

May 2015

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Dear teacher

Sincere thanks are a nice way to show appreciation for teachers. Encourage your teen to write notes saying what she learned and why she enjoyed their classes. She might include a treat with wishes for a “sweet” summer or a book with a note saying, “You’re the best in my book!”

Donating blood

One pint of donated blood can save up to three lives, and during the summer, donations often run low. High schoolers may give blood at age 17, or in some states at 16 with a parent’s permission, if they meet weight requirements. For details, have your child check redcrossblood.org/donating-blood or call (800) RED-CROSS.

It’s (college) app time

Experts say the summer before senior year is the best time to start college applications. Your teen should research what’s required for colleges he’s interested in. Then, he could make a folder for each one and place a checklist inside listing what’s due when. Finally, he can begin completing applications, writing essays, and contacting people to write recommendations.

Worth quoting

“Success is getting what you want. Happiness is wanting what you get.”
Dale Carnegie

Just for fun

Q: Why did the bird make a nest in the car?

A: She knew they would be moving.



Think for yourself

It’s normal for teens to want to go along with the crowd. But when your child thinks for himself, he will feel like his own person—and probably be happier with his choices. Help him be an independent thinker and stay safe with these tips.

Do a self-check

Before your teenager makes a decision, encourage him to “check in” with his own comfort level. Say his friends want to see a summer blockbuster movie, but violent films give him nightmares. Remind him that he’s the one who has to live with the consequences. Trusting his instincts will lead to the right choice for him.

Weigh pros and cons

Let your high schooler know it’s a good idea to look at both sides. If his friend wants him to switch baseball teams so they can be on the same one, he could list the pros and cons and talk them over with you. That will help make the answer



clear. Plus, he’ll know he’s basing his decision on what *he* wants to do.

Look at the results

Your teen needs to know things can turn out well even if he bucks the group. Have him consider the worst-case scenario if, for example, he skips a party where he thinks there will be alcohol. Will his friends drop him? If so, are they friends worth having? *Idea:* Share examples from your own life. Perhaps you didn’t join a committee despite pressure from neighbors, but remained friends with them anyway. 👍

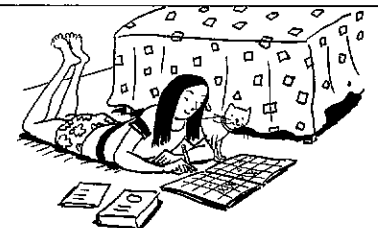
An end-of-year plan

During the last few weeks of school, your teenager will have exams to prepare for and final projects and papers to turn in. Share these ways she can take control.

Schedule ahead. Once she knows what needs to be done, have her plan her calendar. She might interview someone for her capstone project on Tuesday and go over French notes on Wednesday. Spreading out the work will keep her from having to cram or lose sleep to meet deadlines.

Defeat digital distractions. Social media like Twitter and Instagram can quickly drain time meant for schoolwork. Suggest that your teen temporarily disable her accounts until her tests and projects are over. She could also use a website like

focalfilter.com to block websites on her computer, tablet, or phone. 👍

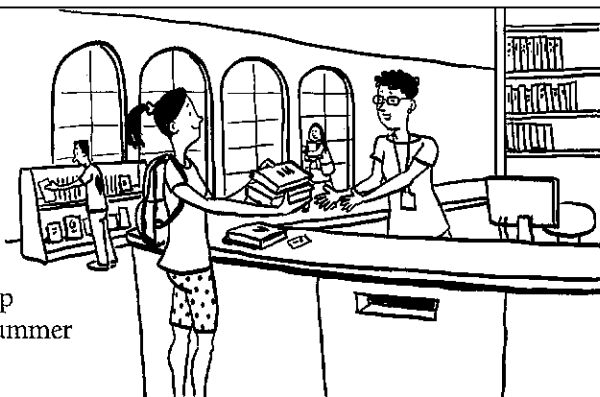


Summer reading and writing

You may have heard that students lose skills over the summer if they don't continue learning. That's true—and it's especially relevant for high school students, who need to jump right back into demanding courses. Try these summer activities to keep your teen's mind active.

Book it

Your high schooler can actually achieve learning gains by making the library a regular stop. Suggest she drop by weekly, even if it's just for a short visit on her way to or from a summer job. She might check out titles from her school's reading list, books by authors she likes, or nonfiction about her



interests. Signing up for a teen book club is another way to make the library part of her routine.

Write it

The more your high schooler writes, the better she'll be at it. Encourage her to post reviews of her

experiences at smoothie shops, the dentist, or restaurants. Or ask her to become the family reporter and blog about your adventures (like a weekend camping trip). She might even enter short stories or poetry in contests. Have her ask her language arts teacher for ideas before school's out or check sites like teenink.com. 👍

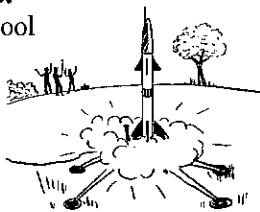


Start a club

Your teen can socialize this summer while building organizational and leadership skills. How? By starting a club with friends. Here are some ideas.

- **Fitness.** He and his buddies could meet at someone's house to lift weights, do conditioning drills, or go running.
- **Investing.** Members might invest pretend money in stocks, then follow the market, and compare results.
- **Games.** Whatever games they enjoy, your teenager and his friends can create a group around them. Maybe they'll get together for role-playing games or a board game like *Settlers of Catan*.
- **Model rockets.**

Hobbyists could pool their funds to buy kits and build rockets together. *Note:* To launch them, they can join an area club's launch event or check local regulations and find a wide-open field to use. 👍



Parent to Parent

Losing a classmate

My son Shane was shocked and upset when a 16-year-old classmate committed suicide. He didn't know the person well but was sad that someone his age would end his life. I wanted to help Shane cope but wasn't sure how. So I was glad to get advice from his school.

His principal sent an email saying they were bringing in special counselors. I encouraged Shane to talk to them, to me, to his friends, or to another trusted person. The principal also suggested letting our children know that everyone grieves differently and can have many feelings, including anger and guilt. I explained that to Shane so he would understand his feelings were normal.

I also told Shane about a technique a neighbor recommended. He could write a letter to the student who died and tear it up afterward. That way, he can express his thoughts privately. In the meantime, I'm trying to stay available so he knows he's not alone. 👍



Q & A What do engineers do?

Q I suggested that my freshman Alexandra look into engineering careers because she has always been drawn to science. She asked me what engineers do, and I really couldn't answer. Help!

A In general, engineers use science and math to find solutions to problems. But there are many engineering careers specializing in different areas.

For instance, civil engineers might design roadways and bridges, and agricultural engineers may create bio-fuels or find new ways to grow food. Engineers can also work

in specific industries, such as automotive manufacturing or solar energy.

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg. For a list of specialties, along with average pay and the education she'll need, steer her to bls.gov/ooh/architecture-and-engineering/home.htm. Encourage your daughter to talk to people (say, friends' parents) who work in engineering fields. Also, taking physics and calculus will help her decide if engineering is a career for her—she'll need to do well in both to get accepted into an engineering program. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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