High School Parents®

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Enterprise City Schools
Parent & Family Engagement

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Encourage three resolutions to boost academic success

The start of a new calendar year is a great time to review the first half of the school year. How is your teen coping with the new normal of learning? Are her grades where she—and you—would like them to be? If not, it may be time for your teen to make learning resolutions.

Here are three to suggest:

1. **Be in every class on time** every day. Students who consistently miss a class (in person or online) or who arrive late, miss out on important information. Teachers don't have time to reteach material every time a student is absent or late.
2. **Read for pleasure.** Teens greatly benefit from time spent reading. Pleasure reading strengthens their reading comprehension, writing skills, vocabulary and more. Unfortunately, there has been a significant decline in reading among teens. So encourage your teen to spend time each day reading something she likes—a sports story, a thriller or a magazine. It doesn't matter what she reads, just that she reads.
3. **Reduce recreational screen time.** We are all spending more time on screens these days—whether it's for school, work or socializing. However, your teen needs a break. Ask her to turn off the TV and other screens for an hour or two each day. Encourage her to use that time to read, be active or just daydream.

Use the media to teach about consequences



Teenagers don't always take the time to consider the consequences of their actions. So it's important for parents to help them learn how to plan ahead. That's where the media can be extremely helpful.

Look for stories that highlight poor life choices. You probably won't have to look far. When you come across a news item about a student, celebrity or politician getting into trouble, raise the topic with your teen. Then, have a discussion. Ask questions like:

- **What was this person** doing that led to this negative consequence?
- **What might have happened** if the person had made different choices?
- **How will this event** affect the person's future?
- **How will others** be affected by this person's mistakes?

Talking about other people's bad decisions offers distance—and some perspective. It's a great way for your teen to think about what he might do *before* a challenging situation arises.

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Ask these four questions when creating rules for your teen



As your teen matures, she will need fewer rules. But you still need to set limits on what is—and isn't—allowed.

The key to setting effective rules for your teen is balance. She needs independence, but you still need to keep some control.

Rules will be different for each family. But the questions to ask yourself as you are setting them will be the same:

1. **Has my teen** had a chance to talk about this rule with me? Teens should have input; however, parents should always make the final decision.
2. **Will this rule** help my teen develop independence? Teenagers need to learn how to think for themselves. They need opportunities to make choices and live with them. But they can't handle every choice. For example, by high school, your teen should be able to decide *when* to study, but not *whether* to study.
3. **Am I setting an example** by following this rule? If you don't wear your seat belt, don't be surprised if you discover your teen isn't wearing one when she is driving.
4. **Does my teen know** what will happen if she violates the rule? Make sure you establish consequences in advance.

"Long before I was a success, my parents made me feel I could be one."

—Toni Morrison

Encourage your teen to use a variety of resources for research



Knowing how to research is a must for high school students. At this point in school, your teen needs more than answers. He needs to know *how to find* the answers.

The internet and the library are great places to start. But your teen should consider going beyond these resources for major projects. Exploring additional types of resources will build his interviewing skills, problem-solving skills and creative thinking skills.

Encourage your teen to:

- **Read published articles** on his topic. Sources of information are often named in the articles. Your teen might even call a reporter. Many are happy to share information and contacts with students.
- **Make phone calls** or send emails to experts in the field he is researching. To find experts, he can look online or call the public affairs offices of universities and businesses.
- **Conduct a short survey.** He could ask people a series of questions about a certain topic and include the findings in his paper.
- **Talk with teachers** and other school staff, such as the librarian. This is a good thing to do once your teen has already collected some materials. Then he could ask for suggestions on books and articles that offer a different point of view.

Are you helping your teen avoid the senior slump?



Ask any teacher and you'll learn that "senior slump" affects most seniors. They don't want to study. They have a hard time paying attention in class. In fact, many don't want to attend class at all!

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out if you are helping your teen avoid the senior slump:

___**1. Have you talked** with your teen about why he can't let his grades drop too much? Colleges can (and do) take back their offers of admission!

___**2. Are you making** sure your teen is attending all of his classes every day?

___**3. Have you planned** some fun senior activities with other parents that will give your teen a reason to want to stay active?

___**4. Are you helping** your teen find work experiences—such as interning and volunteering?

___**5. Are you trying** to relax and enjoy your teen? Next year, he may not be living with you.

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you're helping your teen stay focused his senior year. For each *no* answer, try that idea.

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Talk to your high schooler about the dangers of hazing



The high school years offer students lots of opportunities to get involved. While the pandemic has changed the way students participate in many activities, schools and organizations are getting creative to keep kids engaged.

However, as teens join clubs and athletic teams, they are sometimes asked to "prove" themselves. Often, this may involve unsanctioned activities that are dangerous or even illegal. It's known as hazing and it's something parents need to be aware of.

You may think that hazing only happens on college campuses. But according to research, 1.5 million high school students are subjected to hazing each year. Examples of hazing rituals include requiring students to:

- **Embarrass themselves** by wearing silly clothes or being called names.
- **Perform services** like running errands for members in the group.
- **Consume food or beverages,** from alcohol to very spicy food.
- **Participate in activities** where individuals are hit, hurt or touched inappropriately.

What can you do to prevent hazing?

- **Talk to your teen** about how he should expect to be treated. No one should have to be embarrassed or hurt in order to join a group.
- **Get the facts.** Hazing is against school policy and, in most states, it is against the law. Teens who take part can get into serious trouble.
- **Keep your ears open.** Is there a planned off-campus trip or event? Stay in touch with the chaperones.
- **Ask questions.** If you are concerned about an event or activity, contact the school. And if you are aware of an incident of hazing, report it to the school immediately.

