

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

Booker T. Washington High School
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NEXT STEPS

Teens need to be supported during big transitions

Your teen probably says he's looking forward to adulthood and independence. But in reality, this transition can be scary. Leaving childhood is a big step. To help your teen cope:

- **Be positive.** Look at it from your teen's perspective. If his parents don't recognize his strengths, who will? Give him specific praise. Instead of, "You're wonderful," say, "It really warms my heart when I see how lovingly you treat Grandma."
- **Develop talents.** You may think your teen does nothing but waste time on the phone with friends, but perhaps his talent is being a good listener. Whatever his abilities, give him time to pursue them. Once in a while, mention career choices that might flow from his strengths. For example, a good listener may make a good counselor.
- **Insist on respect.** Swearing, sarcasm and slammed doors demean your teen and the adult he is becoming. Tell him that rude behavior makes you sad because it prevents you from treating him like a young man. Remember to set a good example by staying calm yourself.



Source: Pat Spungin, "Ask Our Experts: Rebellious, Confrontational Teen," raising kids, www.raisingkids.co.uk/ASK/ex06_tee17.asp.

WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

Avoid becoming a 'helicopter' parent

Some parents believe they should hover close to their teens so they can rescue them if needed. Susie got a low grade? No problem. Mom will call the teacher and ask about extra credit. Matt didn't type his research paper? Dad can do it for him.

But "helicopter" parenting keeps kids from learning lessons. Then teens make bigger mistakes, such as getting speeding tickets, because

Mom and Dad will pay the fines, or going over their cell phone minutes, because Mom and Dad will pay the bills. Helicopter parenting catches up with everyone in the end.

Remember, it's okay to let your teen make some mistakes—even if you think you could have prevented them. You can help her learn from them. Someday, she'll be ready to fly solo, and you'll both be proud.

Source: Foster Cline and Jim Fay, *Parenting Teens with Love & Logic*, ISBN: 0-891-09695-7 (Piñon Press, 1-800-366-7788, www.navpress.com).

STUDY SKILLS

Prevent cramming for exams

Is "cramming" for tests as effective as studying over several nights? Experts say "no." It's better to have a series of study sessions. One night might involve reading and reviewing. The next might be spent going through flash cards. The last session could be spent taking a practice test.

ENCOURAGING READING

Prepare your teen for a literary summer

A reading-filled summer will help reinforce learning and keep your teen's brain sharp. To encourage reading:

- **Read** aloud to your teen.
- **Talk** to her about reading.
- **Look** for book reviews in magazines.
- **Read** for pleasure yourself.

Source: "Teen Reading," American Library Association, www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/tipsenc/tipsencourage.htm.



TRANSITIONS

Help your teen turn a summer job into a career

Your teen's summer job could be the first step to a career. Here's how you can help your teen:

- **Encourage** him to visit the school's career center or counselor.
- **Ask** him what he wants to do "when he grows up," and support his answer—even if it isn't something you think is practical.
- **Help** him write a résumé.
- **Help** him network or find an internship.
- **Take** him to work with you to see what "the real world" is really like.



Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers, *A Parent's Guide to Career Development*, Rochester Institute of Technology, www.rit.edu/~964www/Visitor/parent_pdfs/ParentsGuide_Career_Development.pdf.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How can parents help teens get enough rest?

Q: My teen is always on the go. I'm not sure if she gets enough rest. How can I help her with this?

A: Sending teens to school ready to learn becomes more difficult as they assume more responsibility for their lives. Many teens are so busy with school, family and socializing that they sacrifice sleep. Does your teen:

- **Get more than eight hours** of sleep each night?
- **Have a regular sleep schedule** that includes weekends and holidays?
- **Avoid caffeine** (including products like chocolate and coffee ice cream) late in the day?
- **Exercise** three hours or more before bedtime?

Unless you can answer *yes* to every question, your teen is probably short on sleep. This may affect her during exams and other end-of-year events. Help her by:

- **Planning.** Demands on teens multiply at the end of the year. She should schedule time for homework, relaxation, meals and sleep.
- **Encouraging.** Have your teen set a reasonable, regular bedtime goal. Doing calm activities beforehand, such as reading, will help her unwind. Turn off the TV and computer, too!

Source: Margery D. Rosen, "Sleepless Everywhere," Scholastic.com, www.scholastic.com/familymatters/raisingkids/sleep.htm.



PARENT QUIZ

How well do you know your teen?

Sometimes the lines of communication aren't as open when your child gets older. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see how well you know your teen:

- ___ 1. **Can you name** your teen's favorite music groups?
- ___ 2. **Can you name** your teen's closest friends?
- ___ 3. **Do you know** what your teen plans to do after he graduates from high school?
- ___ 4. **Do you know** what career your teen hopes to pursue?
- ___ 5. **Can you name** your teen's teachers?

How did you do? Each *yes* answer shows that you have good communication with your teen. For each *no* answer, consider using that idea from the quiz to change your answer to *yes*.

"Teenagers complain there's nothing to do, then ask to stay out all night doing it."
—Bob Phillips

PEER PRESSURE

Keep your teen from becoming a 'cyberbully'

Bullying has moved from the classroom to the Internet. And in most cases, parents are clueless. Here are some things you can do if you suspect your teen is a "cyberbully":

- **Tell him** what he's doing is cruel.
- **Remind him** of your family's values.
- **Let him know** that there will be consequences for cyberbullying.

Source: "A Parents' Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats," Cyberbully.org, www.cyberbully.org/docs/cbctparents.pdf.

BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY

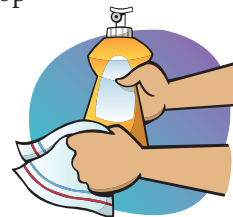
Encourage your teen to keep a 'decision journal'

Making good decisions is a skill that improves with practice. A decision journal can help. Have your teen write down choices she makes and how she feels about them. She should also write down the consequences of decisions. Over time, she'll learn from successes and mistakes. Experience will teach her a lot—without any nagging from you.

DISCIPLINE

Assign chores to teens throughout high school

If your teen complains about chores, it may be tempting to stop assigning them. But teens should pitch in at home, not just because it helps parents, but because it helps kids. Teens must see that they can contribute and be self-disciplined—things they'll have to do as adults.



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