

January 2008

High School 1 YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

Short Clips

Resolve to be ready

Does your high schooler have a New Year's resolution? Share this idea to help her be well prepared for the second half of the school year. Suggest that she restock her supply of pens, paper, binders, and folders—both at home and in her locker. She may also want to replace worn textbook covers.

Spelling double-check

It can be tempting for your teen to rely on the computer for correct spelling. But spell-check can't guarantee an error-free paper. Encourage him to reread his work carefully and look up any words he isn't sure of. He'll become a better speller, which will help him when the computer is off.

Looking ahead

Strong letters of recommendation can make college applications stand out. Help your child think of people who can write about her talents, skills, and character. She can ask teachers, coaches, and employers. If she's not old enough for college, she might start collecting letters and keeping them in a file.

Worth quoting

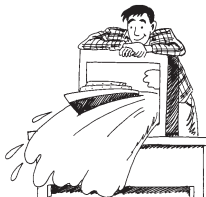
"Nothing happens unless first we dream."

Carl Sandburg

Just for fun

Teacher: "Where is the English Channel?"

Student: "I don't know. My television doesn't pick it up."



Setting limits

Teens show their independence by choosing their own hairstyles, clothing, and music. But there are some decisions they aren't ready to make yet. When you set limits, you help your child balance his need for freedom with the need to stay safe. Consider these ideas.

Create a contract

Seek your teenager's input on curfews, driving privileges, and computer use. Then, write an agreement you both can live with. Outline clear consequences for violations like coming home late or visiting an online chat room you haven't approved. *Examples:* grounded for a weekend, loss of computer time.

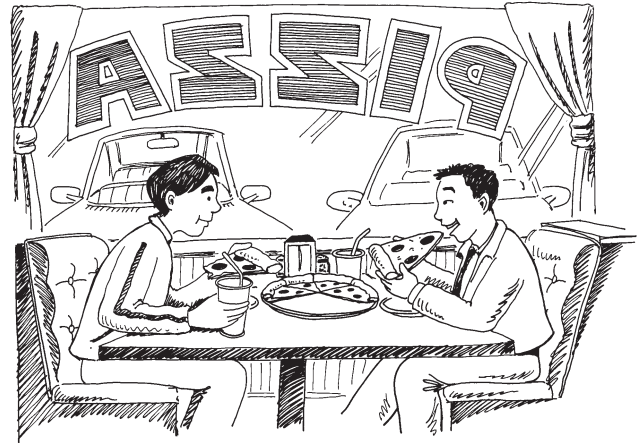
Start out strong

You can start with tighter limits and loosen them as your child shows responsibility. When he first gets his license, for instance, he might drive only to and from his job. Once you know he can follow your driving rules, think about letting him meet a friend for pizza afterward or take the car to a game.

Update rules

Review the rules from time to time—perhaps the beginning or end of each school year. After all, rules for a freshman are different from those for a senior. For example, you might allow group dating in 10th grade and one-on-one dating when he's a junior.

Note: If your child calls to ask for a last-minute change, such as a curfew extension, you might



remind him of your contract and offer to discuss the issue at another time. 👍

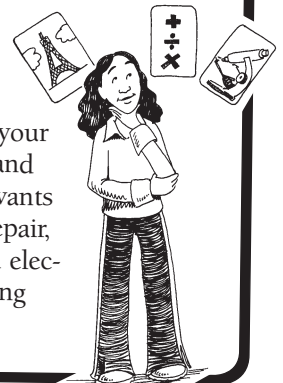
Stay on course

Four years of French? Or three, with an extra computer course in senior year? Whether your teen goes to college or directly to work, course selection matters.

■ Some colleges require more math, science, or foreign language classes than your child needs to graduate from high school. Suggest that she check Web sites or college catalogs for the standards at schools she may be interested in.

■ Honors and Advanced Placement classes show readiness for college. Also, encourage your teen to choose interesting, higher-level electives like environmental science or psychology.