Source: *Hazing Prevention Starts Now: Engaging Staff, Students and Parents in Promoting a Positive School Culture,* The Parent Institute.

Do you and your teenager know the high cost of dropping out?



Decades ago, a student who dropped out of high school could still live a comfortable life. In 1967, nearly half of high school dropouts earned enough money to be considered part of the middle class.

But today, most high school dropouts find themselves at the bottom of the income scale. Many of the jobs that allowed people without an education to earn a good living are gone.

Today, high school dropouts can get only low-wage jobs with little opportunity for advancement. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma have the highest unemployment rate and lowest median weekly earnings. Just by graduating from high school, teens can add an average of $8,000 more a year to their income.

Skipping class is often one of the first signs that a student is considering dropping out of school. If your teen isn't attending her classes regularly, deal with the issue now. Work with the school to get her back on track. By keeping her in class today, you'll help her earn a living in the future.

Source: "Learn more, earn more: Education leads to higher wages, lower unemployment," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, niswc.com/high_cost2.

Q: My daughter tends to put things off. If she has a big paper due, she waits until the night before—sometimes, until very late on the night before. She's bright, but her grades suffer. How can I help my daughter break the procrastination habit?

Questions & Answers

A: Most teens put things off at one time or another. But some teens are regular procrastinators. In addition to driving their parents crazy, these teens end up creating a lot of unnecessary stress—and they usually don't perform as well academically as they could.

To put an end to your teen's procrastination habit:

- **Talk to her.** Ask her why she puts things off. Is she afraid of failing? Does she like the thrill of dashing something off at the last minute? Or, is she just unmotivated? Whatever the cause, let her know that she needs to change this habit.
- **Show her how to divide** large projects into smaller pieces. Then, have her set deadlines for each piece. She may still wait until close to deadlines to finish each part, but bit by bit she'll get the job done.

  Once your teen gets started on a project, she'll find that it will be easier to keep working. As she finishes each task, she should reward herself with an enjoyable activity.
- **Encourage positive self-talk.** Saying things like, "There's no time like the present" can be very motivating!
- **Help her see assignments** in terms of her long-term goals. Learning how to manage her time will help her be successful in high school and in college.

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It Matters: Schoolwork

Practice makes perfect when it comes to math



Math is one of the most useful classes your teen will take in school—and for some students, it's one of the most difficult. Unfortunately, there's no single magic secret that will help your teen do well in math. It takes work—the best math students study every day.

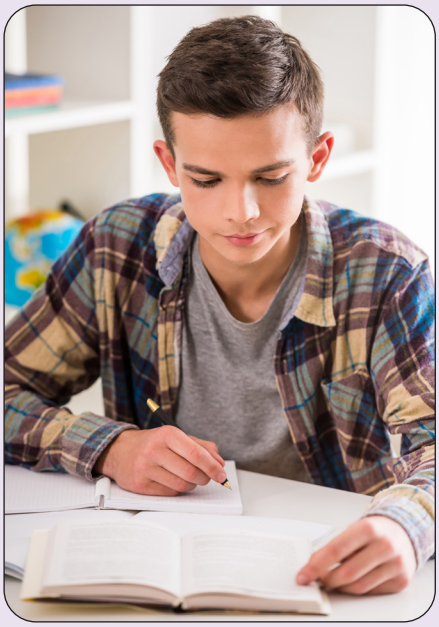
Share these math success tips with your teen:

- **Take class notes**—and review them each evening. She should write down any questions she has and ask the teacher at the next class meeting.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions** during class. If she's confused about how to solve a problem, she needs to speak up. Others in the class may feel the same way.
- **Review past quizzes** and assignments. They'll help her remember the steps she used to solve each problem—and she's likely to see similar problems on the next test.
- **Complete schoolwork** every day and allow enough time. She shouldn't wait until 30 minutes before the class to complete an assignment.
- **Solve sample problems.** She should ask her teacher for sample tests or find ones online.
- **Start a study group.** What she doesn't know might be something a friend can explain. She just needs to be sure to keep the focus on math, not socializing.
- **Avoid missing class.** Learning builds day by day—especially in math. If your teen falls behind, she should ask for help right away.

Help your teenager overcome common schoolwork hurdles

Removing schoolwork hurdles does not mean doing assignments for your teen—that should never happen. Instead, help him cope with these common problems:

- **Not doing the assignment,** or not turning it in. Let your teen know you are concerned and that completing assignments is a top priority. Offer strategies to support him. For example, he could make a to-do list each day and check off completed work.
- **Not caring about schoolwork.** Motivate him by connecting what he's learning to his future goals. And remind him that other activities will have to wait until his schoolwork is finished.
- **Not understanding** the work. If your teen doesn't understand the directions or the assignment, encourage him to ask a classmate or the teacher to clarify.
- **Too much schoolwork—**or not enough. If your teen is doing well in the class, then the schoolwork is probably the right amount. But if assignments consistently take all night, or if he's not doing well in the class but only seems to have a few minutes' worth of work each day, he should talk to the teacher.



Students benefit when they assess the quality of their work



Successful students understand the value of reviewing their schoolwork before turning it in. By taking an objective look at the quality of their own work, teens become independent learners who are more likely to earn better grades.

Here are six questions your teen should ask *before* turning in an assignment:

1. **Does this meet** the requirements my teacher laid out?
2. **Am I satisfied** with what I am turning in? Is it my best work?
3. **Have I given credit** to others whose work I used?
4. **Which part** of this project am I most pleased with?
5. **Is there anything** that I can improve?
6. **What have I learned** from this assignment?