September 2019

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success

Short Clips

Spreadsheet skills

Knowing how to create spreadsheets is an important skill in today's world. Suggest that your teen take a computer elective or attend a library workshop. Then, he can get real-world practice with something that matters to him. He might make a spreadsheet for his budget or to compare features of colleges he wants to attend.

"I promise"

Let your high schooler know that the best way to build trust is for her to keep her word. For example, she should come home by curfew. Or if she borrows her sister's sweater, she should return it when she promised she would—and in the same condition.

Show your interest

When you need to pick up your teen from sports practice, band rehearsal, or drama club, try arriving a few minutes early. You'll get a glimpse of what he's doing, he'll get the message that you care, and it'll give you a way to start a pleasant conversation.

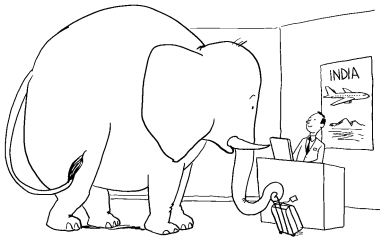
Worth quoting

"That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way." *Doris Lessing*

Just for fun

Q: What's the difference between an African elephant and an Indian elephant?

A: About 3,000 miles!



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Rested and ready to learn

As your teen adjusts to the new school year, establishing good habits will ease her back into the swing of things. Here are some strategies to help her create routines that work.

Sleep for success

Teenagers need a lot of sleep—an average of 8 to 10 hours a night. To make sure your teen gets enough sleep, encourage her to keep a regular bedtime. She'll sleep better if she avoids using electronics an hour before bedtime, then silences her phone and places it out of arm's reach (not on her nightstand).

Fill the tank

Studies show that kids who eat breakfast pay attention and absorb new information better than kids who skip a morning meal. Have your high schooler fuel up each morning—at home or in the school cafeteria—with nutritious, brain-boosting breakfast choices like fruit, yogurt, and whole-grain cereal or toast. Then to refuel for her afternoon classes, it's important for her to eat a balanced lunch.

Plan for homework

Your teen should set aside time and find a comfortable, distraction-free space to do homework and study. She might use a desk or table in her room or work in another quiet part of your home. To help her stay organized, try to give her drawers or shelf space nearby where she can store books, supplies, and papers.

Team up with teachers

You and your teen's teachers make a powerful team. Together, you can help your high schooler achieve his best. Try these ideas:

- Back-to-school night is a good opportunity to meet your high schooler's teachers. Introduce yourself personally to each one. Touching base now will help you feel more comfortable contacting them later with questions or concerns. *Tip:* If you can't make it, call or email teachers to introduce yourself and ask how you can support your teen's education.
- Stay informed about school activities and your child's progress. Read information he brings home, or visit the school website regularly to learn about upcoming events. And find out if you can check your teenager's grades electronically or another way.

The power of kindness

Being kind not only makes your teen feel good about himself, it encourages others to be kind, too. Share with him these simple ideas for spreading kindness.

Find daily opportunities. Look for chances to practice acts of kindness. You might put coins in someone's expired parking meter or give up your place in line to a mom with small children. Or step in when family or friends need help (read to a sibling who's sick, study with a classmate who's struggling).

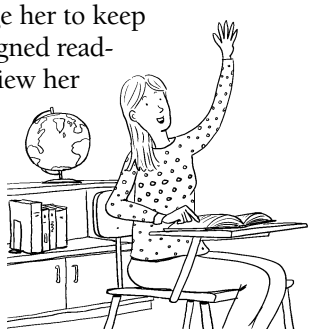
Do community service. Check with the school counselor, local clubs, or places of worship for ideas. Offer to bag groceries at a food bank or sort toys for a gift drive, for example. *Tip:* Find a friend to join you—it will be more fun to volunteer together.

Give to a charity. Taking time out of a busy day to think of others will create a habit of kindness. Go through your outgrown clothing and games and box them up to donate. Or fill zipper bags with items for homeless shelters (toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, socks).

Q&A Paying attention

Q *My daughter says she gets distracted in class. How can she stay more focused?*

A Your high schooler will find it easier to pay attention if she's prepared for class and actively participates.



Encourage her to keep up with assigned readings and review her notes regularly. Being familiar with the material will make it easier for her to follow what the teacher is saying, take notes, and answer questions.

Also, taking part in discussions will keep her on her toes—and boost her participation grade. Suggest that she look for opportunities to respond to what others say and share her ideas.

Tip: If she finds herself daydreaming or chatting in class, she could ask to sit in the front row or away from friends.

OUR PURPOSE

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

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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5605

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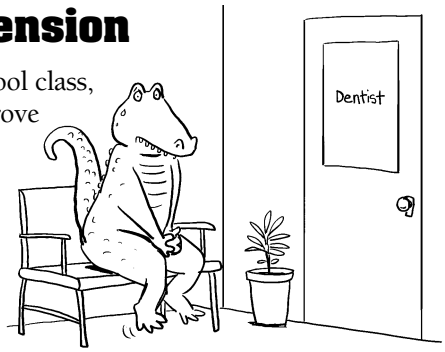
Boost reading comprehension



Reading is a critical part of every high school class, from English to history. If your teen can improve her understanding of what she reads, she'll reap the benefits across all subjects. Share these tactics with your high schooler.

Draw conclusions

Not everything a writer wants the reader to know is written on the page. Details often hint at broader ideas. *Example:* "John sat down outside the dentist's office. His face and palms glistened with sweat. He squirmed in the chair, tapping his right foot as he waited." What conclusions can you draw from the text? (John is nervous about going to the dentist.)

Visualize the scene

Strong readers form pictures in their minds as they read. Imagine what the text is describing. Draw pictures or graphs to illustrate and explain the concepts.

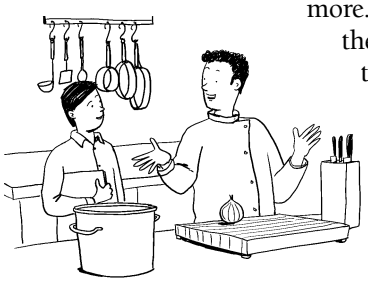
Find relationships

Look for words that show relationships between ideas. Words like *similarly* and *unlike* and phrases such as "on the other hand" signal that two ideas are being compared or contrasted.

Parent to Parent Thinking ahead to a career

My 10th grader, James, was surprised when his best friend told him he already knew he wanted to be a doctor. "I have no idea what I want to do," James said.

First I told him that while it's a good idea to begin thinking about a career, he does have time to explore his options. I suggested that he start keeping a list of activities and subjects he enjoys so we could brainstorm jobs related to them.



Since James loves to cook, he included chef and food critic. Together, we jotted down questions about the education required and everyday tasks for these jobs. Then, he called our favorite local restaurant to see if he could find out more. James was excited when the chef said he was willing to meet with him!

My son is putting together questions to ask the chef, and he's satisfied that he's taking small steps toward choosing a career.