

High School Parents[®]

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Education Service Center Region 15

still make the difference!



Research shows that a strong work ethic leads to success

In today's highly-competitive workplace, it's not enough for your teen to possess the specific skills a job requires. She also needs to have a strong work ethic.

In one recent survey, 75% of business owners said they were concerned about the lack of work ethic in their new hires. Employers are often forced to let people go because of their:

- **Tardiness and absenteeism.**
- **Failure to follow instructions.**
- **Inability to get along with coworkers.**

With a strong work ethic, your teen will be able to avoid these pitfalls.

A good work ethic consists of:

- **Dependability.** A company needs to know that your teen will show up when she is scheduled to and that she will do her work. Your

teen practices dependability when she shows up for school and her classes on time.

- **Initiative.** An employer will expect your teen to be able to work on her own, follow directions and keep herself motivated. Your teen displays initiative when she completes her work without being nagged by you or her teacher.
- **Interpersonal skills.** A company needs its employees to know how to communicate effectively and work on a team. Your teen works on interpersonal skills every time she participates in a group project. Remind your teen that she has the opportunity to strengthen her work ethic every day in school!

Source: M. Toneguzzi, "Survey shows work ethic of new hires has deteriorated for small business owners," *Calgary Herald*, nswc.com/high_ethic.

Combine teens' interests with volunteering



When your teen helps others, he's also helping himself. Teens who volunteer

regularly develop strong problem-solving and leadership skills. They are also respectful of and respected by teachers and classmates.

Help your teen find a volunteer activity that fits his interests. If your teen likes to:

- **Read**, he might volunteer to read to residents of a nursing home or to elementary school students.
- **Be active**, he could offer to clean gutters or wash windows for an elderly neighbor. He could organize an event to clean up a vacant lot or a park.
- **Work with kids**, he could volunteer at a children's summer camp or offer tutoring services at the elementary or middle school.
- **Be social**, he could sign up to be a peer counselor or a mentor. Or he could go door to door to register voters. He could even organize an event to raise money for a charity.

Three steps can help your teen get over rejection from a college



Applying to college takes a lot of hard work. And now, those decision envelopes are starting to arrive. Unfortunately, there's a chance your teen might not have been accepted to her top-choice college. What should you do?

First, get *your* emotions under control. It's normal to feel upset that your child is hurting. But a college rejection letter doesn't mean that your child isn't a good student or that you're a bad parent.

Then, give your teen time to get over the shock. She might not want to talk right away. When she's ready, help your teen:

1. **Accept that rejection hurts.** It's reasonable for your teen to feel like the rejection is personal. But remind her that many schools are overwhelmed by the number of qualified students they must turn

away, simply because they don't have enough space.

2. **Put it into perspective.** What did your teen hope to accomplish at this particular school? Chances are good that there are other schools with similar programs.
3. **Change direction.** Help your teen think about what's next. Is she still waiting to hear from other colleges? Could she take classes at a local community college and reapply to her dream school next year? Work together to come up with an alternate plan—and take action.

“A rejection is nothing more than a necessary step in the pursuit of success.”

—Bo Bennett

A five-day study plan can help your teen improve test results



Whether it's a chapter test in history or a final exam in algebra, tests are a fact of student life.

Encourage your teen to follow a five-day study program:

- **Four days before the test,** gather everything that will be covered on the test—class notes, outlines, quizzes and handouts. Arrange them by date.
- **Three days before the test,** read everything over. Make a list of questions you think may be on the test. Did the teacher spend four days on the defeat of the Spanish Armada? Odds are, that will appear on the test. If you have

a list of facts to memorize, make flash cards to quiz yourself.

- **Two days before the test,** look at the textbook. What are the major titles? What are the most important topics? Add to your list of possible test questions. Make notes of how you would answer these questions.
- **One day before the test,** quiz yourself. If you have memorized facts, see if you can recall them. If you have to apply a formula, see if you can do it.
- **The day of the test,** repeat what you did the day before. Tell yourself that you are prepared and that you will ace the test!

Are you helping your teen prepare for the summer?



Before you know it, the last day of school will arrive. If you want your teen to be engaged in productive activities this summer, now's the time to start planning. Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to see if you are helping your teen get ready:

- ___ 1. **Have you told** your teen to check with his teachers to be sure he will be passing all his courses? Otherwise, his summer could be filled with remedial classes.
- ___ 2. **Have you asked** your teen to consider taking a summer class? He could pursue an interest or complete a required class ahead of schedule.
- ___ 3. **Have you encouraged** your teen to start looking for a summer job?
- ___ 4. **Have you discussed** places your teen can volunteer?
- ___ 5. **Have you checked** with friends about possible internships available at their places of employment?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you're helping your teen prepare for a productive summer. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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Reinforce study skills to help your teen's developing brain



Research shows that teens' brains are still developing—and they continue to develop until they reach adulthood.

During adolescence, your teen's brain is learning to think critically, plan ahead, solve problems and control impulses.

While your teen may be able to process more complicated and abstract information, he needs to practice putting these new skills to work. He also needs to develop processes for learning new information.

Help your teen reinforce what he is learning in school by suggesting that he:

- **Color code materials** to keep organized. For example, your teen might write down his assignments in blue ink, new information in

red ink and details concerning a long-term project in green ink. His brain will categorize the information it sees in different colors as it processes what steps to take next.

