

September 2008

# High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips



### First bell

Help your teen start the school year off right by making sure she's on time for school every day. You might suggest that she set her cell phone alarm for each deadline: waking up, sitting down to breakfast, leaving the house.

### Communication central

Ever find out too late that a friend called or an appointment was changed? Make it easier for your teenager to be considerate by hanging a message board in the kitchen. Ask her to use it for writing phone messages and leaving notes, and do the same for her.

### After-school fun

School teams and clubs help kids make friends and develop new interests. Encourage your child to watch school bulletin boards and listen closely to morning announcements to find out what's offered. From the literary magazine to Future Farmers of America or the diving team, he's sure to find something to suit his taste.

### Worth quoting

"Unless we think of others and do something for them, we miss one of the greatest sources of happiness."  
*Ray Lyman Wilbur*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What did they do at the Boston Tea Party?

**A:** I don't know. I wasn't invited.



## Go for the goal

When your teen looks back on this school year, what will she have accomplished? A lot—if she sets goals now. Planning ahead can boost her self-esteem and motivation and help her do her best in school. Here's how.

### Think spring

Ask your child to picture herself on the last day of school. Is she satisfied with how she did on her final exams? Can she hold up her end of a Spanish conversation? Does she have a summer job or college spot lined up? By imagining where she'd like to be in the spring, she'll know what goals to shoot for now. Suggest that she write down her goals and put the list where she can see it (on her desk, in her binder).

### Find role models

Talk with your teen about celebrities or people she knows who have met goals. For example, maybe a sports star raised a target amount of money for a charity. Or perhaps a cousin got a short story published in a local magazine. Discuss how they might have worked to meet their goals. Then, have your child write down steps for achieving each of her goals, including "what," "when," and "how."

### Celebrate progress

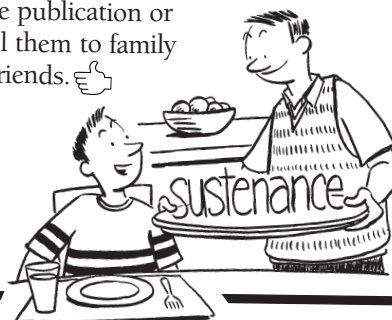
Be sure to recognize your teen's success with a heartfelt "Good job" or "I knew you could do it!" Encourage her to celebrate her accomplishments. She might have a Spanish movie night with a classmate after finishing a Spanish unit. When she mails her last college application, she could visit a nearby college for a concert or play. 👍



## Vocabulary time

It only takes a few minutes a day to build a better vocabulary. Show your teen how with these ideas:

1. He can get a new word by e-mail every day by signing up (for free) at [wordsmith.org/awad](http://wordsmith.org/awad). Have him announce the word at dinner, and see who can use it in conversation.
2. Suggest that he flip open the dictionary and choose interesting words (chiseled, marsupial, voracious) from five random pages. Take turns thinking of sentences using the words.
3. At [www.magneticpoetry.com](http://www.magneticpoetry.com), he can move around word tiles to create poems. Encourage your child to try unusual words. When he's done, he can submit his poems for online publication or e-mail them to family and friends. 👍



## In touch with teens

As your child gets older, you may find it more challenging to stay connected. These tips can help.

**Know your teen.** Be specific when asking about his day. Ask him to share something new that he learned, something that surprised him, or the best part of his day. You might spur conversation by text messaging or e-mailing him from work (Example: "Finished my project!") and then following up with a live conversation at home about both of your days.

**Know his friends.** Insist that friends come inside to pick up your teen rather than blowing the horn. Introduce yourself and



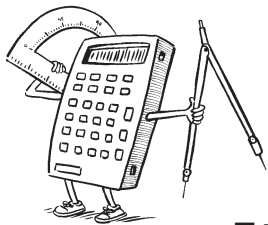
make conversation: "Think the football team will have a winning season this year?" Let your child invite a buddy to your family camping trip or over for dinner.

**Know his school.** E-mail or call teachers regularly. Join the parent-teacher group, and offer to volunteer when you can (make copies in the office, help organize a post-prom party). Whenever possible, attend your high schooler's events and performances. Stop to talk to the coach or instructor, as well as parents of your child's friends. 👍



## How to succeed in math

Whether your high schooler is starting algebra or tackling calculus this semester, share this formula for success:



■ Double-check all work. Minor arithmetic errors can make an entire answer wrong.

■ Maintain a list of math formulas to use for homework and studying. Include sample problems to show how the formulas are used.

■ Get help right away. It can be tough to catch up when you fall behind. Talk to your teacher, consult an older sibling, or ask a classmate who understands the material.

■ Keep math supplies handy. Examples: calculator, protractor, compass.

■ Use math in daily life. Figure the tip at a restaurant, decide how many pizzas to order for a party, or calculate the car's gas mileage. 👍

## Parent to Parent School-year socializing

This summer, we let our son go out more often and stay out later than during the school year. When classes started, he complained we were "too strict." I told Jack we could compromise—as long as he keeps up his grades.

We agreed that if he finishes homework on weekday afternoons, he can visit friends after dinner. We also worked out an early curfew for school nights and a later one for weekends.

Jack set aside time on Sunday afternoons for studying and decided to take Saturdays off as long as he doesn't have a project or big test coming up.

I let my son know that if his grades fall, he can't go out on weeknights. I think our plan will help Jack balance friends and schoolwork. 👍



## Q & A Chores and consequences

**Q** When I ask my daughter Hailey to do chores, she puts them off for so long that I sometimes end up doing them myself. How can I motivate her?

**A** Start by explaining that if she doesn't do her chores promptly, she will have extra work to do.

Say she's responsible for walking the dog. If she forgets and the dog makes a mess in

the house, she'll have to clean it up. If she doesn't rake the leaves, her brother won't be able to mow, so she'll need to do both chores.

Also, choose jobs with built-in benefits for your teen. You might put her in charge of making the grocery list.

Show her how to check the pantry and refrigerator to see what's needed. If she follows through, she'll be more apt to get her special requests (red grapes, cinnamon oatmeal). 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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