

# High School Parents<sup>®</sup>

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Chambersburg Area School District

***still make the difference!***



## Take time to review the school year with your high schooler

**T**he end of the year is a great time to reassess your expectations for your teen. Consider doing a school-year review with your teen as this academic year draws to a close. Together, discuss how he views his progress:

- **Did your teen** do as well as he had hoped to?
- **Does he feel** that his report card reflects what he learned?
- **What was** his favorite class and why?
- **What was** his least favorite and why?

Reviewing this year gives your teen a “benchmark” to use as he sets academic goals for the next year. Ask him what he would like to improve.

Does he want to raise his English grade from a B to a B+? Encourage your teen to come up with a list of goals he’d like to accomplish and have him write them down.

Work together to list steps your teen will have to take to reach each goal. Is there anything he can do now to reach these goals? For example, he might take a writing class at a local community college over the summer to strengthen his writing skills.

Whatever plan he comes up with, be sure to support him along the way. Knowing that you have high expectations—and that you believe in him—is great motivation for your teen to reach his goals.

## Lack of effort may be a sign of trouble



“I just didn’t feel like doing it,” your teen says when you find out she hasn’t been turning in her math

homework. Is she just lacking motivation, or is it something else?

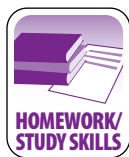
A lack of effort can actually be a “cover up” for a more serious problem. Teens will do a lot to keep parents and teachers from figuring out that they are having trouble understanding a subject. So they’ll pretend they don’t care. They’ll act like the class clown. They’ll “forget” their homework day after day.

If this describes your teen, you might want to sit down with the teacher and take a closer look. Her “I just don’t care” attitude may be keeping you from seeing that she needs serious help in that class.

If your child is struggling, take action now. She can work with a tutor. She can stay after class for extra help. She can take a summer class. Knowing the real problem is the first step to fixing it.

**Source:** Janet Sasson Edgette, *Stop Negotiating with Your Teen*, ISBN: 0-399-52789-3 (Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1-800-788-6262, [www.penguinputnam.com](http://www.penguinputnam.com)).

# Help your high schooler finish year-end school projects on time



She has six weeks to work on her last project for history. It's half her grade for the last marking period. Although she keeps telling you she's "on top of it," you aren't so sure.

The truth is that teens don't have a very good sense of time. When she thinks that she has six weeks left, she's forgetting about the math tests, two track meets and the prom that are coming up.

Nagging won't work. Instead, help her figure out how to find the time for that project. Here's how:

- **Sit down with your teen** and a big calendar.
- **Have her cross out** the days she won't be working on the project. She won't have time on the days of her track meets or on the day of

the prom. She needs to also cross off the days she has to work or has other commitments.

- **Have her count** how many days are left. There will probably be fewer than she thought! She will need to use those days efficiently to get her project finished on time.
- **Don't let her panic.** Remind her that the busier people are, the more they often accomplish. She can finish on time, but she will have to get busy—today.

Source: Donna Goldberg, *The Organized Student*, ISBN: 9780-7432-7020-5 (Simon & Schuster, 1-800-223-2336, www.simonays.com).

**"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."**

—Margaret Fuller

# Encourage your teen to exercise daily, stay healthy this summer



School's out—and your teen probably thinks he can sleep all day, every day. Don't let him waste his summer! Encourage your teen to get some exercise. It only takes 21 days for a habit to form—and daily exercise is a great habit to have.

Teens who exercise regularly:

- **Are less likely** to become overweight.
- **Have stronger bones** and muscles.
- **Sleep better** than those who don't exercise regularly.
- **Are less stressed** and better able to handle problems.
- **Have higher self-esteem.**
- **Earn better grades.**

The key is to make exercise fun. Your teen doesn't have to run nine miles

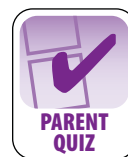
every day (unless he really enjoys running). He can split his workout time into shorter bursts.

