

Parents Still Make the Difference!



Four strategies can help your teen succeed in high school

What's the secret to having a great year? Ask the expert--a teacher. Here are one teacher's tips on ways your high schooler can have the most successful year possible:

1. Bring the right tools for the job. A carpenter can't work without a hammer and a saw. A student shouldn't show up without a textbook, a notebook and something to write with. If organization is challenging for your teen, have her use color-coded binders so she gets to English class with her English homework.
2. Do homework daily. In some classes, such as math, today's lesson builds on what students learned yesterday. If your teen hasn't done the homework, she may miss the entire point of the lesson. Then she'll fall further behind.
3. Learn how to study. Learning how to take notes, how to read a textbook and how to study for tests will make homework time more productive. Ask your teen's teachers for tips on study skills. Also, look in the library for books that teach this important survival skill.
4. Make up missed work right away. It's not uncommon for students to get sick some time during the year. But your teen should take the responsibility of finding out what work she has missed--and turning it in as soon as possible.

Do you know what your teen wants to do after high school?

High school won't last forever--even though sometimes it might seem like it will! Do you know what your teen wants to do after high school? Does he want to go to college? Does he want to get a job?

Discuss your teen's plans. Focus on how your education has helped you--or why you wish you had learned more.

With your teen:

- Research how to prepare for a career that interests him. How much schooling is required? Does he need to go to college or even graduate from school? Could he take any specific classes now to help prepare him?
- Write a résumé. Include jobs he's held, community service and academic achievements. Your teen can also add any special skills or computer programs he knows well.
- See if he could visit a person in a job that interests him. That way he will see first-hand the type of work that's involved.
- Begin planning for after-school jobs. It may take a little longer to find one that could prepare your teen for his chosen career path.

Attendance should always be top priority

Good attendance can make the difference between a teen who graduates from high school and one who drops out.

Teachers focus on the importance of attendance, but that message is more effective when you support it at home.

To promote attendance:

- Talk about your own attendance. Companies depend on employees showing up every day. Set a good example by heading out the door with a smile on your face.
- Don't make staying home a treat. Consider making a "no TV or computer" rule on sick days. Your teen can read or rest. He'll be less likely to say he's sick just to get out of going to school.
- Set a goal and offer a reward for reaching it. Start with a realistic goal at first--like having your teen go to school every single day for a whole month. Decide on a reward for his success. Even something as simple as lunch together can be a great motivator!