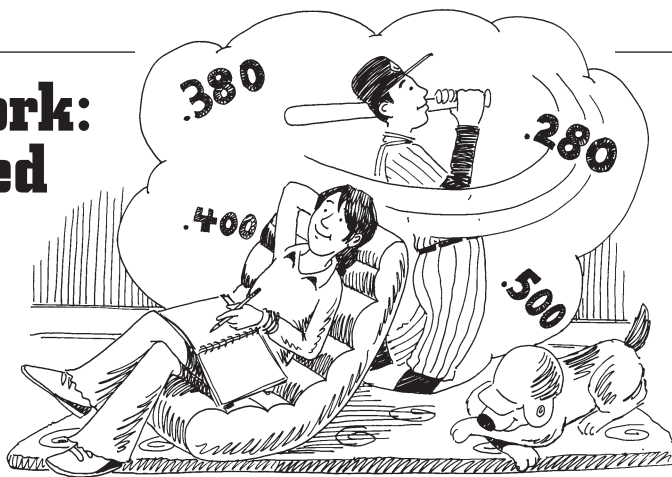
■ Vocational courses give students skills that meet employers' needs. The school career center can help your teen identify interests and choose classes. If she wants a career in computer repair, for example, courses in electronics and programming could be helpful. 👍



Math homework: Problem solved

You don't have to know how to do algebra or geometry to help your high schooler with math homework. Just asking these four questions can point her in the right direction:

1. What is the problem asking? For example, if she has to compare baseball batting averages, she needs to know how to calculate them (add the number of hits and divide by the number of times at bat).



2. Are there similar problems in the textbook? If your child follows a sample quadratic equation one step at a time, she may be able to solve others on her own more easily.

3. Does she know any other math that may help? For instance, if your teenager can find the radius of a circle, she can figure out the diameter (multiply the radius by 2).

4. Where can she get help? Suggest that she get phone numbers or e-mail addresses for two or three classmates she can call if she gets stuck. Or, she can consult math Web sites such as <http://mathforum.org/dr.math/> and www.coolmath.com. 👍

Money talk

Cell phones, gas, prom tuxedo rentals—the teen years can be expensive. Whether he has a job or gets an allowance, make sure your child learns money-management skills. Here's how.



Promote saving. Although your high schooler may want to spend all his money on movie tickets and music downloads, encourage him to set some money aside. For example, you might help him open a savings account for earnings from his snow-shoveling jobs.

Speak from experience. Show your child household bills and discuss your budget. As he gets older, talk about how to manage credit. Also, point out potential dangers, such as credit card companies that are eager to offer high-interest cards to new graduates.

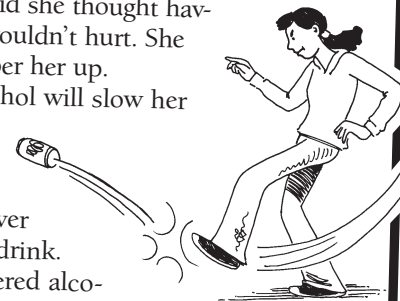
Provide practice. If your teenager has a job, ask him to pay part or all of his car insurance, gas, and cell phone bills. If he doesn't work, consider having him use part of his allowance to get used to paying bills. 👍

Parent to Parent Teen drinking

My daughter Melinda came home from a party last weekend with alcohol on her breath. When I confronted her, she said she thought having just a couple of beers, like "everyone else," wouldn't hurt. She also believed drinking coffee afterward would sober her up.

I explained that even a small amount of alcohol will slow her reactions and affect her decisions. I also told Melinda that coffee can't erase the effects. I made sure to express my relief that she hadn't driven, and I stressed that she should never take a ride from a driver who has had even one drink.

Then, we talked about what to do if she's offered alcohol again. Melinda had a few good ideas. She said that she could say that she got caught and won't take another chance or that she hated how the beer made her feel the next day. 👍



Q & A Joining school activities

Q My child does well in school, but he'd rather do anything than join a club or team. How can I get him involved?

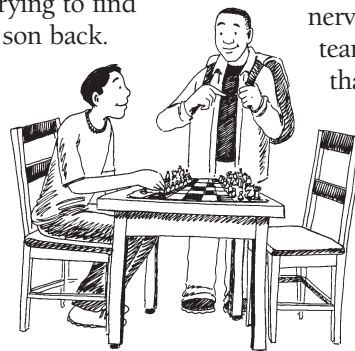
A After-school activities can promote a sense of belonging and help keep teens out of trouble. Start by trying to find out what's holding your son back.

Is your high schooler uncertain about what he'd like? Have him think about his strongest academic subjects and join a related activity, such as the book club or history club. Maybe

he prefers small groups. He could consider activities like the chess team or pottery club. If he'd rather not perform in front of others, he might enjoy a service club or the yearbook committee.

Or, if he likes sports but is nervous about trying out for a team, have him look for a team that accepts everyone.

You may need to do some of the legwork to get your teen going. Help him fill out forms, schedule a sports physical, or buy equipment such as paints and brushes. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5605