Maybe he'd prefer to walk for 15 minutes in the morning and swim at the local pool for 30 minutes later in the day. Or maybe your teen and his friends want join a summer sports league. Then they'd experience the benefits of exercising their bodies and their social skills simultaneously. Whatever your teen decides to do, try to be supportive of his choice.

And while your teen's exercising, make sure he has the proper fuel for his growing body. The summer is a great time for fresh fruits and vegetables to make their way into his diet.

Source: Mary L. Gavin, MD, "Kids and Exercise," kidshealth.org, [http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/fitness/exercise.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/fitness/exercise.html).

# Are you helping your teen learn the value of a dollar?



Learning how to manage money is a critical skill. Summer is a great time to help your teen focus on money management.

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to see if you are helping your high schooler become a good money manager:

- \_\_\_ **1. Have you helped** your teen create a budget—and live with it?
- \_\_\_ **2. Do you encourage** your teen to save money? If he has a summer job, he will save some of what he earns.
- \_\_\_ **3. Have you helped** your teen open a checking account with an ATM card? Each month, he can balance that account to see where his money goes.
- \_\_\_ **4. Do you have** family meetings to discuss your family spending and saving goals?
- \_\_\_ **5. Do you avoid** bailing your teen out when he runs out of money before the end of the week?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* answer means you're helping your teen learn the value of money. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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# Consider the benefits of signing your teen up for summer school



Your teen may have been looking forward to a summer job. Or she might have thought about taking a break from her studies.

But there are some reasons you should think about signing her up for summer school:

- **She wants to concentrate** on a difficult subject. If she anticipates that a science or math class is going to be a real challenge for her, taking it in the summer will give her more time to concentrate. Especially for students who are worried about earning good grades for college admission, this can be a great option.
- **She needs credits to graduate** on time. If your teen failed a course, summer school will give her a chance to take it again. This way, she can focus on the subject that gave her trouble.

Most summer programs allow students to take only one or two classes. However, you need to be sure that she does her homework and reading for a summer class. Because summer classes are taught in such a short time period, missing even one day's homework can put her far behind.

- **She wants to free up space** for an art or music class. A student in a demanding academic program, or one who is taking classes to prepare for a career, may not have room for music or art. Taking a required class in the summer will free up a space for these enriching classes in her schedule. Summer school isn't for every student. But it can help a wide range of students solve school problems.

Source: Samuel G. Freedman, "When the Race for a Top College Intersects with Summer School," *The New York Times*, [www.samuel freedman.com/articles/education/nyt07072004.html](http://www.samuel freedman.com/articles/education/nyt07072004.html).

**Q:** There are times when I think my 16-year-old must have a hearing problem. When I tell her what I expect her to do (or not do), it's like I never said anything. I am really worn out by trying to get her to follow the rules. At times, I feel like just giving up. I want to enforce a curfew this summer, but I'm not sure I have the strength to stick with it.

## Questions & Answers

**A:** Giving up is exactly what your daughter would like you to do. She's smart enough to realize that she may be able to wear you down. Then she'll get to stay out as late as she wants!

Your daughter doesn't have a *hearing problem*—she has a *listening problem*. So when you say anything, be prepared to say it again and again. Think of it as the "three times" rule.

*Your daughter doesn't have a hearing problem—she has a listening problem.*

Your daughter is going to test you, hoping you will get tired and just give up. So brace yourself. Let her know exactly what the consequences will be if she comes in after curfew. Then calmly enforce them whenever she misses curfew.

Your job is to raise her to be an independent adult. But she's not ready to be on her own at sixteen. By enforcing the rules every time, you're teaching her that you will follow through on your words. Once she sees that you really do mean what you say, you'll probably find that *hearing problem* will go away.

—Kristen Amundson,  
The Parent Institute

# Respect your teenager's privacy but know when to get involved



Sometimes, teens tell parents secrets. Johanna uses drugs. Sam's running away. There's a big drinking party at the beach on Saturday.

Your teen may ask you to respect his privacy after he tells you the truth. Can you?

The answer is *sometimes*. The reason your son broke up with his girlfriend should stay secret. So should the story behind a neighbor's divorce.

