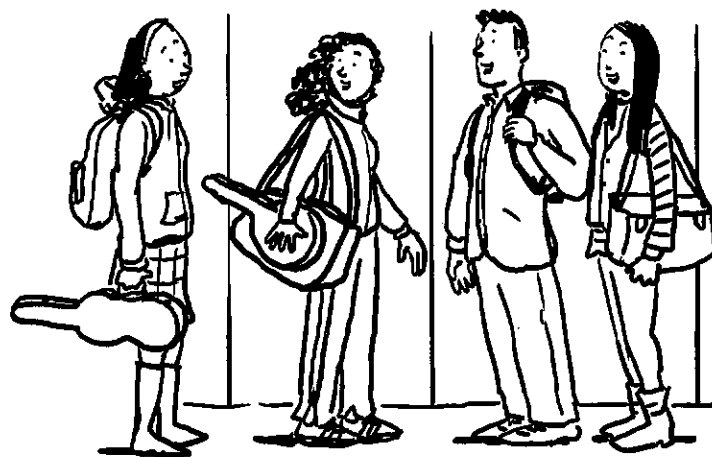


Life in High School



High school is an exciting time, as your teenager faces bigger responsibilities and grows into a young adult. But these years can also bring concerns, like how to drive safely and avoid risky behaviors. Here are ways you can offer support and help your child thrive during the teen years.

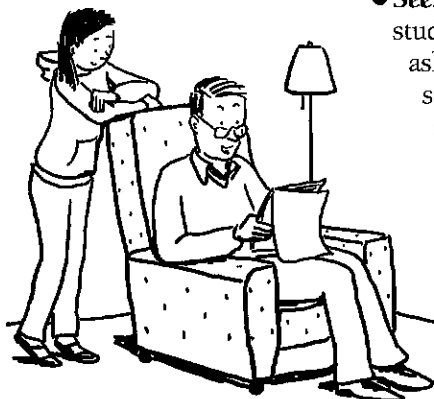
Managing schoolwork

Your teen can tackle more challenging classes with these tips.

- **Set goals.** Encourage your child to put goals in writing, along with ways to accomplish them. Maybe she would like to raise her geometry grade one letter or improve her oral presentation skills. She could study with a classmate who does well in geometry or be a presenter for group projects. Remind her of her goals throughout the year by asking about her progress.

- **Use time wisely.** Good time-management skills can keep your teen on top of her increasing homework load. Suggest that she do a mental “walk through” of her week and figure out when homework will best fit in. Then, she should put it on her schedule and stick with it. *Tip:* Have her glance over her student planner or agenda book at the start of each week so she can plan for quizzes, tests, and projects.

- **Seek support.** A successful student knows when to ask for help. Your high schooler should make sure she has classmates’ contact information handy and that she knows what times teachers are available to answer questions. Let her know you’re



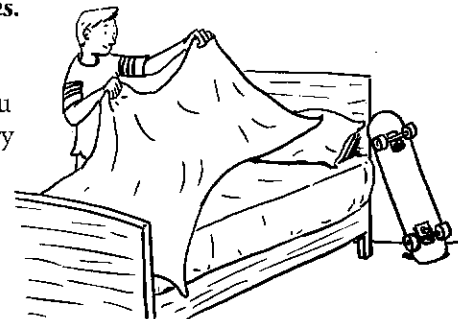
willing to help, too. You might quiz her on science terms or read a rough draft of an English paper, for example.

Handling responsibilities

With adolescence come new opportunities—and new obligations. Here are ways your high schooler can adjust to responsibilities at home, on the job, and behind the wheel.

- **Transfer routine tasks.**

Gradually have your child take care of more of his own needs. If you normally do his laundry or change his sheets, show him how, and then give him the job. He might set a cell phone alert to do it weekly (say, every Sunday night). Then, add new jobs one at a time so he can get used to them.



- **Be work smart.** If you and your teenager decide he will look for a job, talk about how many hours he’s allowed to work. He should be up-front with employers about his availability. (“I can work 10 hours per week.”) Once he’s hired, evaluate how things are going a month down the road. Is he finishing his homework on time? Does he have time for his extracurricular activities?

- **Ease into driving.** Set limits once your teen has his license so he gains experience safely. You might let him drive only to school or work at first, for example. Also, tell him your rules about wearing a seat belt at all times and never texting while driving (and that includes while stopped at lights). *Idea:* Consider having him sign a safety contract with these rules—if he doesn’t follow them, he’s not allowed to drive.

continued



Discussing dangers

Research shows adolescents care what their parents think about risky behavior like drinking, drugs, and sex. Try these ideas for talking to your child.

- **Have regular conversations.** Repeating the same message will help it stick in your teen's mind and keep the door open for discussion. From time to time, ask if he knows anyone who has tried drugs or alcohol, or bring up a teen pregnancy you've heard about. Then, share your beliefs, and explain what could happen. For instance, he might get arrested for drinking or contract a sexually transmitted disease. Let him know you want him to come to you, or to an adult you trust, with questions.
- **Practice responses.** High schoolers sometimes make choices based on impulses and emotions. Help your child make better decisions by encouraging him to think ahead. Role-play what to do if a friend offers him drugs or asks for help cheating, for example. He might say, "No, that's not a good idea." Or he could suggest another activity. ("Let's go lift weights.")
- **Use positive peer pressure.** Being around peers with wholesome hobbies can keep your teen out of trouble. He could sign up for recreational programs at a community center or join youth activities at your place of worship. Also, brainstorm safe and fun ways he and his friends might spend time together. For example, they could make music videos or use outdoor obstacle courses.

Overcoming stress

Stress is part of life—but one your teen can learn to manage with your help. Consider these ideas.

- **Pinpoint sources.** If she's feeling tense, talk about what may be causing it, and help her think of ways to address it. If she's overwhelmed by a project, she might make a checklist of what she needs to do and focus only on one step at a time.



- **Encourage healthy ways to cope.** Your high schooler will handle challenges better if she takes time to relax. Share ways that you de-stress on busy days (do stretching exercises, read a magazine), and encourage her to think of relaxing activities she could try. She might drink a cup of tea while listening to music, for instance.
- **Watch for bigger issues.** It's normal for teenagers to have mood swings. But if your teen's moodiness or irritability lasts longer than two weeks, she may be suffering from depression or anxiety. Take her to the doctor if you notice that she is isolating herself from friends and activities, complaining of physical problems like headaches or stomachaches, or feeling tired or sad.

Dealing with bullying

Bullying is a problem for too many teens. The good news is that your child can be part of the solution. Share this advice.

- **Set a standard.** Let your high schooler know you expect him to be kind to others. Explain that if he isn't sure whether a comment would hurt someone, he shouldn't say it. Suggest that he ask himself, "Would I act like this if my grandparents or the principal were watching?"
- **Be cyber-smart.** If your child texts, tweets, or uses Facebook or other social media, tell him to keep his messages and posts respectful. Encourage him to communicate only with others who do so, too. Explain that if a cyberbully sends him hurtful or nasty messages, he shouldn't respond, since that could escalate the problem.



Instead, he should block the sender and tell you.

- **Take action.** Your child can help stop bullying by speaking up. He should tell a teacher or another adult if he witnesses bullying or if he is bullied. One way to take away a bully's power is by staying calm and walking away. He could also reach out to a victim to show concern and be a friend.

High School Years