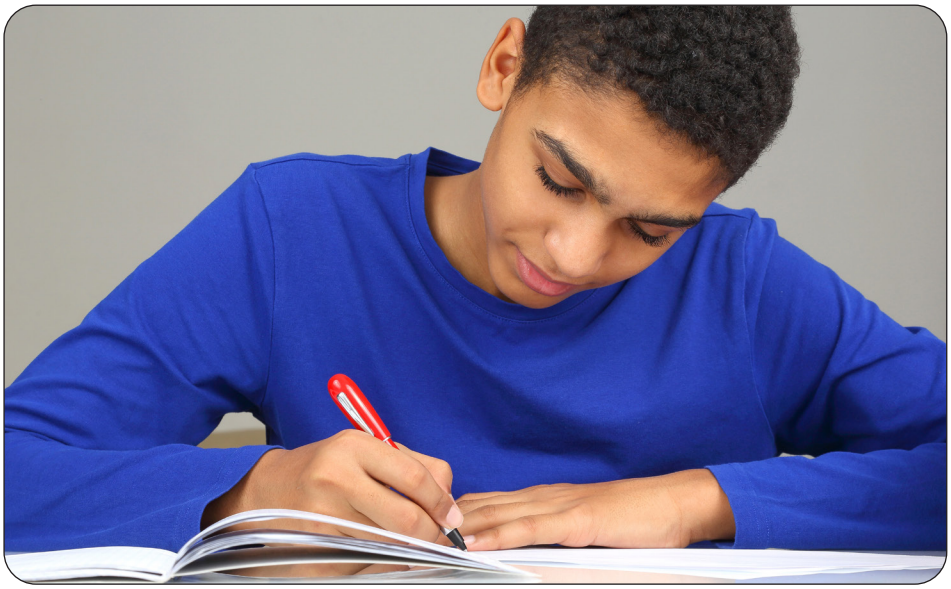
High School
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Enterprise City Schools
Parent & Family Engagement

still make the difference!



Show your high schooler how to take better notes

Developing an effective note-taking strategy will help your teen get the most out of his classes now and in college. Share these tips:

- **Create a structure.** Have your teen draw a vertical line down a sheet of paper, dividing it into two columns of about one-third and two-thirds of the page. He should take notes in the wider column.
- **Take notes by hand.** Studies show that writing notes by hand helps students process information better.
- **Create a list of abbreviations.** Teachers can talk faster than students can write. So using abbreviations will help your teen keep up. Try b/c for because, > and < for greater than or less than.
- **Review notes after each class.** As your teen rereads his notes, he can jot down questions or quick summaries in the narrow column. This review time will also give him an opportunity to add any extra explanations he may need when it's time to study for the test.
- **Supplement notes** with information from other resources. The textbook or a teacher-recommended website may expand on a subject.
- **Use color to highlight.** Some teens create a color-coding system to highlight key points in their notes. Your teen can devise a system that will help identify key details when it's time to review for the test.

Source: J. Rich, "Six Strategies for Taking High-Quality Notes," Edutopia, niswc.com/high_notetips.

Help your teen handle disappointment



Life does not always go as planned. The pandemic certainly helped to prove that! Learning to accept and cope with disappointment is an unfortunate, yet necessary part of life.

To help your teen keep her chin up when things don't go her way:

- **Encourage her to talk** about her feelings. Often, teens tend either to overreact or to clam up entirely. Help your teen express her disappointment in words.
- **Don't try to fix things.** You won't help your teen learn coping skills. Instead, be sympathetic and supportive: "I'm so sorry that event was cancelled. I know you are disappointed."
- **Be a good role model.** It may not be easy to share your personal disappointments. But it's one of the best ways to show your teen how you have learned to cope. "I am so disappointed that I didn't get that promotion," you might say. "I'm going to keep trying."

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Increasing play reduces your high schooler's level of stress



If you think you're under stress, talk to your teen. Studies show that today's teens may be even more stressed than their parents—and that can affect their sleep, grades and health.