You want your teen to know he can talk to you about anything, but you have to tell what you know if:

- **Someone is in immediate danger.** If your teen tells you that a friend is planning a suicide attempt, you have to tell the teen's parents.
- **You can prevent** a dangerous situation. If you learn that some seniors are planning a party with alcohol at the beach, it is your responsibility to call their parents.
- **You might help.** If you can offer advice to a teen in trouble, you might let the teen know that you are available to listen.

Source: Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese, *What Are You Doing in There?* ISBN: 0-76791-297-7 (Broadway Books, a division of Random House, 1-800-733-3000, [www.randomhouse.com/broadway](http://www.randomhouse.com/broadway)).



# It Matters: Summer Learning

## Set limits on your teen's screen time over the summer



Some teens are spending as much as 50 hours a week sitting in front of a screen. Chatting with friends online has

replaced hanging out at the park. Watching television has replaced reading for fun. But that doesn't mean your teen has to do the same.

Here are four steps to take to monitor and limit your teen's screen time this summer:

1. **Ask your teen** to pay close to attention to how he uses media. How many hours per week does he spend watching TV and browsing online? Have him keep track of his time on a chart. He may be surprised by how much time he actually spends staring at a screen.
2. **Find out** what your teen is doing. New video games come out every month. Take a look at the games your teen is playing and check the age ratings. Make sure you are aware of the websites he visits online, too.
3. **Encourage** your teen to become a critical viewer. When watching television, he should question what he sees. Would he act the same way the main character did? Does he think that movie's violence was necessary to develop the plot?
4. **Offer your teen** other choices. Suggest that he have friends over instead of talking to them online for hours at a time. Have plenty of reading materials around for him to view instead of television shows.

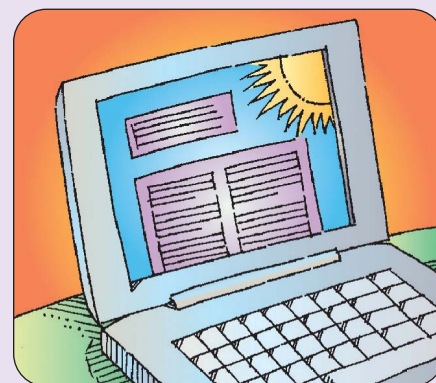
## Encourage your teen to begin summer writing assignments

**M**any high school classes require students to do a writing assignment over the summer. Other classes offer extra credit for students who turn in a summer writing assignment.

These assignments can help teens focus on improving their writing at a time when they don't have other responsibilities.

You can help your teen complete a summer writing assignment successfully by encouraging her to:

- **Start early.** Some teens put off their writing assignments until the last few days of the summer. That usually leads to sleepless nights (and bad papers).
- **Find out how to get help.** Teachers might not have time to help as the summer draws to a close.



- **Make sure she has** what she needs. If your teen must read a book for her assignment, she should get it early. The library and bookstores could be out of the title if she waits too long.
- **Remember** that first impressions matter. This assignment will help shape what next year's teacher thinks of your teen.

## Share important summer job pointers with your teenager



A summer job may be the first step into the workforce and can help your teen prepare for the demands and responsibilities of "the real world."

A job will require your teen to:

- **Be on time.** Nothing is more important than punctuality. Others depend on your teen to show up when expected.
- **Work with others.** Your teen will have to work with others and take direction from a supervisor.
- **Dress professionally.** Most workplaces have dress codes.

- **Interact with customers.** Many entry-level jobs involve working with the public. Your teen will need to be polite and helpful to all kinds of people—even customers who may not treat your teen in the same courteous fashion.
- **Behave professionally.** An employee's behavior and speech reflects on the company. It's important that your teen be on his best behavior.

Source: Susan Carney, "Summer Job Skills for Teens," suite101.com, [http://youthdevelopment.suite101.com/article.cfm/summer\\_job\\_skills\\_for\\_teens](http://youthdevelopment.suite101.com/article.cfm/summer_job_skills_for_teens).