

November 2008

High School YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

Short Clips

► Make conferences count

Attend parent-teacher conferences to learn how your teen can do her best. If her math grades are low, for instance, you can ask the teacher for suggestions. Take notes while you're there, and agree on a date to touch base again. Share the plan with your child so she knows that you and the teacher are working together.

► Spreadsheet skills

Knowing how to create spreadsheets is an important skill in today's world. Suggest that your teenager take a computer elective at school or a workshop at the library or community center. Then, have him practice at home. He might make a spreadsheet for his monthly budget or to compare cars he'd like to buy (cost, gas mileage, features).

► Family giving

It feels great to give, and even better to give together. Have family members donate their change to a "giving box" each week. Each person can donate as much or as little as he can spare. Every few months, donate the pot to a different charity.

► Worth quoting

"The more we do, the more we can do."

William Hazlitt

► Just for fun

Q: What is the best hand to write with?

A: Neither. It's best to write with a pen!



Portfolio planning

Grades, clubs, teams, jobs ... wouldn't it be nice if your high schooler could bundle all her accomplishments into one convenient package?

That's what a portfolio is for. Here's how your teen can collect and keep track of information to share with colleges and employers.

Gain experience

A strong portfolio shows a variety of experiences. Encourage your high schooler to take courses, volunteer, or get a part-time job in a field she's considering. For example, if she's interested in medicine, she might enroll in a first-aid class, volunteer at a local hospital, or work as a file clerk at a health clinic. If she doesn't know what she wants to do after high school, she can explore different options.

Get backup

Encourage your child to gather documentation along the way. Before a job or class ends, she should ask the employer or teacher for a letter of recommendation. She can also collect school papers, newspaper clippings about her club or team, and copies of awards she receives.

Keep track

Have her store information in a binder or an accordion file. Your teen might divide the portfolio into sections: academics, athletics, performing arts, clubs, jobs, and



volunteer work. Also, suggest that she keep a computer document that lists experiences, dates she participated, and contact information for references. 👍

Memory tips

Remembering information for tests will be easier if your child can learn a few tricks. Here are two ideas:

■ Have him think of a familiar place, like a baseball field, and picture several locations within it (first, second, and third base). He can mentally assign facts to each (judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government). During a test, he'll run the bases in his mind to jog his memory.

■ Suggest that your high schooler invent acronyms to remember formulas or facts. *Example:* FOIL (First, Outside, Inside, Last) can remind him how to multiply equations like $(2x + 3)(x + 1)$. With a little creativity, he'll be able to think of acronyms for every subject. 👍



Motivated to read

Help your teen become a lifelong reader by making reading fun and interesting for him. Try these suggestions:

- Book clubs help teens enjoy reading with new or old friends. Contact bookstores and libraries to see if they have high school groups. If not, suggest that your child start his own. He and his friends can read copies of the same book, and then meet at a coffeehouse or rec center to talk about it. They might each bring one question to share (“What did you like and dislike about the main character?”) or look online for discussion questions.



your child’s pillow. A sports fan might enjoy *ESPN* magazine, and a photo buff may appreciate *Outdoor Photographer*. 👍

- Fill your house with lots of reading material—you’ll grab your teen’s interest and inspire him to read more often. Leave books on the coffee table and in the bathroom. Try popular teen fiction, such as *Slam!* (Walter Dean Myers), or compelling nonfiction, like *Close to Shore* (Michael Capuzzo).

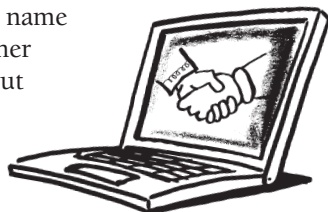
Or toss a magazine on



Social networking

Did you know that more than two-thirds of teenagers belong to a social networking Web site? Help your child make her online presence safe—and smart—with these tips.

Have her invent a clever screen name that reflects her personality but doesn’t give clues to her identity. Make sure she “friends” only people she knows (friends can access her private site).



Let her know that colleges and employers are checking online profiles to find out more about prospective students or employees. Suggest that your teen show herself in the best light when she’s on Facebook, MySpace, or other sites. She might discuss club activities, add stories or poems she has written, or post a resume.

Finally, help her choose flattering photos to put on her profile, and discourage her from adding any that are inappropriate. 👍

Parent to Parent Look on the bright side

My son had planned a hike with a friend, but he woke up to pouring rain. He grumbled, “It always rains around here!”

I try to teach my kids to see the bright side of things. I told him that I like rainy weekend days because I love to sit inside and read or knit. I asked Tyler if he could think of anything good about the rain. He realized it gave him a day indoors to build his model rocket. He ended up inviting his friend over, and they worked on the rocket together.

That evening, Tyler told me he’d had fun with his friend, and he felt good about finishing his project. He said they rescheduled their hike for the next weekend. We decided that a positive attitude can make a day turn out just right! 👍



Q & A Time together

Q Our family tries to spend time together, but something always seems to come up. Do you have any suggestions?

A With busy kids and working parents, finding family time takes a little planning. The key is choosing a time that works for everyone and making it a priority.

Brainstorm activities the whole family likes (bowling, ice-skating, pancake brunches, sporting events). Then, on

the first of each month, grab a calendar and find a day that suits everyone. Pick an activity, and write it in. Remind family members of the event several days in advance, or send e-mails so no one forgets.

Another idea is to schedule a regular event every month, such as family movie night. Take turns picking out a movie on TV or at the video store. Pop some popcorn, turn out the lights, and enjoy the film together. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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