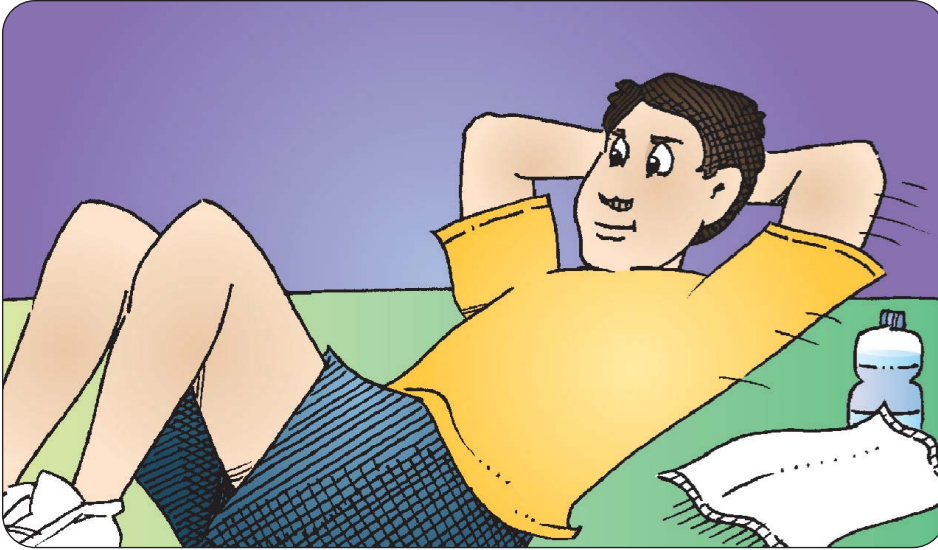


High School Parents[®]

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Chambersburg Area School District

still make the difference!



Use the power of resolutions to encourage self-discipline

Has your teen ever forgotten to finish a chore halfway through completing it? Or has he quit a sport halfway through the season, claiming it was boring? This inability to follow through might be a lack of self-discipline. Self-discipline helps teens focus on and finish what they've started.

Encourage your teen to come up with a New Year's Resolution this year. Setting one goal—and achieving it—takes self-discipline. You might suggest that he resolve to:

- **Avoid peer pressure.** Saying “no” to drugs, alcohol or even bad ideas suggested by friends can be difficult. Sticking to his morals shows a lot of self-discipline—and his self-respect will grow as well.
- **Do better in school.** Have him choose one subject that he would like to improve in. Help him come up with a study plan, and encourage him every step of the way.
- **Get in better shape.** Following a workout plan takes immense self-discipline. And the benefits are great—habits set during the teen years tend to be kept during adulthood.
- **Volunteer more.** The great feeling that he gets from successfully helping other people may encourage your teen to finish all projects he starts.

Source: “Guide Picks: New Year’s Resolutions for Teens,” About.com: Teen Advice, <http://teenadvice.about.com/library/weekly/aatp123101a.htm>.

Ninth grade is a key year for attendance



If you have a student in the ninth grade, pay close attention to the number of days she misses school.

Studies show that students who end their ninth grade year successfully are four times more likely to graduate from high school than those who don't.

Attendance is a big part of that success. A Chicago study found that 90 percent of students who missed fewer than four days of school each semester graduated four years later. Only 63 percent of students who missed five to nine days graduated. As the number of absences increased, the graduation rates went down.

It's not hard to figure out why absences are linked to school success. When students miss important information one day, they can't put it to use the next. So if you want to go to a high school graduation in four years, send your ninth grader to school today.

Source: Elaine M. Allensworth and John Q. Easton, “What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools,” Consortium on Chicago School Research, www.aypf.org/tripreports/2007/documents/07WhatMattersFinal.pdf.

Improve writing by teaching your teen how to write a strong 'lead'



The first section in an essay is called the "lead," and learning how to write a good one is a skill that will serve your teen

well. A strong introduction captures the reader's attention. It sets the tone for the piece. Here are some ways to write a strong lead:

- **Look for an interesting fact.** Which report would you rather read? One that begins, "This is a report about the human blood system"? Or, "Did you know there are 60,000 miles of blood vessels in the human body?" As your teen is doing research for a paper, have him look for those facts that would make a reader say, "I didn't know THAT!"
- **Find a quotation.** An essay about education could begin with Nelson Mandela's observation, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to

change the world." Have your teen find three quotes that might work. Then, after the paper is written, have him choose the one that fits best with what he is saying.

