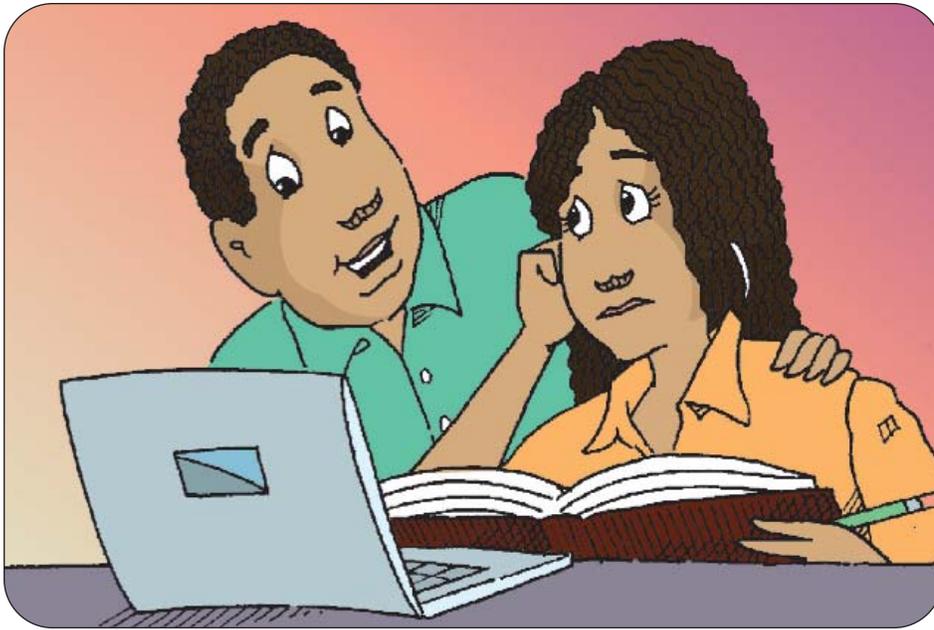


High School Parents[®]

Sample Issue

still make the difference!



Make your expectations clear at the start of the school year

High school matters. The grades your teen receives can affect everything from how much you'll pay for car insurance to whether she can play sports in college. So it's important to give your teen a solid foundation.

Research from the Harvard Family Research Project shows that there is one thing every parent can do: expect a lot. When you expect that your teen can do well in high school, she picks that up. As a result, she also starts believing that she can do well.

That means she spends more time doing homework. The result is that she does better in school.

Here are three things you should do every day:

1. **Talk with your teen about school.** Tell her you want her to do her best each day. Your teen may not be at the top of her class—but she can always do her personal best.
2. **Talk about next steps.** Help her see the link between good grades and success in her future career.
3. **Emphasize effort.** When your teen is feeling like she can't do her math or her English report, encourage her not to quit. Teens need to learn to stick with a tough task even if it's a bit of a challenge.

Source: E. Patrikakou, "Adolescence: Are Parents Relevant to Students' High School Achievement and Post-Secondary Attainment?" Harvard Family Research Project.

Attendance is the key to school success



School success is impossible without one factor: attendance. Your teen's attendance is the single most

important element for school success, this year and every year.

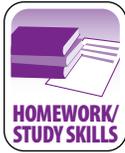
Research shows how important attendance really is. In one study, 75 percent of students who missed school regularly did not earn a high school diploma. That means a teen who is frequently absent only has a 25 percent chance of graduating.

So this year, make sure that attendance is your entire family's priority:

- **Never let your teen stay home** to miss a big test or to rest up for a big game.
- **Don't use your teen as backup** child care. Make other plans before your younger children get sick.
- **Don't make it a treat** to stay home. Any teen who is too sick to go to school is also too sick to watch TV, play video games or use the computer.
- **Don't schedule appointments** during school hours.

Source: J. DeKalb, "Student Truancy," ERIC Digests.

Better organization leads to better grades for your teen



By being organized, your teen will always be prepared. To help your teen stay organized, encourage him to:

- **Use a planner.** Before leaving each class, your teen should write down exactly what he needs to have/do/study for tomorrow.
- **Keep subjects separate.** He shouldn't stuff six batches of handouts into one huge binder.

