

# Helping Students Learn<sup>®</sup>

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

Booker T. Washington High School  
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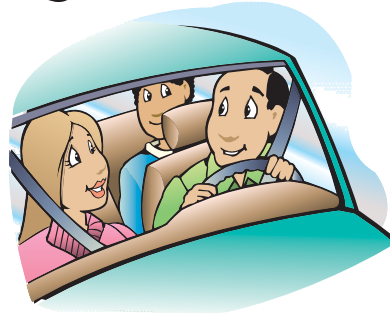
## WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

### Stay involved with high school activities

Parent involvement often dips in high school. But there are still ways to make a difference in your teen's school life. You can be a:

- **Cheerleader.** Whether your teen plays in the band or hangs lights for the school play, she needs your support. Mark your calendar and show up at activities. If you must be away, videos of events may be available to watch together.
- **Chauffeur.** It's not a glamorous job, but it's a great way to stay connected. If you're the one who drives kids to school or practice, you'll have a much better idea of what's going on.
- **Chaperone.** From school dances to band trips, high schools always need parents who can lend a hand. Even if you work full time, try to volunteer at least once a year.
- **Club sponsor.** Find ways to match your interests to school needs.
- **Communicator.** Ask if you can work on the school's newsletter. The school might also need help with other projects, such as a website.

Source: Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese, *The Roller-Coaster Years*, ISBN: 0-553-06684-6 (Broadway Books, a division of Random House, 1-800-726-0600, [www.randomhouse.com/broadway/](http://www.randomhouse.com/broadway/)).



## DISCIPLINE

### Make 'grounding' more effective

"You're grounded." For many parents, grounding is the easiest way to discipline a teen who breaks the rules. To make this punishment more effective:

- **Don't cut off your teen** completely. Teens need to stay in touch with their friends. If your teen has to be home, allow phone and computer privileges. This will help him (and you) through this time.
- **Think about the impact** on your family. Teens are experts at sharing their unhappiness with others. Decide how you'll handle pouting, sulking or the silent treatment.
- **Ground your teen** for an even number of days (no more than 12). Offer to take away one day of punishment for each day he behaves. This provides an incentive for him.

Source: Roni Cohen-Sandler, *Trust Me, Mom—Everyone Else is Going!* ISBN: 0-670-03068-6 (Viking Adult, a Division of Penguin Putnam Inc., 1-800-526-0275, <http://us.penguininc.com>).

## MOTIVATING YOUR TEEN

### Encourage your teenager to develop a 'sense of purpose'

Your teen may be motivated to work hard in school if he sees how this can help him reach an ultimate goal. To develop his sense of purpose, have him:

- **Imagine.** What important things does your teen see himself doing someday? What steps will help him succeed?
- **Write.** Recording goals and dreams (such as in a journal) boosts the chances of achieving them.

Source: Peter L. Benson, Judy Galbraith & Pamela Espeland, *What Teens Need to Succeed*, ISBN: 1-57542-027-9 (Free Spirit Publishing, 1-866-703-7322, [www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com)).

## BUILDING MATH SKILLS

### Discover math help online

It's late, and your teen is struggling with a math concept you don't understand. Where can you turn for help? Try the Internet. At Drexel University's [mathforum.org](http://mathforum.org), for example, you can browse topics and even "Ask Dr. Math" a question.



## MAKING TIME COUNT

### Connect through music

Teens use music to define themselves. Showing an interest can help you learn more about your teen. Request a "guided tour" of her favorite artists and songs. Ask questions like:

- **Who** are the musicians?
- **What** is the song about?
- **What** are the lyrics?

If some of the words offend you, talk about them calmly. Say, "Do you agree with that message?" Let your teen put you on the spot too. Your musical tastes may be different, but you'll have plenty to talk about.

Source: Bill Beausay, *Teenage Boys! Surviving and Enjoying These Extraordinary Years*, ISBN: 1-578-56042-X (WaterBrook Press, 1-800-733-3000, [www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook](http://www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook)).



## QUESTION AND ANSWER

### Should parents encourage teens to read slowly?

**Q:** My teen rushes through reading assignments just to finish them. I don't think he remembers anything afterwards! What advice should I give him?

**A:** To learn from assignments, teens must remember what they read. Your teen should take time to:

- **See what the author is trying to say.** Your teen should ask himself, "What does the author want me to learn?" Finding the answer will help him keep the material in mind.
- **Decide that the material is important.** People especially remember what they want to remember. Maybe the reading is not your teen's first choice. Then he can tell himself, "I want to remember this because it will help me in school."
- **Be thorough.** Your teen won't remember much from a casual glance through a chapter. He needs to skim it first, look for highlights and then do a careful read and final review.
- **Look for the familiar.** As he reads, your teen can think, "Does this remind me of anything I already know? If so, what?" It's much easier to remember something new when it connects to something familiar.

Source: Ron Fry, *Use Your Computer (Ron Fry's How to Study Program)*, ISBN: 1-56414-235-3 (Career Press, 1-800-227-3371, www.careerpress.com).



## PARENT QUIZ

### Is your teen developing study skills?

In high school, teens must take charge of their own learning. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're making this a priority:

1. **Do you suggest** that your teen estimate how long homework will take so she can plan ahead?
2. **Do you encourage** your teen to pre-read (skim headlines, captions, tables, charts and graphs)?
3. **Do you advise** your teen to review class notes, adding details and highlighting key information?
4. **Do you help** your teen see tests as a way to "show off" what she's learned, not something to fear?
5. **Do you support** your teen if she needs extra help, such as a tutor or new homework routine?

**How did you do?** Each yes shows you are helping your teen learn how to learn. For each no, try to change your answer to yes.

"Sometimes we're so concerned about giving our children what we never had growing up, we neglect to give them what we did have."  
— James Dobson

## BUILDING RESPECT

### Help teens manage anger

Does your teen have a temper or a tendency to yell? To encourage better behavior:

- **Be a role model.** It's difficult, but keeping your own temper is critical. When you stay calm, you show that self-control is possible.
- **Explain incentives.** "I know you're worried about making friends. You may find it much easier if you work on your temper."
- **Give compliments.** Notice when your teen communicates well. ("I can understand your needs so much better this way.") Thank her for her efforts!

Source: Neil Bernstein, *How to Keep Your Teenager Out of Trouble and What to Do if You Can't*, ISBN: 0-7611-1570-6 (Workman, 212/254-5900, www.workman.com).

## DEALING WITH TOUGH ISSUES

### Try to prevent your teen from becoming a dropout

Some teens struggle so much in high school that they ask to drop out. If your teen talks about this, meet with the school counselor. Talk about the effects of dropping out—and the alternatives. For example, some schools allow students to combine work and night classes.

## AFTER SCHOOL

### Think of creative ways for your teen to volunteer

If your teen is looking for a special volunteer experience, he could consider helping a child who is ill. Your teen might work at the hospital. Or he could organize a fundraiser. He could also collect donated items. Find out what is needed, and then help him get involved.

Source: Jenny Friedman, *The Busy Family's Guide to Volunteering: Doing Good Together*, ISBN: 1-58904-012-0 (Robins Lane Press, 1-800-638-0928, www.robinslanepress.com).



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