

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Being gracious

Your teen can practice being kind and courteous when you have holiday guests or visit others. Encourage him to answer questions pleasantly, then ask them questions. (“I’m taking Spanish and chemistry this year, thanks for asking. How’s your new job going?”) Listening to their answers shows he cares about what they have to say.

### Finish college applications

With college application deadlines approaching, now’s the time for your high school senior to finish gathering letters of recommendation, order copies of her transcript, make sure SAT or ACT scores were sent to schools she’s applying to, and put final touches on essays. Have her create a schedule—listing tasks in order by application deadlines.

### Parent-teacher conferences

Fall conferences are a great opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss your child’s progress and mention any concerns. Write down questions to ask, consulting your teen for his thoughts. Being involved in your high schooler’s academics will make him feel supported and help him learn better.

### Worth quoting

“It’s okay to make mistakes. Mistakes are our teachers—they help us to learn.” *John Bradshaw*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why are bulldogs so wrinkled?

**A:** Because you can’t iron them.



## Homework habits

Keeping up with homework does more than raise grades—it has life-long benefits. A strong work ethic will pay off when your teenager is living by herself and holding down a job. These tips will help.

### Get organized

Encourage your high schooler to set up a “home office” where she can spread out books and papers and avoid distractions like siblings and television. She should keep supplies and tools (calculator, dictionary) handy, so she doesn’t have to interrupt her flow when she needs something. *Tip:* Remind her that completed assignments should always go straight into her backpack for turning in when they’re due.

### Stay alert

People focus better when they’re well rested and well fed. Teach your teen to pay attention to her needs and to recharge with short breaks or healthy snacks. Then, she’ll be less likely to give up or do sloppy work. *Tip:* Suggest that



she look over important assignments with fresh eyes in the morning—she may catch mistakes when she’s refreshed.

### Be independent

Rather than always turning to you with a question, your child can make a note and continue working. She might figure out the answer—or where to find it—without your help. In the process, she’ll learn to rely on herself, and she’ll build self-confidence. *Tip:* If she’s still stumped, ask what strategies she has tried, or suggest a new approach (look up a term, revise a theory). 👍

## Marijuana: Still not safe for teens

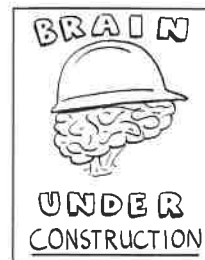
With marijuana now legal for adults in some states, teens may be confused about its dangers. Share these myths and realities with your child.

**Myth:** “If it’s legal, it can’t be that bad for teenagers.”

**Reality:** Marijuana is illegal in every state for the under-21 crowd. Point out that it’s especially harmful to your teen’s developing brain. He’s still learning to reason and make good decisions, skills that marijuana can impair for days or even weeks after use.

**Myth:** “It’s safer if you don’t smoke it.”

**Reality:** Marijuana edibles, such as brownies and gummy candies, often contain high doses of THC (pot’s main ingredient). Explain that it takes longer to feel THC’s effects when it’s eaten, which can lead to consuming dangerous amounts. *Note:* These products are often packaged to look like popular candy brands, so encourage him to read labels and to decline anything with THC. No label? No thanks! 👍



## Responsible me!

One of the best ways to turn your high schooler into a responsible adult is to gradually give him more responsibility—and to expect more from him. Try these ideas.

**Plan meals.** Meal planning is a skill your teen will need when he moves out. He can start now by being in charge of dinner on occasion. Encourage him to find recipes, shop for ingredients, and cook the meal.

**Arrange rides.** Let your child arrange rides to work and activities. If you share a family car or he isn't driving yet, he



should figure out his plans or ask you for rides in advance. If he has his own car, have him review the maintenance schedule and keep track of when the oil needs to be changed, the brakes checked, or the tires rotated.

**Make appointments.**

Help your teen learn to manage personal appointments. He can put numbers in his cell phone for his doctor, dentist, and barber. Explain how far in advance he should make routine appointments. If he needs to cancel an appointment, he can be responsible for that, too. 👍

## On top of the news

Paying attention to the news will help your teenager better understand the world around her. Use these suggestions to get her interested.

**Follow up**

Suggest that your teen download a news app to check each morning. She could pick an interesting event to read about again before dinner. While your family eats, discuss how the news changed. This will help her understand that it's important to stay current.



## Compare sources

Encourage your high schooler to learn about the same topic from different sources. Read, watch, or listen together, and compare the coverage. She will see how various newspapers, TV channels, online news services, or radio stations can report the same story differently—and that hearing all the viewpoints will help her form her own opinions. 👍

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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**Q & A**

## Eye on a STEM career

**Q** My daughter is our family's unofficial "tech support" person, always happy to troubleshoot a computer or smartphone. Recently, she mentioned interest in a technology career. What do you suggest?

**A** Encourage your daughter to talk to her school counselor for advice. The counselor might recommend STEM electives like coding and website development or after-school activities like an engineering or robotics club. He can also steer her toward colleges and majors that match her career goals.

She might look into community events, such as STEM fairs at high schools, colleges, and science centers. And if anyone you know works in a STEM field, she may be able to shadow that person for a day.

Finally, since your daughter likes helping others with technology, suggest that she volunteer at an assisted-living facility or a library. She could show people how to use programs and apps to stay in touch with family or to keep track of finances. 👍



**Parent to Parent**

## Siblings with special needs

Our younger son, Jack, was recently diagnosed with autism. In addition to worrying about him, I was concerned about our teenage son, Cooper.

I knew Cooper was disappointed that his little brother didn't seem interested in doing things with him like playing catch. And Cooper admitted he was nervous about inviting friends over because of Jack's tantrums. I mentioned my concerns to Jack's occupational therapist, who recommended a

monthly support group just for siblings of kids with autism.

In the group, Cooper is learning strategies for getting Jack's attention and how to recognize signs that his little brother is getting frustrated. He's also discovering ways to talk to his friends about autism. The other day, I overheard Cooper on the phone, sounding mature as he explained autism to his best friend. I hope he'll feel comfortable inviting him over soon. 👍

