

High School Parents[®]

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still make the difference!



Time management skills are vital to high school success

Many students struggle with time management. And the challenge gets even greater as teens advance through the grades and have more complicated schedules.

Encourage your teen to:

- **Create a master schedule.** Having all responsibilities and activities listed in one place will give your teen a better understanding of how much time is available.
- **Prioritize.** Your teen should review the calendar often to see if there are activities that conflict or don't allow time for schoolwork and studying every day. If band practice is three days a week, your teen may need to adjust a part-time job schedule.
- **Create a weekly schedule.** At the start of the week, your teen should

transfer items from the calendar to a weekly planner. Seeing what needs to be accomplished for the week will help your student stay on track.

- **Plan each day.** Help your teen get into the habit of making daily to-do lists that prioritize schoolwork. If there are no assignments to complete or studying to do, your teen should use the time to read, review or get started on an upcoming assignment.
- **Take advantage of technology.** Digital calendars are great tools to help students manage time and keep them informed on the go. Suggest that your teen set up reminders a few days before an assignment is due or five minutes before study time is scheduled to begin.

Five steps to improve your teen's recall



Most high schoolers have mastered the basics of reading. But remembering what they read can

be a tougher challenge.

To help your teen retain more, share this five-step process:

1. **See it.** Albert Einstein once said, "If I can't picture it, I can't understand it." Tell your teen to read a paragraph and then try to picture the content.
2. **Predict.** Proficient readers ask themselves what they think will happen next. This is one way they stay focused on what they are reading.
3. **Ask questions**—before and after reading. What is the main idea? What are the differences between mammals and birds? How did the ancient Romans conquer and hold their empire?
4. **Relate it.** New learning is most likely to "stick" if it relates to other things your teen already knows. Help your student find those connections.
5. **Teach it.** Have your teen present the material to you. When students teach new concepts to others, it enhances understanding and recall.

Share the facts about underage drinking with your high schooler



According to health experts, 60 percent of teens have had at least one alcoholic drink by age 18. And research

shows that teenage drinking poses serious health and safety risks.

Share these facts with your teen:

- **Teens who start drinking** before the age of 15 are twice as likely to become addicted as those who wait until they are 21. Students who drink are also much more likely to commit suicide.
- **Alcohol increases** impulsive behavior and provokes teens to make stupid decisions that can lead to serious injury or death.
- **Underage drinking increases** teens' risk of physical and sexual assault.

So what can parents do?

- **Check where your teen** is going and with whom. If there is a party,

find out if there will be adults present and if alcohol will be served.

- **Remind your teen** *never* to get into a car with someone who has been drinking. Develop a code your teen can use when calling you that means "Please come get me!"
- **Watch your teen** carefully for signs of depression. Sometimes, teens use alcohol as a way to medicate themselves.

Source: "Underage Drinking," National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

"In 2020, 4.1 million young people reported binge drinking at least once in the past month."

— 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Ask yourself these questions when setting rules for your teen



The key to setting effective rules for teens is balance. They need independence but parents still need to keep some control.

Rules will be different for each family, but some general questions are important to consider as you are setting rules for your high schooler:

- **Has my teen had** a chance to talk about this rule with me? Teens should have input about rules, although parents should always make the final decision.
- **Will this rule help** my teen develop independence? Teens need to learn how to think for themselves. They need a chance to make choices and

live with them. But they can't handle *every* choice. For example, by high school, teens can decide *when* and *where* to study, but not *whether* to study.

- **Am I setting an example** by following this rule? For example, if you don't wear your seat belt when driving in a car, you shouldn't be surprised to discover your teen isn't wearing one when driving with friends.
- **Does my teen know** what will happen if this rule is violated? It's important to discuss and establish consequences for misbehavior *before* the rule is broken.

Are you helping your teen prepare for the future?



It can be scary for teens to think about life after high school. Should they go to college? What should they study? Answer *yes* or

no to the questions below to find out if you are helping your teen prepare for the future:

- ___ **1. Have you talked** with your teen about careers of interest and the education or training required?
- ___ **2. Have you encouraged** your teen to take advantage of career planning services available at school?
- ___ **3. Have you suggested** that your teen try to shadow a person in a field of interest?
- ___ **4. Have you helped** your teen create a résumé that lists academic achievements, work experience, workplace skills and community service?
- ___ **5. Are you helping your teen** plan for a productive summer? It's not too early to create a plan. Your teen could take a class at a community college or get a job related to a career.

How well are you doing?

Mostly *yes* answers mean you're giving your teen support preparing for the future. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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Give your teen three test-taking strategies that improve results



Whether it's a quiz in English class or that all-important driver's test, testing is a fact of life. To succeed on any

test, suggest that your teen:

- 1. Read directions carefully.** This will prevent simple and avoidable mistakes. The directions could say, "Answer two of these four questions." Or they could say that some multiple choice questions have more than one correct answer. On a math or science test, the directions may say whether your teen has to show work.
- 2. Use time wisely.** Your teen should read through the entire test before answering any questions, when

possible, then budget time. For example, if the essay question is worth 50 points out of 100, your teen will know to allot half of the time for it. Using time wisely also means using all the time available. Some teens treat tests like a NASCAR race—they want to be first across the finish line. Encourage your teen to use every bit of extra time to check work.

