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HIGH SCHOOL

# Helping Students Learn

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Your School Name Here  
Your Name and Title Here

Sample Issue

## IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

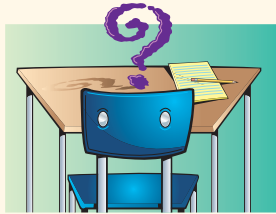
### Make attendance a top priority

Research shows that cutting class is the first step in a downward spiral. Students fall behind in a class. Then they avoid it. As a result, they fall further behind. Soon they're at risk of dropping out.

And it's not just that students miss class. What they do out of class can be dangerous too: smoking, using alcohol and drugs, and even breaking the law.

To prevent such problems, parents can:

- **Be involved.** Find out what homework your teen needs to complete. Check to make sure she does it. Talk with her teachers to see what else you can do to help her be successful.
- **Spend time together.** Look for ways to encourage your teen to open up. For example, watch a TV show and talk about what you see. Or read the same book and discuss your reactions.
- **Promote responsibility.** Expect your teen to pitch in. Assign her a few age-appropriate chores around the house. Set rules about curfews and other key matters—and then stick to them.
- **Address concerns.** If you're worried about your child's attendance, take action right away. Don't allow cutting class or skipping school to become a habit.



Source: Martell L. Teasley, "Absenteeism and Truancy: Risk, Protection, and Best Practice Implications for School Social Workers," *Children & Schools* (National Association of Social Workers).

## BUILDING RESPECT

### Establish an environment of respect

Before long, your teen may be living independently and following his own rules. But respect for each other should be part of your lifelong relationship. This requires:

- **Expecting the best** from each other. Refrain from yelling and using unkind words. Set a good example by saying things like, "I feel differently, but thanks for explaining your point of view."
- **Being consistent.** Set just a few rules and enforce them every time. Don't give your teen the impression that he can manipulate you. Take charge in a firm, fair and reliable manner.
- **Listening respectfully,** even when you disagree. Ask his advice sometimes—and take it. Learning to listen politely will also help him in school.

Source: Foster W. Cline, M.D. and Jim Fay, *Parenting Teens With Love and Logic*, ISBN: 1-5768-3930-3 (NavPress Publishing).

## STUDY SKILLS

### Create a homework plan

The beginning of the year is the best time for you and your teen to create a homework plan together. Make sure that he:

- **Writes** down daily assignments.
- **Brings** home all necessary materials (books, notebooks).
- **Finds** a regular time and place to study.
- **Has** a plan for long-term assignments.

Source: Arthur Robin, Ph.D., "Helping Your ADHD Adolescent Get Homework Done," ADD Resources.

## ENCOURAGING READING

### Suggest 'how-to' books to encourage teen reading

Is your teen a reluctant reader? Try offering her "how-to" books on topics that interest her. They can help her improve her skills or learn the latest techniques.

Consider cookbooks, books about musical instruments, books about cars or books about computers.



## SCREEN TIME

### Protect your teen from cyberbullies

A recent study found that 32% of all teens who use the Internet have been victims of cyberbullies. They have received threatening emails, had embarrassing photos posted or had rumors about them spread online.

To protect your teen from a cyberbully, keep computers in a family area, such as the kitchen. Your teen may be more likely to tell you about bullying if you're in the same room.



Source: Amanda Lenhart, "Cyberbullying and Online Teens," Pew Internet & American Life Project.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

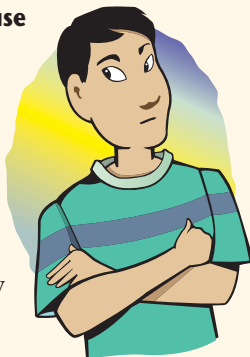
### What are logical consequences?

**Q:** I've heard that "logical consequences" help when disciplining teens. But how and when should I use them?

**A:** Logical consequences are results that happen naturally or simply make sense. For example, if your teen doesn't turn in homework on time, he gets a lower grade. If he misses curfew often, he has to stay home. Logical consequences are great for teaching responsibility. When using them:

- **Ask for your teen's opinion.** Get him involved in creating fair solutions. You may be surprised by his ideas.
- **Explain your teen's choices.** "Either you come home on time, or you can't drive the car on Saturday." "When you finish your homework, you can go out."
- **Stay firm, yet calm.** If you're too angry, an argument may start. If you're too wishy-washy, your teen may take advantage.
- **Give choices one time.** If your teen doesn't comply, enforce the consequence. Make it clear that you mean business.
- **Expect testing.** Teens see what they can get away with. Things will probably worsen before they improve.
- **Give second chances.** Use consequences, but also tell your teen there will be new opportunities to get things right.

Source: "Effective Discipline: How to Raise a Responsible Teen," Active Parenting of Teens Video Library, (Active Parenting Publishers, 1-800-825-0060, www.activeparenting.com).



## PARENT QUIZ

### Are you setting high expectations?

Kids do pretty much what they're expected to do. If you expect your child to do well, she is more likely to. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're setting high expectations for your teen in school:

- \_\_\_ **1. Do you make** time to talk about school regularly?
- \_\_\_ **2. Do you make** it clear to your teen that you are more concerned that she *do* her best than *be* the best?
- \_\_\_ **3. Do you talk** about future goals with your teen?
- \_\_\_ **4. Does your teen** have a home-work routine?

\_\_\_ **5. Do you expect** that your teen will do well in school?

**How did you do?** Each *yes* answer means you are setting high expectations for your teen. For each *no* answer, consider trying that idea from the quiz.

"The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress." —Joseph Joubert

## MOTIVATING YOUR TEEN

### Encourage your teenager to develop a 'sense of purpose'

Your teen may be motivated to work hard in school if she sees how this can help her reach an ultimate goal. To develop her sense of purpose, have her:

- **Imagine.** What important things does your teen see herself doing someday? What steps will help her succeed?
- **Write.** Recording goals and dreams (such as in a journal) boosts the chances of achieving them.

Source: Peter L. Benson, Judy Galbraith & Pamela Espeland, *What Teens Need to Succeed*, ISBN: 1-57542-027-9 (Free Spirit Publishing).

## DISCIPLINE

### Encourage self-discipline

Teens shouldn't always look to adults for cues on how to behave. They need to learn self-discipline. Tell your teen:

- **Be aware** of yourself and your actions at all times.
- **Be able** to calm yourself.
- **Listen** to your conscience.

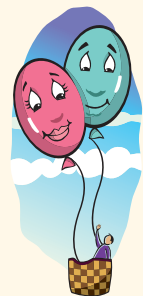
Source: C. Drew Edwards, *How to Handle a Hard-to-Handle Kid: A Parent's Guide to Understanding and Changing Problem Behaviors*, ISBN: 1-57542-046-5 (Free Spirit Publishing).

## BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

### Teens want your support

It may be hard to believe sometimes, but your opinion matters to your teen. In survey after survey, teens say they care about what parents think. Be sure to give your teen plenty of praise. And when you criticize, do it helpfully, not hurtfully.

Source: Lisa Efron, "Dealing With Children's Challenging Behaviors," The Children's National Medical Center.



## Helping Students Learn<sup>®</sup>

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