Instead, he should use a different folder for each class. That way, his work will be divided by subject.

- **Use an assignment calendar.** Your teen should keep a calendar in his room and track every upcoming test and project on it. If the assignment is weeks away, he can jot down reminders. Encourage your teen to keep his calendar updated and to look at it every day.

Avoid being an overprotective parent to teach independence



Overprotective parents tend to “rescue” kids from problems to protect them from any pain or suffering. Kids often love this

kind of parenting—at the time. But overprotection can prevent them from learning the life skills they'll need as adults.

It's especially important to avoid overprotecting teens. Teenagers need to learn to take care of themselves, especially as they will probably move away from home in a few years.

To make sure you're not an overprotective parent:

- **Avoid rescuing your teen** from small problems. If she has forgotten her geometry book at school and she has homework to do, she'll have to figure something out. (Obviously, if your child is dealing with a larger problem, like being bullied, it's fine to step in and help her.)
- **Give your teen responsibilities** around the house. Knowing how to do her own laundry, how to make doctors' appointments

or how to mow the lawn will definitely come in handy when she's an adult.

Source: J. Nelsen and L. Lott, *Positive Discipline for Teenagers: Resolving Conflict with Your Teenage Son or Daughter*, ISBN: 1-5595-8441-6.

Do you find ways to spend time with your teen?



Teens pretend they want nothing to do with their parents. But they actually do want you around. It just takes creativity to

spend time with them. Answer *yes* or *no* to see how you're doing:

- ___ **1. We have meals together** whenever we can.
- ___ **2. I ask my teen for help** around the house. It's more about the talking than about the work.
- ___ **3. I go to my teen's games**, school activities and concerts.
- ___ **4. When my teen is watching TV**, I sometimes sit down and watch the same show.
- ___ **5. I talk to my teen** when we are in the car together.

How did you do?

Each *yes* means you're sneaking in time with your teen. For *no* answers, try those ideas from the quiz.

High School **Parents** *still make the difference!*

High School Edition

Published monthly September through May by The Parent Institute, a division of NIS, Inc., an independent, private agency. Equal opportunity employer. Copyright © 2011 NIS, Inc.

Editor & Publisher: *John H. Wherry, Ed.D.*

Available in four editions: Early Childhood Edition (*Parents make the difference!*), Elementary Edition (*Parents make the difference!*), Middle School Edition (*Parents Still make the difference!*) and High School Edition (*Parents Still make the difference!*). All four editions available in English and Spanish.

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Review your high schooler's responsibilities, make changes



This school year, take some time to review your teen's current responsibilities. Teens can grow up a lot in a year, and it may be time for a change. Think about ideas like these:

- **Has your teen gotten his license** over the summer? Maybe he's ready for the new responsibility of picking up the dry cleaning or running some other errands for you.
- **Did he manage to keep** to his curfew this summer? Maybe you could extend his curfew an extra half hour on Saturday nights.
- **Has he been begging you** for a way to "prove" he's an adult? Give your teen sole responsibility for the family pet—feeding it, walking it and even making

appointments to see the veterinarian.

Teens may seem apathetic at times—but that's just their way of trying to assert their independence and show that they don't really need their parents. But the vast majority of teens actually want their parents' approval. Divvying up the household chores shows your teen:

- **That he is an important part** of the family.
- **That you believe he's capable** of completing responsibilities.
- **That his newfound independence** has not gone unnoticed.

Updating your teen's responsibilities will show him you are proud of him and will also prepare him for the many responsibilities of adulthood.

Talk with your teen about the importance of respect



People assume that teens will be disrespectful, and then—surprise—they often are. Instead of reprimanding your teen for being disrespectful, have an open discussion about respect. Try to:

- **Talk about respect.** What does showing respect look like? What words would she use to define respect? How does showing respect in person differ from showing it over the Internet or a text message? Should there be a difference?
- **Talk about disrespect.** How do people show that they disrespect teens? How do teens show that they disrespect others? Has your

teen ever felt disrespected—by another teen, by another adult or even by you? How does she think others feel when she disrespects them?