- **An interesting story.** Have your teen think of two or three stories and write an opening paragraph using each. After the rest of the paper is completed, he can choose the story that works best.

Source: Tim Clifford, *The Middle School Writing Toolkit: Differentiated Instruction Across the Content Areas*, ISBN: 0-92989-575-4 (Maupin House, 1-800-524-0634, www.maupinhouse.com).

"In the final analysis it is not what you do for your children but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings."

—Ann Landers

Share research with your teen about the dangers of drinking



New research shows that teenage drinking is a much greater health problem than most parents realize. For

example:

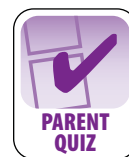
- **Teens who start drinking** before the age of 15 are twice as likely to become addicted as those who wait until they are 21. Students who drink are also much more likely to commit suicide.
- **Alcohol increases** impulsive behavior and provokes teens to make stupid decisions that may lead to serious injury or death.
- **One-fourth of the teens** killed in car crashes were intoxicated.

What can you do?

- **Check where your teen is going** and who she'll be with. If she is going to a party, call the parents to be sure they will be in the house and that no alcohol will be served.
- **Be sure she never gets in a car** with someone who has been drinking. Develop a code she can use if she calls you that really means, "Come get me."
- **Watch your teen carefully** for signs she may be depressed. Sometimes, teens use alcohol as a way to medicate themselves.

Source: American Psychological Association, "Another Link Between Death and Drinking," www.apa.org/monitor/feb04/another.html.

Are you overly involved in college applications?



There's no question that it's harder to apply to college today. But to some parents, that means it's okay for them to take

over for their teen. Are you too involved as your teen applies to college? Answer *yes* or *no* to each question:

___1. **My teen will choose** the colleges where she would like to apply (within reason). I will not push my choices on her.

___2. **I don't use the word "we"** when talking about the college application process, as in, "We're applying to five in-state schools."

___3. **My teen is present** at all appointments with the school counselor. I don't meet without her.

___4. **I expect my teen to complete** college applications and essays on her own.

___5. **I plan to leave the room** when my teen goes for a college interview.

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* answer means you are letting your teen drive her college search. For *no* answers, back off and let her take over.

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Talking with your teen is worth the effort, builds relationships



You've heard that talking with and listening to your teen is important. But clearly whoever came up with that advice doesn't

live in your house. Talking with your teen can be dangerous! Either she snaps at you or she responds with a blank look.

So why should you make the effort, even if you're sure you're going to be shot down? Because communication helps your teen:

- **Feel cared about.** Even if she answers "How was your day?" with "Fine," she's still secretly pleased that you asked.
- **Build trust.** Your teen will realize that she can talk to you about her problems and you won't think she's "uncool."

- **Believe she's important to you.** Tell your teen you care about her.
- **Learn how to have "grown-up" discussions.** After a while, your teen will realize that storming off isn't the way to convince you to let her do something. When she approaches you with rational arguments, listen.

The teen years are a time of testing boundaries. Your teen is also asserting her independence through pretending your opinions don't matter to her. So keep talking. Teens who have close relationships with parents are more likely to keep those close relationships through adulthood.

Source: "Talking and Listening to Youth Fact Sheet," Tennessee Department of Health, Adolescent Health Program, http://health.state.tn.us/MCH/Adolescent/Talking_with_Youth_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

Helping others can help your high schooler do better in school



Learning builds day by day. The complicated ideas your teen is learning in high school build upon the more simple

facts he learned in elementary and middle school.

A student can't learn geometry without knowing shapes. He can't survive English literature without a good vocabulary. He can't write papers without knowing how to spell or where to put the commas. And world history class is going to be confusing if he doesn't know where the countries are.

That doesn't mean you have to sit at the kitchen table and quiz your teen about these facts to make sure he still remembers them. Instead, you can reinforce his learning by encouraging him to help his younger

sibling with her homework. (No younger sibling? Have your teen talk to his guidance counselor or the local librarian about tutoring programs that are looking for volunteers.)

Helping younger students with homework benefits your teen. It will:

- **Improve his memory.** He'll be forced to remember facts he hadn't thought about in years. Using his mind—instead of Google—will help him more easily remember other things, as well.
- **Improve his social skills.** Teens can be surly, but are often more caring towards children. He'll have to be polite with the child he's helping.
- **Improve his study skills.** He'll be more focused when he has to do his own homework.

Q: My daughter is a junior who has always hoped to go to college. She studies hard and gets good grades. But in this economy, we are barely making ends meet. How can I tell her that we can't afford college?

