

A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Teen Get the Most Out of High School

This guide was developed to provide parents with information they can use to help their teenagers be successful in high school.

Parents want their children to do well in high school but sometimes it is a challenge to figure out how to support them. High school is a time when parent involvement is critical but often not present. Following are some hints on how to help your teen get the most out of high school.

Help your child show up at school with a good attitude and ready to learn

Studies indicate that showing up is important but not sufficient for school success. Physical and mental states are important factors in getting the most from school.

- Keep tabs on school attendance. Check report card attendance reports. If you suspect a problem, immediately call the school. Do not encourage your child to skip school for special trips or activities not related to school such as a family vacation or an outing with friends. That makes school seem less important than having fun.
- Make sure your teen gets plenty of sleep. Recent studies show that teenagers need nine or more hours of sleep nightly and that students earning As and Bs generally are getting to bed earlier than students with lower grades.
- Don't accept the "I'm never gonna use this after high school" excuse for not working hard in a particular class. For example, algebra may not be everybody's favorite subject, but studies show that courses like algebra are critically important in college acceptance and achievement.
- If you have a senior, beware of "senior slump." Recent reports indicate that students may consider the last year of high school a waste of time. However, students who waste their senior year are often unprepared for college-level work even if they took challenging courses during their earlier high school years.

Help organize time and materials

Just because students are in high school does not guarantee they are all prepared to do high school work, especially long-term projects, on their own.

- Help your teen keep an assignment calendar with dates for long-term projects as well as daily homework. Review the calendar at the beginning of the week to plan how time will be used and make allowances for other activities such as sports and clubs.
- Help your teen divide long-term assignments into smaller tasks and develop a timeline for when pieces should be finished in order to have the entire assignment completed on time.
- Make sure there is a place for quiet study away from the television and telephone along with a place to keep school materials, including materials necessary for long-term assignments.

Take an interest

Studies show that parent involvement drops dramatically as students move from elementary school into middle and high school. Yet given the complexities of today's high schools, this is a time when many students are most in need of parental support and involvement.

- You might not understand a subject such as physics or early American literature but you can still listen to your teen talk about what is happening in class. Also listen to what is happening outside of class. Listen to what your teen is trying to say without immediately judging or offering advice.
- Encourage your teen to join a club or sport at school. Outside activities are educational and often increase students' interest in school.
- Help your teens put their concerns or problems into words and encourage them to try and figure out possible solutions or coping strategies.
- Try to find at least one teacher with whom you can communicate regularly for updates or advice on your teen's general well-being in high school.

The ultimate goal is to help students become self-sufficient managers of their time and resources in order to get the most out of high school. They may need your help even if they don't realize it. Help them to develop habits and strategies for greater

achievement while encouraging them to take increasing responsibility for their work.

Resources

Kidsource

www.kidsource.com/education/middlehigh.html

The Public School Parent's Network

www.psparents.net

Family Haven

www.familyhaven.com/parenting/helping/homework.html



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www.pta.org