

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

INDIAN LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL
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MOTIVATING YOUR TEEN

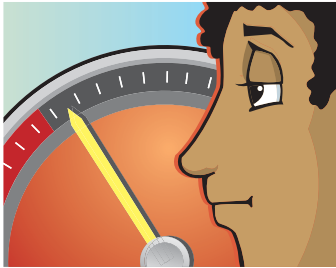
Avoid 'running out of gas'

Your son started work on his science fair project with a burst of energy—but before it was due, he seemed to run out of gas. Some teens just don't follow through. They don't do the final draft of the paper. They don't finish reading the novel. They don't answer all the questions.

Getting the job done—on time and according to the directions—is important for success in school and in life. To motivate your teen to be a "closer":

- **Expect him to have a regular time** for homework, whether teachers assign it or not. If he has no specific assignment, he can review or read.
- **Check the school's website.** Does your son's teacher post assignments? You don't want to do your teen's work, but you can ask how he's doing.
- **Monitor your teen's schedule.** If he's involved in too many activities, he may just be too tired when it's time to work on a project.
- **Show your teen** how to break large jobs into smaller tasks. Then have him write due dates for each task on a calendar.
- **Turn off the TV.** And if your teen has a TV in his room, take it out. Monitor time playing computer games, too.

Source: Mel Levine, *Ready or Not, Here Life Comes*, ISBN: 0-743-26224-7 (Simon & Schuster, 1-800-223-2336, www.simonsays.com).



YOUR TEEN AND YOU

Use TV to improve communication

By the time most American children graduate from high school, they will have spent 15,000 hours in the classroom—and 20,000 hours in front of the television! To make TV less intrusive and more useful:

- **Watch with your teen.** Even if *American Idol* isn't your favorite show, your teen might not miss an episode. Consider it an hour to spend with her, rather than an hour of agony.
- **Talk with your teen.** Ask why this type of show appeals to her. What did she think of the plot and how characters handled themselves? How would she handle similar situations?
- **Share with your teen.** Was the show like anything you watched as a teen? How was it different? Imagining you as a teen may help your teen relate to you—and help her find it easier to talk to you.

Source: Sheila H. Troppe, "Television and Teens," Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1984/5/84.05.03.x.html.

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

Skipping class hurts teens

Never tolerate skipping a class. Learning builds day by day. Missing even one class discussion or lab experiment means your teen is missing a valuable learning experience. Expect your teen to be in school—and in every class—every day (except in case of illness or emergency).

BUILDING MATH SKILLS

Encourage more math

As your teen decides on a schedule for next year, make sure it includes math. Taking more math is linked to future success. But many students don't take enough while in school. In today's global economy, two years of math may not be enough for students who hope to continue any kind of education after high school. Encourage your teen to take three or four years.

Math helps with:

- **All four-year college programs.**
- **All two-year college programs.**
- **Most trade programs,** especially if they involve technology or mechanics.

Source: "Do All Students Need Challenging Math in High School?" Achieve, www.achieve.org/files/ChallengingMath.pdf.

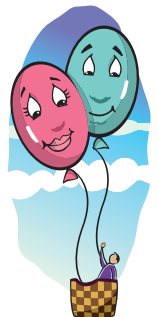


BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Teens want your support

It may be hard to believe sometimes, but your opinion matters to your teen. In survey after survey, teens say they care about what parents think. Be sure to give your teen plenty of praise. And when you criticize, do it helpfully, not hurtfully.

Source: Lisa Efron, "Dealing With Children's Challenging Behaviors," The Children's National Medical Center, www.childrensnational.org/research.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How can parents keep prom classy?

Q: Recently I was a chaperone at a school dance. I was shocked by the bump-and-grind movements I saw on the dance floor. I'm no prude, but I worry about my daughter. What can parents and schools do to keep prom from turning into an MTV video?

A: Parents today are concerned about teen behavior from pre-prom drinking to post-prom sleepovers. And then there's the dancing. You are right to be worried. Here are some things you can do:

- **Talk with your daughter.** Tell her you want her to have a prom she'll always remember. Talk about the issues that concern you, from the dancing to drinking and sex. Ask her how she plans to deal with the issues when they arise. Share your confidence in her ability to make good decisions.
- **Talk with other parents.** They may be unaware of the inappropriate dancing you observed. If you are a member of the school's parent-teacher organization, you might suggest that guidelines for prom behavior be addressed during an upcoming meeting.
- **Work with your school.** Some schools have asked students to sign a pledge that they will "stay classy" on prom night. It's not a huge step, but it sends a powerful message.



PARENT QUIZ

Are you meeting your responsibilities?

Parents of high schoolers have important responsibilities that can make the difference between a teen's success and failure. Answer these questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're making a difference in your teen's education:

- ___ **1. Do you stress** the values that will help your teen in school (like a strong work ethic and the importance of education)?
- ___ **2. Do you set** high but realistic expectations for your teen?
- ___ **3. Do you praise** your teen's accomplishments in school? Do you help him get back on track if he falls short?
- ___ **4. Do you help** your teen set his priorities so that school comes first?
- ___ **5. Have you visited** your teen's school and met his teachers?

How did you do? *Each yes answer means you're doing a great job supporting your teen's learning. For each no answer, consider trying that idea from the quiz.*

"Parents can tell but never teach, unless they practice what they preach."

—Arnold Glasow

BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY

Ask questions if your teen wants to quit an activity

If your teen wants to quit an activity, ask:

- **Did you make a commitment?** Will the team, club or group suffer if you leave? As a general rule, teens should finish what they start.
- **Why do you want to quit?** Listen carefully to his reasons.
- **Is participation affecting** your schoolwork? Academics should come first.

Source: Stacy M. DeBrock, *Sign Me Up*, ISBN: 0-743-23541-X (Free Press, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 1-800-223-2336, www.simonsays.com).

SPENDING TIME WITH TEENS

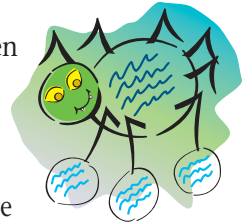
Meet your teen's friends

Teens are social animals. And often they want to please their peers more than their parents. To know the kind of influence friends have on your teen, spend time with them. Invite them to your home. Ask them to join a family activity. Get to know their parents, too. Healthy friendships can contribute to your child's school success.

STUDY SKILLS

Show how to make a 'web'

Webs are helpful when your teen wants to identify a main idea and supporting details. Have your teen draw a large circle and inside it write the main idea of a text. Then have her draw "spider legs" coming out from the circle. At the end of each "leg" have her draw a small circle. Have her write a supporting detail for the main idea in each smaller circle.



Source: The staff of The Princeton Review, *Know it All: Grades 9-12 Reading*, ISBN: 0-375-76374-0 (Princeton Review Publishing, L.L.C., a division of Random House, 1-800-273-8439, www.randomhouse.com/princetonreview).

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