

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Study-group strategy

To help your teen get the most out of her study groups, whether virtual or in person, suggest setting an agenda for each session. Members might decide that everyone will write three sample problems to share or bring notes on one section of a textbook chapter. They'll stay focused and make the most of their time.

### Raise a lifelong learner

Show your child that learning doesn't stop when he finishes high school or college. Share examples of how you continue learning, like taking a training course at work or watching a NASA documentary at home. Also, mention little things you discover. ("Did you know that a banana is technically a berry?")

### Thank you, teachers!

Hearing from students means a lot to teachers. Encourage your teen to write a thank-you note to each of her teachers and include specific things she enjoyed about her classes. Or she could mention what she'll take away from them. She can drop off or email the note on the last day of school.

### Worth quoting

"Be yourself; everyone else is taken."  
Oscar Wilde

### Just for fun



**Q:** What do you get when you cross a cow with a trampoline?

**A:** A milkshake!

## A break from school—not from learning

After a school year like no other, your high schooler is probably ready for a break. But he also needs to be ready for next year! Try these teen-friendly ways to keep the learning going all summer long.

### Match activities to goals

Encourage your teenager to think of any subjects he struggled with or wants a head start on for the fall. Maybe that's algebra, biology, and Spanish. Then, challenge him to list fun activities related to each subject. *Examples:* Do math brainteasers and puzzles, go on a habitat scavenger hunt, plan Spanish dinner-and-movie nights.

### Be an entrepreneur

Your child can recruit friends to launch a summer business like lawn care or virtual tech support. They'll need to write a business plan, come up with a budget, decide on pricing, and advertise. Everyone can take on a role based on



their strengths. Who will design flyers? Shop for supplies? Schedule customers?

### Explore careers

Suggest that your teen look to the future and choose careers to learn about. If he'd like to be a writer, encourage him to visit library and bookstore websites to find out about upcoming author talks. Ahead of time, he could read books by the author and list questions to ask. Or if he's interested in music, he might research jobs like sound engineer, radio DJ, and music teacher. 👍

## Boost parent-teen bonds

During the teen years, it's easy for parents and children to drift apart. Luckily, you can shift that drift into reverse. Here are a few ideas:

- Plan special outings with your teenager.
- Send texts, emails, or letters to your child when you're apart.
- Show an interest in your teen's hobbies.
- Keep track of your child's school and summer schedules so you'll know what her days are like and have ideas for questions to ask her.
- Share some of the same books and movies—they're great conversation starters.
- Ask your high schooler for her opinion on a problem or situation of your own. 👍



# Guidelines for home-alone teens

Whether your high schooler is home alone for most of the day or just occasionally, these guidelines can help her stay healthy, safe, and productive.

**Share the basics.** Make sure your teen has a list of emergency contacts (neighbor, aunt) and knows when to use them. Remind her not to talk about being alone on social media and to disable location-sharing on her phone.

**Provide structure.** When your child is on her own, it's easy to fall into an unhealthy habit of sleeping all morning and playing video games all afternoon. Talk about expectations. You might



agree that she'll wake up at a certain time and get outside for exercise each day.

**Set clear rules.** Can your teen order food? Have anyone over? Use the car? Discuss rules, and role-play how to handle sticky situations that might occur, like if a friend shows up with alcohol.

**Schedule check-ins.** Arrange set times each day that she's expected to check in with you, by phone or text. Also, you might have her call or text you if she leaves the house and when she's home again. 👍



## Parent to Parent First steps on college essays

As a rising senior, my daughter Giana is beginning the college application process. She was nervous about writing her admission essays, so she asked her school counselor for advice.

First, he said that summer is a great time to write essays. The Common Application prompts are now available, and she won't have schoolwork competing for her time.

Then, the counselor said to think about her strengths and interests:

What is she passionate about?  
What makes her special? He stressed that colleges want to learn



something that's not obvious from her application. She could highlight something she learned about herself or a challenge she overcame, for instance.

The counselor also suggested leaving time to get feedback from others, make revisions, and proofread her essay. Giana's feeling more confident now. And I'm excited to read what she comes up with! 👍

## Q & A Being assertive

**Q** I've noticed that my son says things like "Whatever you guys want" when he's in a group. How can I encourage him to be more assertive?

**A** Speaking up for what you want or need is an important skill. Too-passive teenagers might lack the confidence to ask for what they want or worry that others will think their ideas are silly.

On the other hand, too-aggressive teens can steamroll over everyone else.

To help your son find the right balance, remind him that everyone's needs and ideas have value, including his own. If his friends are picking a topic for their group project, for instance, let him know it's okay to offer an opinion, even if his friends disagree.

The next time he's tempted to answer "Whatever," he could swap in an "I" statement. ("I think a project related to DNA would be interesting.") With time, he'll get used to asking for what he wants, respectfully. 👍



## Summertime vocabulary boosters

Why should your high schooler settle for a big vocabulary when he could have a gargantuan one? Share these entertaining word-builders with him.

### Make word continuums

Ask your child to think of two words that are extreme opposites (*freezing*, *boiling*). He should write one at the top of a sheet of paper and the other at the bottom. Challenge family members to add words on the "continuum" in between (*chilly*, *toasty*, *sizzling*).

### Find words in action

Make vocabulary boosting a family adventure this summer. Get a word-of-the-day calendar, or print out words from an online dictionary. Each day, post a word and its definition on the refrigerator (*deference*: respect or esteem owed to a superior or an elder). Encourage everyone to look for examples of the word or concept.

Over dinner, talk about what you found. ("The cashier showed *deference* to an older customer.") 👍



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
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www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5605