

High School Parents[®]

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Chambersburg Area School District

still make the difference!



Reduce your teen's stress to improve attendance, learning

Research has found that teens who experience stress at home are likely to have attendance problems and difficulty learning at school for up to two days following the stress. The study found that sources of stress for teens included:

- **Conflict with parents.**
- **Family demands.**
- **Problems with homework.**
- **Time management issues.**

It makes sense—if a teen is spending her time in science class thinking about something that happened at home the night before, she is less likely to pay attention—and therefore less likely to learn.

If your teen is experiencing stress, suggest that she:

- **Take a deep breath.** It sounds simple, but works surprisingly

well. Taking time to stop and think about the issue at hand may help your teen see a solution to the problem.

- **Exercise.** Twenty to 30 minutes of exercise can relieve tension and clear your teen's head. If she's feeling stressed, encourage her to go for a run or try some yoga. Eating right will also keep your teen feeling her best.
- **Keep a journal.** Some teens find that it's easier to write down their feelings. This is a great way to relieve stress—and your teen will be strengthening her writing skills at the same time.

Source: Jennifer Warner, "Teen Stress at Home Lingers in School," WebMD Health News, www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/news/20080514/teen-stress-at-home-lingers-in-school.

'Translate' your teen's words before reacting



Your teen has just said something disrespectful to you. You're angry, but you know that losing

your temper will not help.

Try pretending you're at the United Nations. If you've ever watched those international meetings on TV, you've seen people wearing headphones. They're not listening to the person who is talking. They are listening to a translator instead. Usually, it takes a few seconds for the translator to repeat what the speaker has said.

Make that same idea work for you. Imagine that your teen's words have to come through a pair of imaginary headphones. While you're waiting, you will have time to prepare your own "translation."

So instead of losing your temper, say, "I can hear that you're angry. But you may not speak to me this way."

Remember, teens who speak respectfully at home are more likely to do so in school, as well.

Source: Russell A. Barkley and Arthur L. Robin, *Your Defiant Teen: 10 Steps to Resolve Conflict and Rebuild Your Relationship*, ISBN: 9781-5938-5583-3 (The Guilford Press, 1-800-356-7006, www.guilford.com).

Encourage your teenager to spring into the reading habit



It's April. Reading inside isn't exactly how your teen envisioned spending this beautiful spring afternoon. But you know the importance of keeping your teen reading—if he's still reading now, at the end of the school year, the chances are good he'll be reading all summer long. And teens who read (and learn) over the summer are more likely to be successful in September.

So what can you do? Offer these spring reading suggestions to your teen. He can:

- **Take it outside.** Encourage your teen to enjoy the day while getting some reading in. He can read in the backyard, on the front steps or at a park. If he's really motivated, he might consider finding an audio book that he can listen to while he takes a walk or jogs.

- **Improve his game.** Sure, practice is important when it comes to sports. Yet reading about sports heroes could improve his game, too. He can ask the librarian to help him find biographies of the all-stars in his favorite sport.
- **Plan ahead for the summer.** Don't get him too excited—he still has to complete his finals before he can really enjoy summer vacation. But if you're planning a family vacation, suggest that he read a travel book about the area or a work of fiction set in the place you're planning to visit.

"Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish."

—John Quincy Adams

Follow some simple rules if you volunteer to chaperone the prom



One secret to a really successful prom is adult supervision. Having parents at the prom can keep it a fun and safe affair for everyone.

But how can you be a good chaperone and not embarrass your teen? Here are some tips:

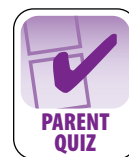
- **Talk to the school** ahead of time. Find out the rules for the prom. Meet the administrators who will be there.
- **Dress up.** It's a special night for everyone.
- **Remember the old-fashioned rule** about children—that they should be seen, but not heard? It's good advice for chaperones, as well.

Wander through the prom regularly, but don't draw attention to yourself.

