

High School Parents[®]

Sample Issue

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still make the difference!



Work on a plan with your teen to create responsible behavior

A common complaint teens have is that parents treat them like children. But if your teen acts irresponsibly, like a child, then you may feel you have no choice! But you do. Break this cycle by telling your teen *exactly* what you expect at home, at school and in your community.

You should expect your teen to:

- **Keep his word.** Can you count on your teen to do what he says he will? If so, you can declare him responsible.
- **Follow directions and routines.** If it has long been his job to take out the trash on Mondays, a responsible teen will do this without nagging from a parent. He'll also follow school routines, like beginning his homework and following the teacher's directions.
- **Show effort.** It's easy to give full effort to things we enjoy and want to do. But a responsible teen will also do this for things he knows he has to do. Model this behavior yourself the next time you have to do a task or chore that you dislike.
- **Maintain self-control.** Everyone gets angry. But a responsible teen expresses anger without destruction. A responsible teen also uses words (without insults) to communicate anger. He accepts that—as a member of a family at home and a member of a class at school—he is not always going to get his way.

Source: Don Fontanelle, *Keys to Parenting Your Teenager*, ISBN: 0-7641-1290-2 (Barron's Educational Series, www.barronseduc.com).

Make sure that attendance is a family priority



Your teen was up late at her job last night. "Can't I sleep in just this once?" she pleads. You don't want a fight.

And you find yourself wondering whether it really matters if she gets to class every day.

Researcher Carl Chung at the University of Minnesota kept track of the grades and attendance in a beginning (high school level) math class. His conclusion: "Students who miss too many classes end up doing poorly, withdrawing or requiring significant help in the form of one-on-one meetings or tutoring in order to catch up."

Missing just one or two sessions of a class can start a downward spiral. What can you do?

Here are some tips:

- **Limit late-night work hours** to the weekend. School is your teen's most important job.
- **Make sure your teen** has an alarm clock with a loud alarm.
- **Stress why** she needs to get to school on time. No employer will let her show up whenever she feels like it.

Source: Carl Chung, "The Impact of Attendance, Instructor Contact, and Homework Completion on Achievement in a Developmental Logic Course," www.findarticles.com/p/artides/mi_qa4116/is_200404/ai_n9465365.

Managing time will help make your teen's homework easier



Your teen knows that homework is her responsibility. Yet with more homework than she's ever had, along with after-school activities, it may be hard to figure out how she'll get it all done. Help her:

- **Prioritize.** Have her make a "to-do" list. Put the most important tasks first and the least important last.
- **Use her time wisely.** She can read on the ride home from school or on a break at work.

- **Avoid procrastination.** Starting a project right away means she'll finish more quickly—and won't waste time worrying about it.
- **Keep to a schedule.** If she works best after dinner, that's when she should do her homework. She can tell friends not to call after 8 p.m.
- **Get enough sleep.** Homework will seem less difficult when she's more awake.

Source: "Time Management Tips for High School Students," CollegeBoard.com, www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/college-success/116.html.

Being a helicopter parent isn't as helpful as you may think



Some parents always hover over their teens so they can rescue them when they get into trouble. Suzie got a bad grade on a test? No problem—Mom calls the teacher to ask about extra credit. Matt didn't type his research paper—Dad types it for him.

The truth is that "helicopter" parents keep their kids from learning important lessons. Their teens don't worry if they're caught for speeding, because they know a parent will pay the fine. They don't pay attention to deadlines because they know their parents will get the deadline extended.

But sooner or later, these kids are going to crash. In the real world, deadlines matter. Parents can't show up at college to type their papers, and Mom can't send an excuse when they're late for work.

The next time your teen needs rescuing, don't be a helicopter parent. Let your teen make some mistakes. Don't rescue him from his own actions. That's the way he'll

learn. And it's the way you can ground that helicopter forever.

Source: Foster Cline and Jim Fay, *Parenting Teens with Love & Logic*, ISBN: 0-891-09695-7 (Piñon Press, www.navpress.com).

Are you helping your teen make good decisions?



Missing curfew, hanging around with the wrong crowd, taking risks. Teens don't always make the best choices. Can parents help? Experts say *yes*.

Take this quiz to see if you're helping your teen make better choices. Answer *yes* or *no*.

1. My teen and I have talked about her goals.
2. When my teen has to make a choice, we first figure out the cause of the problem.
3. I help my teen come up with different ways to solve her problems.
4. I have talked with my teen about a problem I had in the past.
5. I help my teen think about the consequences of choices she makes.

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* answer means you are helping your teen make better decisions. For each *no* answer, try that idea.

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High School Edition

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Help your teenager prepare for new & different testing formats



The tests your teen is facing in high school will probably be longer and more complex than those he had in middle school.

He may also have different testing formats—more essays and fewer multiple choice tests, for example.

He needs to study for all kinds of tests, but certain types of practice can help him do better on different testing formats.

Here are hints your teen can use when preparing for:

- **Essay tests.** Your teen should find the main ideas in the chapter he is studying. Then he should practice writing answers to questions in paragraph form, using clear, complete sentences and squeeze as much into them as he can.

- **Short-answer tests.** These tend to be “fill in the blank,” so your teen needs to know the facts. Memory techniques are helpful for these types of tests. Making a mental picture of what he is reading may help, too. *Chunking*, which is learning facts in groups instead of one at a time, is also useful.
- **Problem-solving.** Your teen is likely to have these tests in math or science. To do well, your teen will need to know how to set up the problem and how to do the calculations. Daily practice, even if there is no assigned homework, is the key to success.

