

# Helping Students Learn<sup>®</sup>

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

Title I Cooperative  
Educational Service Unit 10

February 2009

## STUDY SKILLS

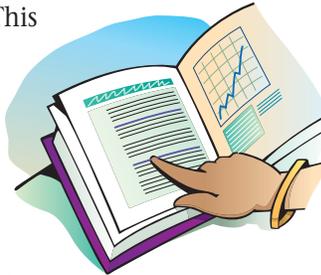
### 'Study reading' prepares students

Reading doesn't always have to be an "assignment." Your teen can read simply to prepare for class. This is called "study reading." Have your teen:

- **Start with the title, subtitles** and introduction. Notice charts, graphs and pictures. Flip to the end and read study questions and summaries. How does the material feel? Completely new? Related to something learned in the past?
- **Skim the introduction again.** Then read the first sentence of other paragraphs. Finally, reread the summary or last paragraph. This provides a good overall look at the material.
- **Break chapters into parts at home.** While reading them, take notes and write sample test questions. Make quizzes based on each part. These are excellent for review.
- **Rephrase material by answering questions** such as, "What are the main points?" "What details support these ideas?" "Have I reached any conclusions?" "What might the teacher ask on a test?"

Remind your teen to listen attentively in class. Study reading makes lectures easier to understand. It also inspires interesting questions and class discussions. When teens are prepared, teachers are impressed.

Source: William R. Luckie & Wood Smethurst, *Study Power: Study Skills to Improve Your Learning & Your Grades*, ISBN: 1-57129-046-X (Brookline Books. 1-800-666-2665, <http://brooklinebooks.com>).



## BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY

### Help your teen earn more freedom

Teens often complain that parents treat them like children. But if your teen acts irresponsibly, like a child, you may feel you have no choice. But you do. Break this cycle. Tell your teen you expect her to:

- **Keep her word.** If your teen follows through on commitments, that's a sign of responsibility. Trustworthiness is essential to receiving freedom.
- **Follow directions** and routines. Your teen should study and do chores without nagging from you.
- **Show effort.** It's easy for teens to work hard on fun tasks. But being responsible means putting your best foot forward at all times.
- **Maintain self-control.** Everyone gets angry sometimes. Doing it without insults or destruction is a sign of responsibility.

Source: Don Fontanelle, *Keys to Parenting Your Teenager*, ISBN: 0-7641-1290-2 (Barron's Educational Series, 1-800-645-3476, [www.barronseduc.com](http://www.barronseduc.com)).

## WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

### Get to know your teen's guidance counselor

National School Counseling Week is celebrated the first week in February. Counselors are trained to help teens with scheduling, planning for college, academic problems and social issues. Learn about all your teen's counselor can do to make his high school years a success.

## HEALTHY HABITS

### Is your teen getting enough sleep?

If your child is like most teens, she's not getting enough sleep. Being rested allows your teen to focus in class. So help her:

- **Cut the caffeine.** Limit soft drinks after 2 p.m. Encourage her to drink water.
- **Establish a regular bedtime.** Her body will adapt to a good schedule.
- **Trim the extras.** Don't let your teen make room for activities by cutting out sleep.

Source: Judy A. Owens and Jodi A. Mindell, *Take Charge of Your Child's Sleep*, ISBN: 1-569-24362-X (Marlowe & Company, 1-800-788-3123, [www.marlowepub.com](http://www.marlowepub.com)).

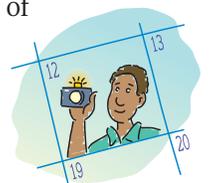


## YOUR TEEN AND YOU

### See through your teen's eyes

A camera can show people new things—or help them see everyday things in a new light. Try doing both of these activities with your teen. Here's how:

- **Let** your teen use a disposable or digital camera.
- **Have** your teen record a "day in his life." If the school allows it, he can include images from there.
- **Look** at the results together. You'll learn about your teen. And he'll probably learn about himself!



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### How can parents help struggling students succeed?

**Q: I just found out that my son may fail a class this grading period. He doesn't ask for help, but I'm worried. What can I do?**

**A:** Tell your son you are concerned. Then ask him why he thinks his grades are falling. Listen carefully to his reply. If he says:

- **He doesn't understand what the teacher is presenting in class,** ask him to show you some of the papers (assignments or tests) from that class. Ask him to tell you where he got confused. If you cannot help him, then make an appointment for you and your son to talk with his teacher. Be sure to take some of his papers with you.
- **He doesn't have enough time to do the work,** then help him get organized. Buy him an assignment book and a large calendar. Encourage him to make daily to-do lists. If he has a long-range project, have him break it into steps and give himself a "due date" for each step. Consider having him eliminate an extracurricular activity if necessary.

Once your son begins to improve, let him be responsible for asking for help and completing assignments on time. Your goal is to help him become an independent learner.



## PARENT QUIZ

### Is your teen dressing appropriately?

For many teens and parents, school clothes become a daily battleground. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you know what to do when your teen heads to school in clothing you don't approve:

- \_\_\_ **1. Do you help** your teen build self-respect by discussing the choices she makes?
- \_\_\_ **2. Do you talk** about the messages clothes send and why your teen might not want to send those messages?
- \_\_\_ **3. Do you share** stories or photos of some of the clothing choices you made as a teen—those that worked and those that didn't?

\_\_\_ **4. Do you discuss** how clothing that is appropriate in one place may not be in another?

\_\_\_ **5. Have you read** the school dress code?

**How did you do?** Each *yes* answer means you're helping your teen make good clothing choices for school. For each *no* answer, consider trying that idea from the quiz.

"Praise your children openly, reprehend them secretly."

—W. Cecil

## BUILDING CHARACTER

### Help teens face letdowns

Sometimes the teen years can be tough. But teens with a positive outlook are more likely to rebound. Teach your teen to:

- **Focus** on what goes well.
- **Move on.** After a disappointment, encourage her to look in a new direction.
- **Laugh.** It's still the best remedy.

Source: Barbara A. Lewis, *What Do You Stand For? For Teens: A Guide to Building Character*, ISBN: 1-57542-029-5 (Free Spirit Publishing, 1-800-735-7323, www.freespirit.com).

## DEALING WITH TOUGH ISSUES

### Be alert to substance abuse

Substance abuse can be a life-or-death issue. Your teen could be at risk if he:

- **Has a sudden drop** in grades, along with another sign of substance abuse.
- **Leaves evidence.** Are you finding beer cans or wrapping papers for marijuana cigarettes? Your teen probably knows exactly how they got there.
- **Needs money.** Teens who use drugs often take money from their homes.

If you're concerned about your teen, don't ignore the problem. Ask his guidance counselor for help.

Source: Linda Sonna, *The Everything Parenting a Teenager Book*, ISBN: 1-59337-035-0 (Adams Media Corporation, 1-800-872-5627, www.adamsmedia.com).

## ENCOURAGING READING

### Graphic novels motivate teen readers

Graphic novels look like comic books, but they're more complex. And they're *extremely* popular with teen readers. So if your teen doesn't like to read, ask a librarian to show you some age-appropriate graphic novels. You may find one that will get her started on the road to reading success.



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