

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

HIGH SCHOOL

Booker T. Washington High School
Dr. Curley White

March 2007

AFTER SCHOOL

Prepare early for summer success

Last summer, your teen put off his job search until school was out. As a result, he got a job he despised. It's smart to plan for summer now. To match work situations to your teen's needs and interests, ask him:

- **Why do you want a job?** Does he need to earn money? Does he want to try out a possible career? Is he looking for something to write about in a college application? Answers to these questions will help him narrow the search.
- **What do you enjoy?** What does your teen do well? What does he dislike? Someone who loves reading, for example, might work at a bookstore. Someone who isn't patient with kids, however, shouldn't work at a camp.
- **What have you accomplished?** Even if your teen has never been employed, he can put together a one-page résumé. Perhaps he's volunteered somewhere, won an award or been part of student government.
- **Are you willing to look hard?** Jobs can be hard to come by. Your teen may have to read pages of ads and fill out several applications. He should brainstorm with you and others about exciting possibilities.



Source: "Finding a Summer Job or Internship," TeensHealth, Nemours Foundation, http://kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/jobs/summer_job.html.

REINFORCING LEARNING

Reduce fear about oral reports

Many people fear public speaking. Yet there are occasions when it's necessary. If your teen is assigned an oral report, help her relax. Encourage her to:

- **Choose a fun subject.** If she's enthusiastic about it, others might be, too. Plus, interesting topics are easier to study.
- **Do plenty of research.** Your teen should ask herself, "What do I want to know?" Knowledge will boost her confidence.
- **Get organized.** Have her start with something that will grab people's attention, such as a surprising fact. Then focus on a few key points. Finally, summarize in the conclusion.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Your teen can talk to the mirror, to family or to friends. Give positive, helpful feedback: "That's fascinating! But make sure the whole class can hear you."

Source: "How to Give an Oral Report," Homework Center, www.infoplease.com/homework/oralreport1.html.

BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY

Stress being accountable

Learning to be accountable for her actions is an important step for your teen. An accountable person:

- **Keeps** promises.
- **Acknowledges** her actions.
- **Does not blame** others for her mistakes.
- **Does not overextend** herself with too many commitments.

Source: Peter L. Benson, Judy Galbraith and Pamela Espeland, *What Teens Need to Succeed: Proven, Practical Ways to Shape Your Own Future*, ISBN: 1-57542-027-9 (Free Spirit Publishing, 1-866-703-7322, www.freespirit.com).

ENCOURAGING READING

Online reading still counts

Many teens use the computer for homework, exchanging emails and playing games. But it's also great for reading, especially if your teen doesn't like books or magazines. Of course, you should make sure the material is appropriate.

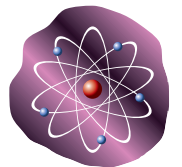


REINFORCING LEARNING

Boost your teenager's excitement about science

If your teen complains that science is "boring," remind him how much he owes to this incredible medium. Without it, he couldn't eat his favorite cereal or watch his favorite show. Together, you can:

- **Plan a "scientific" outing.** Check out a science museum. Tour a local factory. Or take your pet to the vet—and stay for the exam.
- **Watch a science show.** Many exciting programs have a scientific "hook." Check the local listings and choose one together.



Source: Eric Jensen and Tom Kerr, *Student Success Secrets*, ISBN: 0-8120-9488-3 (Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1-800-645-3476, <http://barronseduc.com>).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How can parents promote consistent grades?

Q: My teen gets inconsistent grades. Last marking period she earned A's and B's. This time, they were mostly C's. She's a well-adjusted kid, and teachers say she can do the work if she applies herself. How can I help?

A: Remember the old story of the tortoise and the hare? The hare started strong, but couldn't finish. The tortoise moved slowly and steadily toward the goal.

To encourage consistent grades, encourage consistent study habits. Here's how:

- **Ask your teen what was different when she earned high grades.** She may have done a better job of writing down assignments, reviewing notes, staying organized and studying every day.
- **Help her figure out how she can do these things regularly.** She'll need essential tools, such as an assignment pad, folders, notebooks and a calendar. Then instead of making daily decisions about when (and whether) to study, she should follow a simple routine. She might study after dinner, for example, and get the hardest tasks out of the way first. Once your teen improves her homework habits, getting high grades may become a habit, too!



PARENT QUIZ

Are you connected with your teen?

Keeping the lines of communication open is critical during the teen years. Here's a quiz to see how you're doing. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see how you're communicating with your teen:

1. **Do you listen** to your teen at least as much as you talk? *to change your answer to yes using that idea from the quiz.*
2. **Do you state** your views respectfully?
3. **Do you discuss** problems without losing your temper?
4. **Do you show** interest when your teen talks to you?
5. **Do you ask** for your teen's opinion about things that concern him?

How did you do? Each yes answer shows that you are communicating well with your teen. For each no answer, try

“Young people do not learn only in school. Their surroundings and the times in which they live have as much, if not more, influence on them than teachers.”
—Unknown

COPING WITH ADOLESCENTS

Count to 10 to calm down

Your son wants to go to a college party. What do you say? Nothing. Just count to 10. Why? Because while you're counting—instead of overreacting—your teen will politely wait for your response. He will appreciate that you listened to him, even if you say no.

Source: Michael Riera, “Tips for Staying Connected to Your Teenager,” *OurChildren*, March 2004 (National PTA, 1-800-307-4782, www.pta.org).

DISCIPLINE

Don't view teasing and bullying as the same thing

Everyone gets teased at some point. But when teasing is cruel instead of good-natured, it's time for adults to step in. Unfortunately, bullies rarely stop on their own. So if your teen is bullied (or bullies others), ask the school for help.

Source: Cathi Cohen, *Raise Your Child's Social IQ*, ISBN: 0-9660366-8-9 (Advantage Books, 1-888-238-8588, www.advance.com).

HOMEWORK

Use note cards correctly

Almost every article about research papers includes the same advice: “Take notes on index cards.” But what should your teen include on the cards?

- **Important facts.** Be sure to include the page where the information was found.
- **Quotations.** Put quotation marks around anything that was copied word for word. Add specifics about the source.
- **Paraphrasing.** Teach your teen to rewrite what she's read in her own words.
- **Source details.** Make a separate bibliography card for each source used. Include information required by the teacher.



Source: Patrick Sebrane, Verne Meyer & Dave Kemper, *Write for College: A Student's Handbook*, ISBN: 0-6694-4402-2 (Great Source Education Group, 1-800-289-4490, www.greatsource.com).

Helping Students Learn[®]

Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
Managing Editor: Patricia Hodgdon.
Editor: Jennifer McGovern.

Staff Editors: Erika Beasley & Rebecca Miyares.
Writers: Susan O'Brien & Amanda Blyth. Editorial Assistant: Pat Carter. Head of Translations: Michelle Beal-García.
Layout & Illustrations: Maher & Mignella, Cherry Hill, NJ.
Copyright © 2007, The Parent Institute[®], a division of NIS, Inc.
P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
1-800-756-5525 • www.parent-institute.com • ISSN 1527-103x