- **Escort teens who are dancing** inappropriately off the dance floor. Find an administrator to enforce the rules.
- **Escort teens to a private place** if you believe they have been drinking. Find an administrator to enforce the rules.
- **Don't dance.** Your teen will be mortified.
- **Be the last to leave.** Check rest rooms, hallways and the parking lot before departing.

Source: Denise Witmer, "How to Be a Chaperone at the Prom," Parenting Teens, <http://parentingteens.about.com/cs/prominfo/ht/promchaperone.htm>.

Are you teaching your high schooler how to 'unplug'?



April 20–26 is TV Turnoff Week. If you have a teen who seems to be glued to the television, this is a good time to think about

how to help her "unplug." Answer *yes* or *no* to each question:

___ **1. Have you removed the TV** from your teen's room, if one was there? This is one of the best ways to help keep grades up.

___ **2. Are you a good role model?** Do you choose the shows you will watch to avoid channel surfing?

___ **3. Do you turn off the TV** during mealtime? Do you use that time to talk with each other?

___ **4. Do you encourage everyone** in the family to do things other than watch TV? Do you keep books and magazines handy? Do you plan time for family activities?

___ **5. Will you try to turn off the TV** for at least one day during TV Turnoff Week.

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* answer means you're helping your teen unplug from too much TV. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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The Parent Institute®, 1-800-756-5525,
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Remember how to be a PARENT during the teenage years



Brain research shows that parents play a critical role during the teenage years. While teens are mature in some ways, they still need parents to help them make responsible decisions.

How can you do that? Here's an easy way to remember some of the things you can do. Just be a PARENT:

P=Promote positive activities. Help your teen channel his energy into worthwhile programs. Teens are great at physical challenges. They also understand technology better than many adults.

A=Assist your teen with activities that require planning. The last part of the brain to develop is what's known as the prefrontal cortex. It is involved in planning, decision making and impulse control. Since most teens still lack the ability to do these things well, they need parents to help them. So ask

questions. "What will you do if kids are drinking at the party?"

R=Remind your teen to ask for advice. When he does, say you are glad he asked. Talk about how you make decisions.

E=Encourage behaviors that promote good brain development. Make sure your teen avoids drugs and alcohol. Encourage him to get regular exercise.

N=Never underestimate the effects of alcohol on a teen's brain. Research shows teens are affected much more strongly by alcohol. Alcohol can harm a teen's brain development.

T=Tolerate. Teens make mistakes. Expect them. Plan for them. Then help your teen get back on the right track as soon as he can.

Source: Ken Winters, "Adolescence, the Developing Brain, and Alcohol: Intersections on the Developmental Highway," Presentation at the National Conference of State Legislatures, August 9, 2007.

Q: My son and some friends broke into the school and set off a fire alarm. Unfortunately, that set off the sprinkler system in the lab. This caused a fair amount of damage. The school wants the boys to pay for the damage, and they say my son can't "walk" at graduation. (He will still get his diploma.) I think that's harsh for a prank. How can I make the school allow my son to take part in graduation?

Questions & Answers

A: There's a long tradition of senior pranks. But they've turned from funny and harmless to dangerous and damaging.

Let's be clear about what your son did. He broke into a school—a crime in most areas. He pulled a fire alarm—another illegal act. And his actions may have caused thousands of dollars of damage, which probably makes it another crime.

In many places, he wouldn't be worried about whether he was "walking." He'd be worried about whether he'd have a criminal record.

I think you need to help your son realize that he is very fortunate. His actions hurt the school and hurt other students. He needs to make amends.

Have him work out a plan to pay for his share of the damage. But also have him volunteer to do extra community service at the school. And on the day of graduation, plan a small family gathering.

It won't be the same as actually "walking" at the ceremony, but it will help him realize that actions have consequences. Think of it as the last important lesson he'll learn in high school.

—Kris Amundson,
The Parent Institute

Help your teen learn how to 'read' the visuals in textbooks



Graphics in textbooks are there for a reason. If your teen learns how to "read" these visuals, she'll get a head start on reading the rest of the text.

