

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Safety first

Your teenager may want to make plans without having to clear them with you first. But to keep her safe, you still need to know where she's going and who she'll be with. Insist on details, and give her a curfew. She may scoff, but deep down she'll know you love her.

### Dangers of e-cigs

Although e-cigarettes may be marketed as a safer way to smoke, they're not. E-cigs, vapors, or "vapes" as they're sometimes called, are simply a different way to put nicotine into the bloodstream. And they are illegal for anyone under 18 years old. Let your teen know these facts, especially if you suspect that his friends might be "vaping."

### Kindness is easy

Being kind in small ways shows others that you care—and it's simple. Encourage your high schooler to show kindness throughout the day. For instance, she could carry the lunch tray for a classmate on crutches. Or she might give a quarter to a cashier if the person in front of her comes up short.

### Worth quoting

"The things that make me different are the things that make me me."

A.A. Milne

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the computer cross the road?

**A:** Because it was programmed by the chicken!



## Time to talk

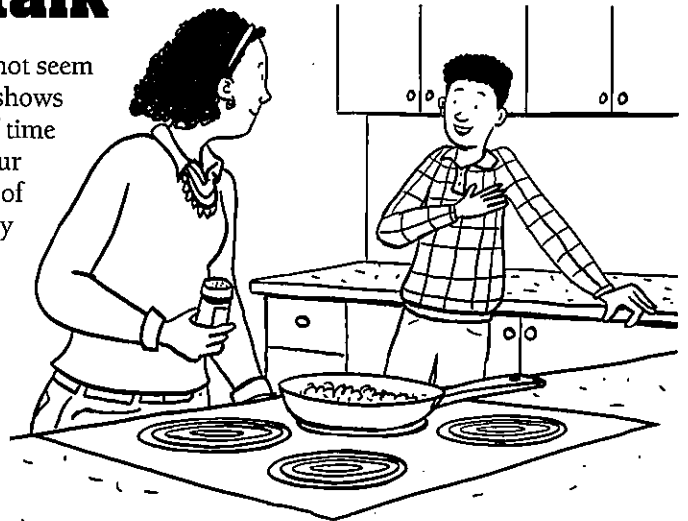
Fifteen minutes may not seem like much. But research shows spending that amount of time each day talking with your teen can keep your lines of communication open. Try these four ways to make the minutes count.

### 1. Chat with your teenager when he's relaxed and in a good mood.

Knock on his door before he goes to bed, or greet him when he comes home from an evening out with friends. Start a conversation about your night and his, rather than asking him a lot of questions.

**2. Watch for cues that your teen wants to talk.** If he has something on his mind—or just feels like talking—he may linger nearby while you cook or offer to go along to the grocery store with you. Encourage him to open up by casually asking how things are going.

**3. Do an activity together.** Your high schooler may feel more comfortable



discussing his life while you're taking a walk or driving to the mall. Be ready to listen extra closely if he mentions a serious topic like a new relationship or a friend who is in trouble.

**4. Reconnect after interruptions.** If you have to stop a conversation to take a younger child to soccer practice, for instance, let your teen know you still want to talk. ("I'll be back in 30 minutes. Can we talk more then?") Be sure to follow through when you get home. 👍

## I wouldn't miss it!

Teens who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate. Good attendance also creates a habit that can carry over into work later. Consider these tips.

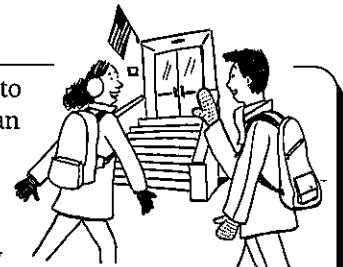
### Set expectations

Being out for even a day or two a month means losing valuable learning time. Tell your child that the only acceptable excuses are illness, family emergencies, or pre-approved college visits.

### Discuss results

Point out that missing school means she'll have to make up coursework. If she falls far behind, she may have to retake courses.

*Note:* Call the attendance line or write notes for excused absences so the school knows your teen is not skipping. If she does skip, contact the school so you can create a plan together to get her back on track. 👍



# Q&A The opioid epidemic and teenagers

You may have heard news reports about the opioid epidemic and wondered whether it could affect your teenager. Here are answers to questions about opioids, which include heroin and prescription pain relievers like OxyContin, Vicodin, and codeine.

**Q:** How can I talk to my teen about opioids?

**A:** Explain the dangers, including the serious consequences like addiction and even fatal overdose. When you hear sobering statistics in the news, such as the number of overdoses in your state, share them with your high schooler.



*I do if I think my child has tried these drugs?*

**A:** Signs of opioid use include shifts in relationships with family and friends, not caring about one's appearance, changes in sleep habits, and poor concentration. If you suspect or discover your teen is using drugs, contact her pediatrician immediately. 🍊

**Q:** What if a doctor prescribes an opioid for one of us?

**A:** Keep all medications locked up between doses. Also, promptly dispose of any leftovers. That will keep them away from teens who are tempted to explore medicine cabinets or face peer pressure from friends to do so.

**Q:** What are the signs of opioid use, and what should



## Parent to Parent Learning a language— together

My son Parker is taking French this year. I took it in high school, too, but I don't remember much. I thought I could motivate Parker by learning some words and phrases alongside him.



I've been encouraging him to text me in French occasionally, and I use a French-English dictionary to reply to him. Before we went to the grocery store together, I asked him to translate the list into French, and we had fun using it to shop.

Finally, I suggested that we download one of his favorite childhood movies in French. Since Parker remembered much of the story, this was a great way for both of us to pick up new vocabulary. 🍊

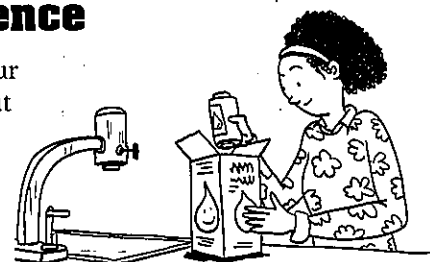
## How to increase confidence

Feeling confident can pave the way for your high schooler's future success, both in and out of the classroom. Try these tips to boost her self-esteem.

**Stay upbeat.** Encourage your teen with positive statements like "I know you'll rock your presentation today!" Also, share what gives you confidence. "I was a little nervous about my presentation at work, but I felt good because I had backed up my points with solid information."

**Give her responsibility.** Put your teenager in charge of home projects like replacing a water filter or a printer cartridge. Accomplishing tasks successfully, and seeing family members benefit from her efforts, will boost her confidence.

**Focus on what your teen can do.** Shine the spotlight on what your child is good at. Say she has a knack for explaining complicated ideas in simple language. Ask her to help her younger brother with his fractions homework or to teach the whole family how to play a challenging board game. 🍊



## Thoughtful course planning

Four years of math? Or three, with a computer course senior year? Whether your teen goes to college or directly to work after high school graduation, course selection matters.

■ Some colleges require more math, science, or foreign language classes than your child needs to graduate from high school. Suggest that he check websites for the requirements at schools he may be interested in.

■ Honors and Advanced Placement classes show readiness for college. Also, encourage your teenager to choose interesting, higher-level electives like environmental science or psychology.

■ Vocational courses teach skills that meet employers' needs. The school career center can help your teen identify interests and pick classes. 🍊



### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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