

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

Title I Cooperative
Educational Service Unit 10

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BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY

Handle late nights wisely

Your teen wants to stay out later—and he's ready for the responsibility. But you still want peace of mind. Tell him that responsible people check in. They do not allow their parents (or teachers or other adults) to worry and wonder about their whereabouts. Setting a policy with your teen is one way to promote responsibility. Be sure to:

- **Set a curfew.** Determine what will work best for your teen—and for your family.
- **Expect him to keep you informed.** If he changes his destination, he should tell you. He should tell you how he is getting around. He should tell you who is driving.
- **Have a way to contact him.** If he doesn't have a cell phone, get a phone number for where he will be.
- **Expect him to tell you when he gets home.** If you are asleep, he should wake you.
- **Tie checking in to privileges.** Failure to check in limits a future privilege.
- **Save questions for morning.** Late at night is not the time to discuss concerns about why your teen was late and what he was doing.
- **Extend check-in to other parts of your teen's life.** He should tell people at school, work or friends, if he is going to be late.



Source: Kenneth R. Ginsburg with Martha M. Jablow, *"But I'm Almost 13!" An Action Plan for Raising a Responsible Adolescent*, ISBN: 0-8092-9717-5 (Contemporary Books, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, 1-877-833-5524, www.mcgraw-hill.com).

SCREEN TIME

Teens must evaluate online sources

The Internet provides a world of information for students. Yet not all of it can be trusted. To judge online sources critically, your teen can:

- **Ask questions.** Is the purpose of the site to sell something? Where do the "facts" come from? What information is not presented?
- **Check multiple sites.** Use a search engine to find other sites on the same subject. Seeing them

side by side can reveal their limitations.

- **Learn how things work.** Many search engines are "pay for play," meaning people pay to have their sites pop up first. Using several search engines can help.
- **Be wary of health information.** Double-check it with a doctor. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Source: "6 Ways to Make the Most of Online Information," PBS, www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/computers-teens.html.

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

Skipping class hurts teens

Skipping a class keeps teens from important interaction with the teacher and other students. And research shows that being in class is critical for a student's academic success. Students who skip class are far more likely to drop out, too. So check on your teen's attendance. Make sure she is in school and in every class—*every day*.

Source: Ethan Yazzi-Mintz, "Students are bored, many skip school, lack adult support," Indiana University, IU News Room, <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/4948.html>.

WELLNESS

Promote physical fitness

Teens who are physically active tend to have better physical health—including lower obesity rates.

Research shows that active teens also tend to behave better.



Teens who play hard tend to stay out of trouble. And teens who play sports along with their parents are even *more* likely to stay out of trouble!

Source: Medical News Today, "Wide Variety of Physical Activities May Protect Teens Against Risky Behavior," Medscape from WebMD, www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=40938.

BUILDING MATH SKILLS

Suggest math strategies

Share these tips to help your teen achieve on his next math test:

- **Look** over the test. Check problems you know you can do.
- **Start** with the easy ones.
- **Check** the value of each answer. If a problem is only worth five points, don't spend a lot of time on it.
- **Ask**, "Does this make sense?" about every answer.



Source: "Success in Mathematics," St. Louis University, <http://euler.slu.edu/Dept/SuccessinMath.html>.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How can parents prevent the abuse of prescription drugs?

Q: My daughter studies hard, and sometimes late into the night. Recently, I found that she occasionally takes a friend's prescription ADHD medicine. She says the pills help her "focus." She says it's completely safe. What should I do?

A: The use of illegal drugs has gone down—and that's great. But there's also been a huge rise in the abuse of legal drugs.

Your daughter fits the profile. Many good students believe they have to use drugs to get good grades. A study by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America reported that at least one in 10 teens had tried Ritalin or Adderall (common ADHD drugs).

Many teens believe that prescription drugs are safer than street drugs. But using any drug—legal or illegal—in a way that was not intended can be dangerous. These drugs are stimulants. They can raise blood pressure, increase heart rates and speed up breathing.

What can you do? Talk with her. Tell her there are safe ways to deal with stress, and taking drugs is not one of them. Be clear about your concerns. Make sure she knows that under no circumstances should she ever take medications without your knowledge.

Source: "Generation Rx: National Study Reveals New Category of Substance Abuse Emerging," The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, www.drugfree.org/Portal/About/NewsReleases/Generation_Rx_Teens_Abusing_Rx_and_OTC_Medications.



PARENT QUIZ

Are you reinforcing learning at home?

"Reinforcing learning" can be tough when your teen begins taking more advanced courses. But you can create a family life that values learning no matter what the subject. To see if you've created a supportive learning environment in your home, answer the following questions *yes* or *no*:

- ___ **1. Do you ask** your teen to explain concepts he is learning in school?
- ___ **2. Do you encourage** your teen to research and explore topics that interest him?
- ___ **3. Do you try** to bring learning into everyday projects?

- ___ **4. Do you discuss** your teen's opinion on current events?
 - ___ **5. Do you support** and respect your teen's talents?
- How did you do?** *Each yes answer means you're promoting learning in your home. For each no answer, try the idea in the quiz.*

"Telling a teenager the facts of life is like giving a fish a bath."
—Arnold H. Glasow

Instill respect at home

He rolls his eyes when you speak to him. He talks back. If your child is disrespectful to you, it's likely that he is also rude to other adults.

Take a look at your family. If teasing and insults are considered "normal," your teen may be mimicking what he sees in real life. Teens model what they see at home.

But if family members are respectful to others, talk with your teen. Tell him that you expect him to treat you and others with the same respect.

TALKING & LISTENING

Use conversation time wisely

When your teen is ready to talk, focus on what's important: doing her best in school, staying safe and being responsible. Avoid nagging your teen about smaller issues. Try written reminders about chores such as cleaning her room or feeding the dog.

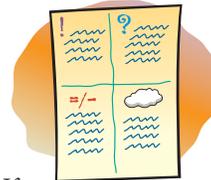
Source: David Walsh, *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen*, ISBN: 0-7532-6071-6 (Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1-800-223-2336, www.simonsays.com).

STUDY SKILLS

Focus on textbook reading

Does your teen's mind wander as he reads? To help him focus, have him divide a sheet of paper into four squares. Label each square—use !, ?, +/- and a drawing of a cloud.

As he reads a chapter, he can make entries in the squares. If he finds something interesting, he can put it in the ! square. If he thinks of a question, he can jot it down in the ? square. If he has an opinion, he can record it in the +/- square. If he is left wondering about something, he can note it in the cloud square.



Source: Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan, *Q Tasks*, ISBN: 1-551-38197-4 (Pembroke Publishers, 1-800-997-9807, www.pembrokepublishers.com).

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