

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

INDIAN LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL
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HEALTHY HABITS

Help your teen get enough sleep

You know how important it is for your teen to attend school every day. But you also know how difficult it is for him to get up and out the door.

The problem is that teens' internal clocks change when they hit puberty. A child who naturally fell asleep at 8 or 9 p.m. is now a teen who's awake until 11 p.m. And teens need about nine hours of sleep per night—which is almost impossible for them to get. More than 25 percent of teens report sleeping only six and a half hours per night or less.

To help your teen get more sleep:

- **Use lighting cues.** Encourage your teen to dim the lights in his room as it gets close to bedtime. Turn on bright lights in the morning.
- **Stay on a schedule.** Even on weekends, your teen should try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- **Avoid caffeine.** Even though soda may keep your teen awake in science class, it will also keep him from sleeping at night.
- **Follow a bedtime routine.** Suggest that your teen read to relax before bed. He should avoid watching television, playing video games and other similar activities in the half-hour before bed.

Source: Mayo Clinic, "Adolescent Sleep Problems: Why Is Your Teen So Tired?" www.mayoclinic.com/health/teens-health/CC00019.



BUILDING RESPECT

Treat your teen with respect

People who are *treated* with respect are more likely to *show* respect. So respecting your child can help her respect you, herself and others. Here are some ways you can do this:

- **Be polite to your teen.** Speak to her the way you would like her to speak to you.
- **Give your teen choices**—and respect her decisions (as long as they don't hurt anyone).
- **Ask your teen what she thinks.** She will appreciate that you value her opinion—even if you don't always take her advice.
- **Correct your teen's behavior** in private, not in public. Also avoid telling embarrassing stories about her in front of others.
- **Praise your teen** when you see her acting respectfully. This will reinforce her positive behavior.

Source: Michael J. Bradley, *Yes, Your Teen is Crazy: Loving Your Kid Without Losing Your Mind*, ISBN: 0-936197-44-7 (Harbor Press, Inc., 1-888-851-9090, www.harborpress.com).

STUDY SKILLS

You can help with studying

You don't have to be a teacher to help your teen understand difficult schoolbooks. Just ask a few questions about:

- **Fiction.** "Who are the main characters?" "What would you have done?"
- **History.** "Who or what put those events into motion?" "Do the events remind you of anything happening today?" "How?"
- **Math or science lessons.** "What was new to you in this chapter?" "How does it relate to what you already know?" "How will you use it?"

GETTING ORGANIZED

Get organized for success

Teens make the most of their study time when they're not constantly looking for things. Help your teen get her study space organized. Encourage her to:

- **Clean** her desk off—and keep it clean. Use it only for schoolwork.
- **Post** a calendar nearby for assignments.
- **Make** a filing system for old tests and handouts.



Source: Janet S. Fox, *Get Organized Without Losing It*, ISBN: 1-575-42193-3 (Free Spirit Publishing, 1-800-735-7323, www.freespirit.com).

MAKING TIME COUNT

Set aside some 'teen time'

It may be hard to carve out time to spend with your teen. Start a ritual. Bake cookies together the last Saturday in September every year. Obviously it's important to spend more than one day together. But having an activity your teen can count on will be comforting to him.



Source: Linda Sonna, *The Everything Parenting a Teenager Book: A Survival Guide for Parents!* ISBN: 1-59337-035-0 (Adams Media, 1-800-258-0929, www.adamsmedia.com).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How can parents motivate teens?

Q: My daughter talks about improving her math grade this year. But her habits haven't changed at all from the summer.

What can I do to get her motivated?

A: If your teen says she wants to raise her grade—but doesn't spend any extra time studying—she has a dream. If she takes action—perhaps by spending extra time studying every day—she has a goal.

Setting goals—and outlining plans to reach them—will help motivate your teen. Encourage your teen to:

- **Write down the specific goal.** To raise her math grade, she might write down "I want an A in math on my next report card."
- **Note the steps needed to reach the goal.** "I will study math for 30 extra minutes each night." Make sure your teen is realistic—a plan to study for an extra four hours a night is useless if she isn't going to do it.
- **Consider obstacles.** "On Thursdays, I have to work until 9 p.m."
- **List solutions.** Maybe your teen will do her extra studying in the morning if she has to work late one night.
- **Post plans.** Your teen should post her goal where she will see it often.

Source: "5 Elements of a Useful Goal," Middle Tennessee State University, www.mtsu.edu/~studskl/goals.html.



PARENT QUIZ

Are you keeping your teen safe online?

Today's teens are wired. They're online, on the phone—but not necessarily on top of their safety when it comes to the Internet. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're up to speed on Internet safety:

- ___ **1. Do you know** if your teen has a webpage (probably on *MySpace.com* or *Facebook.com*)?
- ___ **2. Do you know** how to access these websites?
- ___ **3. Do you monitor** the content your teen posts on these websites?
- ___ **4. Do you encourage** your teen to use privacy settings, so only his friends can see his page?
- ___ **5. Do you talk** with your teen about Internet safety—such as not posting his address or phone number, or not giving such information to strangers?

Each yes answer means you're making the Internet a safer place for your teen. For each no answer, try that idea from the quiz to change your answer to yes.

"Children are apt to live up to what you believe of them."

—Lady Bird Johnson

Share your family's values

Every family has values, and it's your job to instill them in your teen. Here are some key values to teach your teen:

- **Integrity.** A person with integrity always tells the truth.
- **Respect.** A respectful person treats others the way she wants to be treated.
- **Giving.** A giving person takes the time to help others.

Source: Neil I. Bernstein, *How to Keep Your Teenager Out of Trouble and What to Do If You Can't*, ISBN: 0-7611-1570-6 (Workman Publishing, 212-254-5900, www.workman.com).

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

Attendance = achievement

Do you know the rules for attendance at your teen's school? Are you expected to call if your teen will be absent? What if your teen is tardy? Regular attendance is one of the key factors for a student's success in school, so support the school policy and expect your teen to be in class—on time—every day.

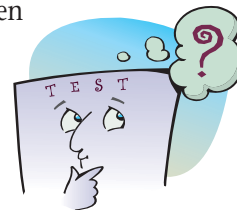
Source: Elaine Allensworth and John Easton, "What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools," Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

ENCOURAGE READING

Improve comprehension

"I read it, but I didn't remember it when I took the test." Sound familiar? Some teens have trouble recalling what they read. You can help your teen by giving these tips:

- **Be creative.** Your teen might memorize the date of a battle, for example, by picturing a scene with the date in big numbers.
- **Focus attention.** Don't allow your teen to watch TV, talk on the phone or deal with interruptions while studying.



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