- **Talk about the importance** of showing respect at school. Your teen can show respect to the teacher in simple ways—like coming to class prepared and on time. Your teen can show respect to her classmates by working quietly. And your teen can show respect to the other staff by following school rules and using good manners. By demonstrating respect, your teen is more likely to receive it in return.

Source: Rick Wormeli, *Day One & Beyond*, ISBN: 1-571-10355-4.

Q: There are times when I think my 16-year-old must have a hearing problem. When I tell her what I expect her to do (or not do), it's like I never said anything. I am really worn out by trying to get her to follow the rules. At times, I feel like just giving up. I want to enforce a curfew this school year, but I'm not sure I have the strength to stick with it.

Questions & Answers

A: Giving up is exactly what your daughter would like you to do. She's smart enough to realize that she may be able to wear you down. Then she'll get to stay out as late as she wants!

Your daughter doesn't have a *hearing problem*—she has a *listening problem*. So when you say anything, be prepared to say it again and again. Think of it as the "three times" rule.

Your daughter doesn't have a hearing problem—she has a listening problem.

Your daughter is going to test you, hoping you will get tired and just give up. So brace yourself. Let her know exactly what the consequences will be if she comes in after curfew. Then calmly enforce them whenever she misses curfew.

Your job is to raise her to be an independent adult. But she's not ready to be on her own at sixteen. By enforcing the rules every time, you're teaching her that you will follow through on your words. Once she sees that you really do mean what you say, you'll probably find that *hearing problem* will go away.

—Kristen Amundson,
The Parent Institute

It Matters: The Home-School Team

Get involved and stay involved in your teen's school



What makes the difference between a successful high school student and one who struggles? That's the question that student researchers in Kentucky set out to answer. They surveyed more than 4,000 teens. They read research studies. The findings were clear—parent involvement plays a huge role. Here are some of the things they learned:

- 1. Nothing takes the place of personal contact.** If you have a question, it's easier to ask someone you have already met. So plan to attend back-to-school night so you can have a chance to meet all your teen's teachers.
- 2. Attend school events.** They often are a time when parents and teachers can meet and talk informally. As Dr. Laurence Steinberg said, "Parents who attended school programs, went to back-to-school nights, went to see their kids play in athletic events or perform in musical and theatrical events," had students who were more successful.
- 3. Parents and teachers are busy.** You may not always be available to answer a phone call from the school. Be sure the school has all your phone numbers and an email address so you will be less likely to miss the message that your teen skipped fourth period!

Source: Youth News Team of Kentucky Conference for Community and Justice, "High School Students Have Parents, Too!" Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence.

Make time to meet your teen's high school guidance counselor

During your teen's high school years, he'll have many teachers and coaches. He'll take different classes and sign up for different activities.

But there's one person who will see the whole picture—who will follow your teen's progress throughout high school. That's his counselor.

Counselors can help you and your teen make wise choices when it's time to choose classes. If he's heading for college, the counselor will make sure he has the classes he needs.

Then when it's time to think about college, the counselor can suggest schools that might be a good match. The counselor will suggest some schools that may be "reach" schools and some that are more likely to admit your teen.



So when should you and your teen get to know the counselor? As early as possible. Make an appointment to meet with the counselor. Together, you can help your teen map a high school path to success.

Source: College Board, "Your Child's High School Counselor, Putting it All Together."

Try one of these many ways to help your teen's school



Your teen may not want you to help out in his English class. But there are still ways you can make a difference. Offer to:

- **Tutor a student** one-on-one.
- **Sew costumes** or paint scenery for a school play.
- **Serve on a school committee.**
- **Answer the phone** in the attendance office.
- **Sell tickets** at a school event.
- **Provide transportation** to school for a parent who can't drive.
- **Translate school information** into another language.
- **Help design a brochure** about your school.
- **Write an article** for publication in your local newspaper about the school's activities.
- **Handle paperwork.** Check with your child's teacher or the office to see if there are papers that need to be folded or stapled.
- **Set up email lists** so teachers can contact parents in each class.

Source: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, "50 Ways Parents Can Help Schools."