- 3. Answer the easy questions first.** Getting off to a strong start can give your teen the confidence to tackle the tougher questions. Answering the easier questions first may also remind your teen of a fact or two that will help with more difficult questions.

Coaching can help your high schooler make better decisions



Ever watch how a coach teaches an athlete a new skill? Generally, the coach breaks the skill down into smaller parts, then lets the

athlete practice them until the skill is mastered.

This same approach works for teaching teens how to make better decisions. Coach your teen to:

- 1. Discuss the issue.** What is it your teen needs to do or decide? What does your student already know about this issue?
- 2. Gather information.** Before making a decision about an unfamiliar situation, tell your teen to gather as much information as possible before making a choice.
- 3. List all the alternatives.** Not all decisions are either-or choices. There may be many possibilities.
- 4. Think about consequences.** Have your teen write one choice at the top of a piece of paper, then draw a line down the middle. On the left side of the paper, your teen should write the positive consequences from that decision. Negative consequences go on the right side.
- 5. Consider feelings and values.** Sometimes, the best decision on paper may not feel right. Teens need to think about their values as they make a choice.
- 6. Choose the best course of action.** Although it's hard to let go of this part of the decision-making process, it's the most important step to turn over to your teen. If your teen makes a wise choice, offer praise. If your teen makes a poor choice, talk about how to make a better one next time.

Q: My 10th grader tries her best in Spanish class. But she just isn't getting it. Her grades are low, and she doesn't want to have to take the class again next year. What can a parent do when trying hard isn't enough?

Questions & Answers

A: Life isn't always fair. Some students can master a subject without much effort. Others work really hard but still struggle.

That's no reason for your teen—or you—to give up. There are some things she can do differently that should help her be more successful. There are also ways you can support her.

Suggest that your teen:

- **Talk with the teacher.** She should report how much time she spends studying every night. What problems does the teacher see? What does the teacher think your teen could do differently?
- **Devote more time** to Spanish for now. Encourage your teen to spend at least 20 minutes a day learning vocabulary words with flash cards or an app. Later in the study session, have her work on reading or verbs.
- **Review past lessons.** Suggest that your teen work through past assignments. When she hits a stumbling block, she may be able to pinpoint where her problem started.
- **Get extra help.** Encourage your teen to see if the teacher would be able to work with her after school. If not, she should ask if there is a student who might be interested in tutoring her.

With a strong work ethic, consistent communication with the teacher and your help, your teen can rise to meet this challenge!

It Matters: Reading

Five ways to help teens pick up the reading habit



Many high schoolers don't pick up books on their own to read. They need some outside motivation to get in the

reading habit.

Encourage your teen to:

- 1. Start a crossword challenge.** Doing the crossword puzzle or a word puzzle online or in the newspaper is a fun way to build vocabulary. Print two copies of the puzzle and race your teen to see who can complete it first.
- 2. Read to family members.** Ask your student to read to a younger sibling or an older relative. Remind your teen that an older person might enjoy being read to even more than a gift from a store.
- 3. Read about sports.** Sure, practice is important when it comes to sports. However, reading about sports heroes could improve your teen's game, too. Your teen can ask the librarian for suggestions of biographies of all-stars in a favorite sport.
- 4. Take it outside.** Your teen can read in the backyard or at a park. Or, your student could download an audiobook to listen to while taking a walk or shooting hoops.
- 5. Volunteer to read.** Daycare centers, libraries, hospitals and nursing homes are just a few places that may welcome volunteer readers in person or virtually. This might be a terrific way for your teen to complete volunteer hours.

Source: R. Clark, M.Ed. and others, *The School-Savvy Parent: 365 Insider Tips to Help You Help Your Child*, Free Spirit Publishing.

Challenge your teen to set a reading goal this school year

The older students get, the less they tend to read for pleasure. Studies show that a typical teen reads for less than 10 minutes a day, and 80% of teens don't read for pleasure on daily basis!

Reading is a skill that, like all skills, improves with practice. Students who read for pleasure show stronger reading comprehension skills and are able to read more quickly. They also do better in school.

If your teen is one of the many students who have stopped reading for enjoyment, set a reading goal for this school year. The goal can be measured in minutes spent reading, pages read or number of books read. Work with your teen to come up with a reward for reaching the goal.

If your teen is not sure what books to choose, visit the American Library Association at www.ala.org/yalsa for



recent Teens' Top Ten lists of books voted on by other teens.

Source: "Time spent reading for personal interest in 2020," The Economics Daily, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Reading and discussing articles promotes critical thinking



News articles are great tools when you're trying to get your teen to read. News articles are shorter than books or magazine feature articles—which makes your teen less likely to protest that there isn't enough time to read them.

Quickly scroll through recent news articles in a printed or online newspaper or online and select at least one your teen might find interesting.

After reading it yourself, share the article and ask your teen to read it and give an opinion about it. Did your teen learn anything?

To really sharpen thinking skills, encourage your teen to read editorials—articles that offer an author's opinion on a topical issue.

Every day for a week, have your student pick an editorial for you both to read. At the end of each day, discuss what you've read. Do you and your teen agree or disagree with the points made? If you could tell the author one thing, what would it be?

Reading the news every day, even just an article or two, is one of the most valuable habits your teen can develop to enhance reading and critical thinking skills!