An effective way to help your teen manage stress is to encourage him to build in some time for fun and relaxation. Here are four ideas:

1. **Make study time playful.** Ask your teen to act out a scene from his history book, or create a rap about a chemistry concept. Play can boost brain function. So, teens who learn through fun are more likely to remember what they study!
2. **Play family games.** Find a board game or video game your teen loves and carve out time each week to play as a family.
3. **Create art.** The act of making something beautiful can help your teen see things in a new way. Suggest he paint a picture, write a short story or film a video.
4. **Explore.** Teens are naturally curious. So, encourage your teen to be adventurous. He could go on a hike with a friend or check out a virtual college tour.

Source: Z. Stavely, "How to Bring Playfulness to High School Students," Mind/Shift, niswc.com/high_play.

"It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it."

—Lou Holtz

Encourage your teen to be productive over winter break



It's nearly winter break. Your teen is looking forward to at least a week off from school. She's probably thinking about sleeping late, staying up late and taking a break from all of her responsibilities.

While it's important for teens to use breaks from school to relax and recharge their batteries, it's also important that they include time for learning.

To help your teen be productive over the winter break, encourage her to follow a schedule. Expect her to:

- **Wake up.** Don't let your teen sleep in more than one hour past her normal wake-up time. She'll be less groggy in those early-morning classes when school starts back up again.
- **Work.** Your teen should schedule at least 30 minutes of schoolwork every day. If she doesn't have assigned work, she can review class notes and read ahead. If she is applying to college next fall, she can spend this time on her applications.
- **Write.** Ask her to spend a few minutes each day writing in a journal. She can write about anything.
- **Read.** Help your teen find something interesting she'd like to read. Then, encourage her to read for pleasure at least 30 minutes each day.
- **Contribute.** Once a week, ask your teen to take over a responsibility, such as a family meal. She can handle the menu, the budget and the cooking. She'll sharpen her math skills and give you a break at the same time!

Do you stand firm or are you a pushover parent?



Nearly every time a parent imposes a rule, a teen is likely to push back against it. "It's not fair! Nobody else's parents make them do this."

But what happens then? Some parents stand firm. But others seem to let themselves get pushed around. Have you fallen into the pushover parent trap? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

___**1. Does your teen** have a regular curfew that you consistently enforce?

___**2. Do you stand firm** on your rules, even if you know your teen will be angry?

___**3. Do you impose** and enforce consequences when your teen breaks a rule?

___**4. Do you only adjust** rules as she shows maturity and responsibility?

___**5. Do you understand** that your teen needs you to be her parent—not her best friend?

How well are you doing?

If most of your answers are *yes*, congratulations: You are not a pushover parent. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

High School Parents still make the difference!

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Proofreading can help your teen avoid careless errors



Your teen spent last week researching and writing a big paper for her marketing class. She used a variety of reliable resources and took careful notes. She didn't even have to stay up all night to finish it—impressive, right? Not if she turned it in without a second look.

Technology has come a long way in helping students with spelling and grammar, but spell-checking programs aren't perfect. If your teen types *their* instead of *they're*, the program may not notice anything is wrong—but her teacher will.

To improve your teen's writing and help her avoid careless errors, encourage her to:

- **Include proofreading** as a step when she creates a schedule for completing a paper.
- **Slow down.** By slowing down when reading over a paper, your teen is more likely to catch errors. Our eyes tend to fill in missing letters or words. She should also try reading it aloud—sometimes the ear will catch what the eye skips over.
- **Proofread more than once.** Some students even read a paper from back to front so spelling errors are more likely to stand out.
- **Understand the types of errors** she typically makes. If she always forgets to number her pages, that should be something she double-checks.
- **Remain positive** even when she doesn't catch all of her mistakes. Remind her that magazines and newspapers have many editors to proofread their copy, and they still make mistakes sometimes!

Remind your teen of test-taking strategies that work for all tests



Whether it's that all-important driver's test or a short quiz in math class, testing is a fact of life for today's high school students. While there are specific ways to approach each kind of test, there are some general strategies that will help your teen do his best on *any* test.