Questions & Answers

A: Luckily, you may never have to have that conversation. Because your daughter is a good student, many options are available to help her achieve her dream of going to college.

However, you can't wait to do the work that will be required to take advantage of the help that is out there. Meet with her high school counselor. Talk about the types of aid that may be available. Here are a few places to start:

- **Find out if your state** offers scholarships to students with good grades. The Georgia HOPE Scholarship, for example, pays for tuition, fees, and even provides an allowance for books. Be sure your daughter knows exactly what grades are required to be eligible.
- **Ask if the counselor** can help your student fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form must be completed for students to qualify for many types of financial aid. Check out the FAFSA website at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- **Contact schools** that your daughter would like to attend. Many may be able to work with you to provide financial aid. Don't give up hope. Scholarships and loans are available to help high achievers like your daughter receive a college education.

—Kristen Amundson,
The Parent Institute

It Matters: Motivation

Motivate your high schooler to get organized



Ask your teen to get organized, and he'll probably gesture to a sea of papers covering his desk, claiming "I am organized! I know exactly where everything is!"

Parents and teens clearly have different ideas of what being "organized" is. He thinks it means being able to find that magazine he was looking for; you think it means being able to see the top of his desk—and the floor, on a good day.

The key is to put your idea of "getting organized" into his words. Follow these three steps:

1. **Explain that he has complete control** over how he gets organized. You're not going to come into his room and start alphabetizing his books. He's the one who gets to figure out what's important to him.
2. **Make him think.** He's very unlikely to get organized just because you asked him to. So talk about what his disorganization is *costing* him. Does it take him 40 minutes to find his calculator? If he were organized, those 40 minutes could be used for something more fun.
3. **Tell him he doesn't have to throw things out.** Teens are attached to their "stuff"—the idea of "getting organized" often makes them think they have to part with things. Just encourage him to get rid of items he doesn't use.

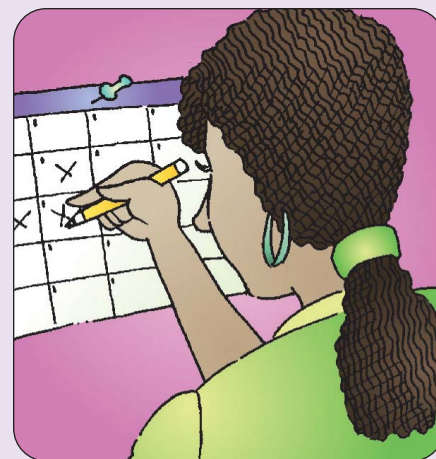
Source: Julie Morgenstern, "How to Motivate Your Teen to Get Organized," iVillage, <http://parenting.ivillage.com/teen/tbehavior/0,,mvqk,00.html>.

Have your teen use a chart when trying to reach a goal

Your teen probably has a goal she is working toward, whether it's making the softball team this spring, or even going to school every day so that she can graduate. Whatever it is, using a chart can help her measure her progress.

Have her come up with small steps for reaching her goal—such as running every day, in the case of the potential softball player. Give her a calendar. Have her place a sticker (or she can draw an X) on each day that she runs.

The chart serves as a visual reminder both of what she still has left to do—and all that she has already accomplished. Seeing



everything she's done mapped out in front of her might give her that extra push needed on days when her motivation seems to be missing.

Avoid four traps when dealing with an underachieving teen



You know your teen can do better and you want to help motivate him. To help your teen improve, be sure to avoid:

1. **Unrealistic expectations.** There is no question that parents want the best for their kids. But if you expect your teen to be the captain of the football team, work a part time job and still get good grades, you may be setting your teen up for failure.
2. **The need to control.** Some decisions (safety, for example) require parental control. But when it comes down to it, he is the one who will decide when, and if, he does his math homework.
3. **The urge to "rescue" him.** If you constantly bail out your struggling teen, he will learn that it's okay to keep struggling. He will remain helpless as long as you allow it. Once he knows you aren't going to step in, he will figure it out.
4. **Anger and guilt.** You already know this doesn't work. You get angry. He gets angrier. And the homework doesn't get finished. So if you feel yourself losing your temper, take a break until you can approach things more calmly.

Source: Diane Heacox, *Up from Underachievement: How Teachers, Students, and Parents Can Work Together to Promote Student Success*, ISBN: 0-91579-335-0 (Free Spirit Publishing, 1-800-735-7323, www.freespirit.com).