Here are questions your child should ask herself as she looks at a graphic element—a photo, chart, graphic or other visual:

- **Why is this here?** Have your teen look carefully at the graphic before she reads the text. What does it show? How does she think it relates to the text?
- **Does the graphic** make it easier to create a mental picture of what

the text is discussing? How does it change what your teen thinks she knows about the subject?

- **Have her think** more about the graphic after she reads the text. What details are most important? Are those details highlighted in the text?
- **Are there any other** important points in the chapter that are not illustrated? What graphic element might have been included to emphasize those key points?

Source: William N. Bender, *Differentiating Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities*, ISBN: 0-761-94517-2 (Corwin Press, a Sage Publications Company, 1-800-233-9936, www.corwinpress.com).

It Matters: Spending Time Together

Make an effort to spend time with your teen



It's a fact: Teens don't want to end their relationships with their parents as they grow older. They just want them to change as they

grow. Spending time with their parents is one of teens' biggest priorities—but they can't do it alone.

Make spending time with your teen one of your biggest priorities. You can:

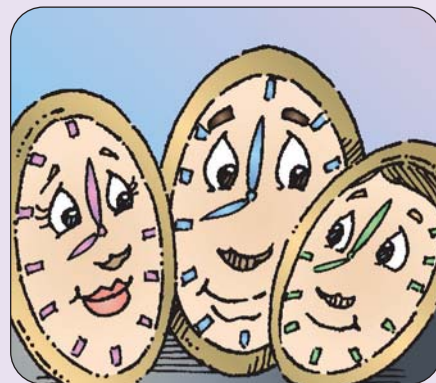
- **Take five ... or 15.** Devote five or 15 minutes a day to your teen. Give her all of your attention—and let her choose what you do. She may want to talk about something that's bothering her, watch a TV show together or go for a walk. The important thing is that you focus on your teen.
- **Show an interest.** Talking about what your teen is doing at school is a great first step. Attend her games and performances. Go to the parent-teacher conference. Being there shows your teen how important she is to you more than your words can.
- **Be friendly.** Make an effort to get to know your teen's friends. Offer to drive a group of teens to the movies or the mall. Make your home a place where they can feel comfortable "hanging out." You will get to know the people important to your teen—and be able to know she's in a safe place.

Source: "Giving Your Teens the Gifts of Time and Attention: Tips on Raising Your Pre-Teens and Teens," Office for Family, Youth and School Success, Rhode Island Department of Health, www.health.ri.gov/family/ofyss/teens/tips/Tip8.php.

Study shows that teens want to spend time with their family

A recent study found that the top concern among teens today is not spending enough time with their parents. "Not having enough time together" actually tied with education as the top issue teens are worried about. Surprisingly, parents ranked drugs and alcohol as their top concern for their teens. Quality family time came in as a distant fourth.

During adolescence, teens often place more emphasis on spending time with friends than they did as elementary school students—but that doesn't mean family time is any less important to them. Teens count on parents to provide guidance about values, and look to parents for advice on a variety of issues, including dating, sex, drugs and alcohol.



So make the time you spend with your teen count. Even something as simple as a weekly family dinner could help you learn more about your teen—and will give him the family time he needs.

Source: "Talking With Teens: The YMCA Parent and Teen Survey Final Report," The White House Conference on Teenagers, http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/teens/survey.html.

Touch base with your teen at four key times during the day



You are busy and your teen is busy. Still, says Professor Robert Blum, spending time with your teen is critical. His study of more than 12,000 teens shows that they need to feel a close connection with at least one parent. Otherwise, trouble—drug use, sexual activity and depression—can result.

He says parents need to try to touch base with their teen at four key times during the day: early morning, after school, dinnertime and bedtime.

Of the four, dinnertime is the most important. It's a time when a single question can lead to a 15-minute conversation. It's a time when you and your teen can talk and listen to each other.

If you can't be at home during all four of these key times, find other ways to touch base. Send an email or an instant message from work. Call your teen on the phone. (Some parents say their teens open up more on the phone than in person.)

Source: "Busy Parents Add to Teenage Angst," BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/education/newsid_1937000/1937276.stm.