When your teen is taking a test, remind him to:

1. **Read the instructions carefully**—and then read them again. He should make sure he knows exactly what he is supposed to do.
2. **Look for direction words** that tell him what to do, such as *compare, list, describe, define* and *summarize.*
3. **Read through all the questions** quickly before he starts. He should think about how much time he has and decide how much time he can spend on each question.
4. **Read each question carefully**. He should determine what he thinks the answer is *before* he reads any choices provided.
5. **Skip a question** if he isn't sure of the answer. He should answer all the questions he knows first. Then he can come back to the others.
6. **Allow time to go back** and check his answers. Did he answer every question? Do the answers make sense? Are his sentences complete?

Q: My son tells me he falls asleep almost every day during his English class. It's his first class of the day and he says that the combination of a subject he doesn't like and the early hour just knocks him out. How can I help him?

Questions & Answers

A: Studies show that most teens are not, by nature, morning people. But they have to get up and start school anyway.

Sleeping during a class is a problem. First, your son is obviously missing some of what the teacher has to say. If he already struggles with English, this will make the situation worse.

He is also damaging his relationship with the teacher. If he ever wants extra help, the teacher may wonder why he didn't pay attention the first time she taught the material.

So work with your son to find ways he can stay awake during class. Here are two ideas:

1. **Enforce an earlier bedtime.** No, he won't like it. But since he can't meet his responsibilities in the morning, he'll just have to agree to the new schedule. Also, make sure your teen knows that bedtime means no digital devices. Don't let him keep his cell phone in his room for recharging—he'll be tempted to check it.
2. **Suggest a few changes.** Have him talk with the teacher and request a seat near the front of the room. If he's taking the class online, have him sit at a table in a room with bright lighting—not on his bed in the dark.

This combination of more sleep and a little more focus should keep your teen awake during all of his classes, even the early morning ones.

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It Matters: Motivation

Foster your teen's internal motivation



Teens who are internally motivated want to learn. They are not learning to receive a particular grade, a payment or a parent's approval. They are learning because they find it satisfying.

Most people are motivated to learn for both internal and external (learning to receive a grade or other reward) reasons. But internal motivation is what creates lifelong learning.

To help your teen strengthen his internal motivation:

- **Help your teen set goals** for mastering the material in his classes. He should set high goals, but not ones so high that they are unattainable.
- **Praise him** for putting forth his best effort and for understanding the material, rather than just for the grade he earns.
- **Encourage your teen** to assess how well he's meeting his goals. He should be honest: "I could do better if I studied another 20 minutes each night." But he should not put himself down: "I'm so stupid."
- **Remind your teen** to think about the learning strategies that work best for him. For example, does he retain more information when he reads material out loud? Does creating and reviewing colorful flashcards help him study?
- **Let your teen know** you believe in him. "These math problems look very challenging, but you know the concepts and you'll work it out."

Your teen can stay focused on learning with these strategies

For some students, the school year is already getting old. To motivate your teen to remain focused and do her best, encourage her to:

- **Learn the difference** between doing schoolwork and studying. Doing schoolwork means completing assigned work. Studying means making an effort to learn and remember the material. Make sure your teen allows enough time to study every day.
- **Manage her time.** Does your teen always put things off until the last minute? Show her how to break down those big papers and projects into smaller, more manageable parts.
- **Accept an academic challenge.** Some teens just coast by, taking the easiest courses and doing the least work possible. But to prepare for college and a good job, they need to step up. Is your teen taking rigorous classes? Is she doing her best? If not, how can she increase the challenge level?



Effective praise is a powerful motivator for teenagers



Praise can be a powerful motivator. That's especially true for teens with low self-esteem, or for students who struggle academically.

But as with so many other good things, praise can be overdone. Here are three ways to make your praise more effective:

1. **Tie it to specific actions.** "You rewrote that essay taking into account the comments your teacher offered. It reads so much better now—and I am really proud that you kept at it."
2. **Do it in private.** A quiet word while the two of you are in the car will mean more to your teen than a public, "Isn't my kid great?" Don't worry—your teen will find a way to let others know what you've said!
3. **Focus your teen's attention** on his own good feelings. The most important part of praise is helping your teen recognize how it feels to do a good job. So make statements that help him do that: "How did it feel to turn in a paper you knew had improved so much?"

Source: R. Lavoie, *The Motivation Breakthrough: 6 Secrets to Turning On the Tuned-Out Child,* Touchstone Books.