use words people could guess, like the name of his school or favorite soccer team. Also, he should include special characters (\$, %) and a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters.

Vary passwords among accounts. Using the same password means that if one of your child’s accounts is hacked, all of them could be. Experts suggest a unique password for each account.

Keep passwords private. Suggest having a ready excuse if friends ask for his password. (“My family had trouble with that once, so now we have a rule to never share passwords.”) 👍



Raise an ethical teenager

Ethics isn't just about following rules. It's also about figuring out what's right and what's wrong in any situation—and then making the better choice. Try these ideas to help your teenager learn to be ethical.

Lay a firm foundation. Talk often about the values that matter to your family, such as kindness, honesty, and fairness. Point out examples on TV and in daily life, and ask your teen what he thinks. These core values can help him see



that cheating on a test, for example, isn't honest or fair to other students—or even himself.

Look through an ethical “lens.” When faced with a decision, like whether to keep \$10 a cashier accidentally gave as change, it's natural to consider “What's in it for me?” Encourage your teen to also think about how his choices affect others (the cashier might have to pay \$10 out of her pocket). Write unethical decisions on slips of paper (passing along gossip, “fudging” details on a college application), and occasionally choose one to discuss over dinner. What ripple effects does each decision have? 👍

At-home STEM challenges



Engineering involves problem solving, design, and building. And it's fun! Have your high schooler try her hand at these activities.

Build a catapult

Encourage your teen to gather craft items from around the house (index cards, binder clips, pipe cleaners, clothespins, paper clips, rubber bands, twine, craft sticks). Then, challenge her to design and build a catapult that will launch a toy across the deck or yard. How can she redesign so the toy will fly farther?

Create a water timer

Suggest that your child engineer a “timer” that relies on the flow of water—similar to a sand

timer. How could she make water flow from one container (cup, bottle) to another in a precise amount of time? She might

poke holes in one container and insert straws, for example. Now she can use the timer during homework sessions! 👍



An IEP plan for the future

Q My daughter has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Because she turns 16 soon, her IEP team will start transition planning for life after high school. What is my role in helping her?

A Transition planning is the formal name for the process that starts by age 16 for students with IEPs.

Like any parent, you can help your child think about the future by talking with her about her strengths and interests. Perhaps she's good with animals and likes science. Her IEP team will use that information and work with both of you to set goals (say, enroll in a technical education program to earn a veterinary assistant certificate).

The team will also decide what services your child needs to achieve her goals. These might include accommodations for classes, career counseling, and training for daily living skills.

Be sure to cheer your daughter on as she makes progress toward her goals, and stay in touch with her team if you have any questions. 👍



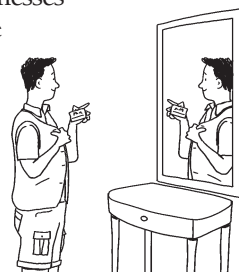
Job hunting in uncommon times

My son Rashi needed to find a summer job, but I was concerned about COVID-19. Would jobs be available? Would Rashi be safe at work? So I talked to friends with working teens.

I discovered that many local businesses are in fact hiring teens, and there are even jobs that kids can safely do outdoors or from home. For instance, one friend's child found work as a guest assistant at a golf course. And another friend's son works from home taking food orders for restaurants.

Rashi visited a few online job sites, narrowing his search to outdoor or remote positions only. After a successful interview on Zoom, he landed a position at a garden center. He'll be arranging displays and ringing up customers, and

we're both comfortable with that because all of his work will take place outside. I know working will help Rashi learn responsibility—and the money he'll earn will come in handy for our family now. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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