Source: Sara Dulaney Gilbert, *How to Do Your Best on Tests*, ISBN: 0-688-16090-5 (William Morrow and Company, an imprint of HarperCollins, www.harpercollins.com).

Daily routines work better than nagging to motivate teenagers



If you still manage your teen's every move, then he's only doing things because you push him. This is not motivation.

Motivation happens when teens feel, from within, a reason to act.

A way to create this feeling is to encourage your teen to rely on routines instead of reminders. Do not try to make these routines for your teen. This would be you managing him again. It is his responsibility to create and maintain his routines for himself.

Routines work well in these areas:

- **Homework.** Your teen can decide for himself where homework fits in best. Then he can make a daily schedule showing the time and place for him to work on homework. Remember: Unfinished

homework is an issue between your teen and his teacher. If he finds that his homework space isn't working out for him, it's his responsibility to fix it.

- **Chores.** Chores are done to help the family and keep the household running smoothly. Talk with your teen about his chores. Let him know if there are any specific deadlines, but let him keep his own schedule. Have him post the schedule in a place where he—and you—can see it. Point to it if he forgets, but don't nag.

Source: Jane Nelsen, “How Do You Motivate a Teen?” *Positive Discipline*, www.positivediscipline.com/articles/teen-motivation.html.

“Fall down seven times, stand up eight times.”

—Japanese proverb

Q: My teen was never a morning person, but this year she's worse. I cannot get her out of bed in the morning. By the time she's dressed, she has missed the bus so I have drive her to school. How can I get her back on track?

Questions & Answers

A: If she's getting an adequate amount of sleep and still has difficulty, you may want to contact a physician. There may be an underlying health problem.

Otherwise, lots of people who aren't “morning people” still get up and get to work on time most days. They've learned ways to cope. Your daughter needs to learn their secrets.

First, have her choose her own alarm clock. Consider a clock radio so she can wake up hearing her own music. Here's one case where louder is better!

Next, tell her she's in charge of her own morning routine. If she wants to spend 25 minutes on her hair, that's fine, but you expect her to leave on time. She may be late a day or two, but she'll figure out that you mean business. Let her experience the consequences imposed by the school if she is late.

She'll soon learn that taking a few minutes the night before will help her in the morning. She can choose her clothes then and set them out. She can pack her bag with all her school stuff.

Of course you should make sure you have something quick and handy for her to eat. A cereal bar and a piece of fruit will tide her over until lunch. Getting some fuel in her tank will energize her for a day of learning.

—Kris Amundson
The Parent Institute

It Matters: Respect

Respect for others begins with self-respect



You may have heard the expression, “charity begins at home.” It means that before you can help others, you

need to take care of your own family.

A similar concept applies to respect. Make clear to your teen that respecting others begins with respecting herself. What are the qualities of a teen with self-respect?

- **She accepts herself.** She realizes that she should always try her best, yet she knows that no one is perfect.
- **She values herself.** She takes care of her body, giving it enough food, exercise and sleep. She doesn’t harm it with alcohol or drugs.
- **She sees a future for herself.** Keeping her goals in mind helps her say no when faced with a difficult situation.

How does self-respect help your teen respect others?

- **She understands.** Since she accepts herself, she realizes that others deserve to be accepted. She expresses happiness when things go right for others, and sympathy when things go wrong.
- **She demonstrates** that she believes others are important. Since she values herself, she realizes that the lives of others have value as well. She encourages others to care for themselves.
- **She appreciates the hard work** that others have done.

Source: Barbara A. Lewis, *What Do You Stand For? For Teens: A Guide to Building Character*, ISBN: 1-57542-029-5 (Free Spirit Publishing, www.freespirit.com).

Let your teen know that rude behavior will not be tolerated

She rolls her eyes when you speak to her. When you ask her to do something, she ignores you. These are signs of rudeness. Odds are, if she’s being rude to you, she’s also being rude to other adults.

Take a look at how others in your family behave. If teasing and wise-cracks are considered “normal,” your teen is just mimicking what she sees at home. If you see that behavior, work on changing it.

But what if everyone else in your family treats people with respect? Then take action. Wait for a time when you can talk without losing your temper. Tell your son that you are unhappy with his behavior. Tell her that you expect her to treat others with the respect she wishes to receive.



It’s the Golden Rule—and it’s still the best way for people to get along with each other. The more your teen treats others with respect, the more she’ll respect herself.

Source: Neil I. Bernstein, *How to Keep Your Teenager Out of Trouble and What to Do If You Can’t*, ISBN: 0-761-11570-6 (Workman Publishing, www.workman.com).

Learn to approach your teen from a position of respect



You can talk about respecting others, following rules and being polite. None of it will sink in unless you practice it yourself.

A teen who feels respected might:

- **Treat others** as people of value—because he is treated that way.
- **Follow rules**—because he respects those who are in charge.
- **Listen to others**—because you listen to him.

A teen who feels disrespected might:

- **Argue a lot**—because he feels people won’t listen to him.
- **Ignore others**—because he feels ignored.

- **Resist authority**—because he doesn’t trust those who are in charge.

Steer him toward positive results by:

- **Being polite to him.** Speak to him the way you want him to speak.
- **Asking his opinion.** The words “what do you think” are powerful. While you can’t always follow his advice, you can at least listen to him.
- **Praising him** when he acts respectfully. Remind him that he represents your family at school and out in the community.

Source: Michael J. Bradley, *Yes, Your Teen is Crazy: Loving Your Kid Without Losing Your Mind*, ISBN: 0-936197-44-7 (Harbor Press, Inc., www.harborpress.com).