- **Use charts and diagrams** to visualize new information. Seeing facts written out may help your teen recall them later.
- **Use process charts** to outline the steps of long-term projects. It will help your teen keep track of important steps and due dates.
- **Rely on routines.** Consistent expectations from you will help your teen remember the processes and rules for completing homework, studying for tests and more.

Source: P. Lorain, "Brain Development in Young Adolescents," National Education Association, niscw.com/high_skills.

Take action now to make sure your teen stays in high school



Every year, over one million teens drop out of school. That's more than 7,000 students each school day. While it used

to be possible to earn a decent living without a high school diploma, today's economy requires more advanced skills.

So why do teens drop out of school? And what can parents do if they suspect their teen is on that path? Here are some facts:

- **Students drop out** for many reasons. But poor reading skills are among the leading factors. It makes sense—students who are struggling to read can't understand the content in their classes. If your teen has trouble reading,

don't ignore the problem. Talk with the school. And encourage her to read when she's not in school.

- **They get "lost"** in the ninth grade. Nearly one-third of all dropouts fail the ninth grade. Many never recover. If your teen is in ninth grade, pay close attention to her attendance and grades.
- **They don't feel connected** to the school. Teens need a reason to come to school, and a love of algebra might not be enough. So encourage your teen to join a club or a sport. Talk with your teen's counselor. Any connection will help teens stay in school.

Source: "Why Students Drop Out," National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, niscw.com/high_dropout.

Q: My daughter wants to get an after-school job, but I don't want her schoolwork to suffer. How can I help her decide if she can handle one?

Questions & Answers

A: After-school jobs provide countless benefits for teens. They teach responsibility and money management skills (not to mention that they can enhance a college application). But before you give your teen the go-ahead to start applying for jobs, be sure you both agree that school is her number one priority.

To help your teen decide if she can handle an after-school job:

- **Discuss various options** for part-time jobs and the amount of time per week each takes. Mowing lawns on weekends does not require the same amount of time as working at a local restaurant. What would best fit into your teen's schedule?
- **Talk about other commitments** that your teen has. How much time does she need to commit to homework every night? Does she play any sports or help watch younger siblings after school? Adding an after-school job can help your teen learn valuable time management skills—as long as it doesn't overload her schedule.
- **Remind her to take time** for herself. Teens' lives can be stressful! Your teen should make sure she will still have time for herself if she adds a job to her schedule.

While after-school jobs build important life skills, make sure your teen knows that her full-time job is being a successful student!

It Matters: Technology

Turn your teen's smartphone into a learning aid



Today's teens use smartphones to send text messages, post pictures, check social media and play games.

Sometimes, they even use them to call people!

Why not encourage your teen to use his phone as a learning aid? There are countless free apps that can help him:

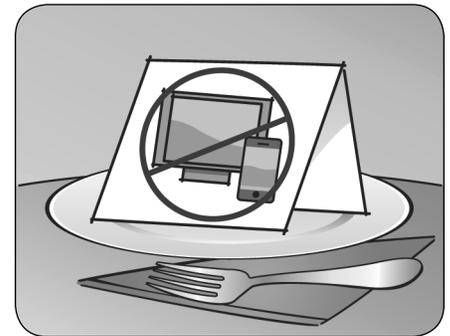
- **Prepare for college testing.** There are many apps that help teens master the challenging vocabulary for college tests. Downloading one of these apps will allow your teen to study new words on the go.
- **Study a foreign language.** Many apps will help students in their foreign language courses. Some apps focus on vocabulary. Others help students learn challenging verb tenses. Your teen should ask his teacher to recommend the best one for the language he is learning.
- **Replace a graphing calculator.** In upper-level math classes, students often use these calculators to solve problems. There are apps that will also do the job. Now he will be able to solve equations on his phone.
- **Read Shakespeare.** Instead of lugging around a huge volume of Shakespeare's works, your teen can download whatever he's reading to his phone.
- **Brush up on geography.** There are even apps that can help your teen become familiar with the countries around the world.

Encourage awareness & limits when it comes to screen time

Recent studies show that the average teen spends nine hours a day consuming media for enjoyment. And six of those hours are spent staring at a laptop, smartphone or tablet screen.

Experts urge parents to help teens limit excessive recreational screen time. Here are some ideas:

- **Encourage your teen** to spend one week writing down the amount of time he spends each day on recreational screen time. Challenge him to reduce that time the following week.
- **Establish no-tech zones** and times. The dinner table should be a place where everyone leaves their smartphones and tablets behind.



- **Create a tech curfew.** Teens should have at least 30 minutes of "unplugged" time to wind down before they go to sleep.
- **Don't use tech time** as a reward or punishment. It'll make it seem even more important to your teen.

Source: K. Wallace, "Teens spend a 'mind-boggling' 9 hours a day using media, report says," CNN, nswc.com/high_media.

Share these learning websites with your high schooler



Yes, it's fun to spend time playing Candy Crush online. But there are also some great websites that can help your teen with homework. Here are five of the best and what your teen can do on each one:

1. **The Learning Network from *The New York Times***, <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com>. Your teen can read the news, learn about "This Day in History" and see news-related maps.
2. **Chemicool**, www.chemicool.com. Your teen can find detailed information about elements on the periodic table.
3. **The Library of Congress American Memory**, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>. Your teen can listen to recordings, read digital texts and see still and moving pictures from periods of history.
4. **Khan Academy**, www.khanacademy.org. Your teen can learn about everything from algebra to art history. She can even take practice college entrance exams.
5. **Math Open Reference**, www.mathopenref.com/index.html. Your teen can find definitions of math terms and see examples of how to solve problems.