

January 2020

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Never stop learning

Show your teenager that learning is a lifelong pleasure by studying something new yourself. Take a watercolor class, perhaps, or sign up for a creative writing course. He could even learn with you by taking community center classes together in anything from calligraphy to coding.

### Count on me!

Dependable people are valued as friends, students, and employees. So encourage your high schooler to be sure she can honor promises before she makes them. Point out that politely saying no now is better than not following through later.

### Winter fitness

A weekly fitness challenge can keep your whole family active this season. Have your child make a list as everyone suggests short activities. *Examples:* "Do two yoga poses." "Build a snowman." "Dance to one song." Post the list, and see who can check off the most this week. Then, make a new list!

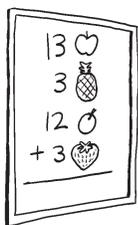
### Worth quoting

"Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs." *Henry Ford*

### Just for fun

**Teacher:** If you had 13 apples, 3 pineapples, 12 grapes, and 3 strawberries, what would you have?

**Student:** A delicious fruit salad.



## Be part of the bullying solution

Taking a stand against bullying makes a positive difference for everyone at school. Share these ways your teenager can be part of the solution when she sees or hears about someone being bullied.

### Be an ally

It might be hard for your high schooler to know what to do if she witnesses bullying. Suggest that she start by refusing to join in. Laughing or watching quietly provides an audience, which might escalate the situation. Instead, she could say, "Hey, that's not cool," and walk away with the person being targeted. *Note:* She should get adult help right away if anyone is in danger.

### Be supportive

Encourage your teen to check in with a classmate who has been bullied, not just when it happens, but later, too. Just knowing you're not alone makes a big difference to someone who's dealing with



bullying. Your child could lend an ear, offer to take the person to the school counselor's office, or make plans to hang out.

### Be a role model

Bullying isn't just pushing or taking someone's things. "Joking" about someone's appearance, spreading rumors, or deliberately excluding people hurts, too. Tell your teenager that she should use respectful language, refuse to pass along gossip, and invite left-out students to sit with her at lunch or on the bus. 👍

## Stay organized

Developing stronger organizational habits will pay off in the new year—and beyond. Help your high schooler keep track of his assignments and important papers with these suggestions.

1. Make a to-do list. Update it daily.
2. Print out calendar pages from the internet, and fill in assignment and test dates in different colors. Keep this sheet at the front of your binder or above your desk at home.
3. Empty your backpack regularly, and clean out your locker periodically. Decide what to save or toss.
4. Spend a few minutes each night gathering items needed for the next day (gym clothes, math book, homework assignments). Put them in your backpack or by the front door. 👍



# Family thinking games

Challenge your teen to think hard with these family games you can play anywhere!

## Toothpick puzzles

A box of toothpicks is an endless source of games to build math and logic skills. Start by putting 15 toothpicks on a table. Let each player take a turn picking up 1, 2, or 3 (their choice). The player who picks up the last toothpick wins. Can your high schooler figure out what strategy works best? Or see who can form the longest



word using 10 toothpicks. Another idea is to give each person 9 toothpicks and compete to make the most triangles. (*Hint: Triangles may nest inside other triangles.*)

## Fortunately... unfortunately

This storytelling twist requires players to think logically and creatively.

Have one person start a story: "A man got stranded on a deserted island." Then, players alternate adding a sentence that starts with *fortunately* or *unfortunately*. *Examples:* "Fortunately, he found berries to eat." "Unfortunately, there was no ice cream to go with them." 👍

## Dial down smartphone use

Studies show that teens *want* to reduce their screen time. And cutting back does have benefits, including more time for family and schoolwork and less anxiety from constantly checking social media. Help your child with these suggestions.

**Go low-tech.** Keep calculators, clocks, and flashlights around the house. That way, your high schooler won't grab her phone for those functions—and then start checking texts, Instagram, email, and so on.

**Take up a hobby.** Having a novel way to occupy her mind and hands may make your teen less likely to reach for her phone. Maybe she will learn to cross-stitch or get hooked on doing a daily crossword puzzle.



**Make it a contest.** Start a family challenge to see who uses their phone the least. You could download a screen time tracking app on your phones and compare the stats at the end of one week. Whoever has the least amount of phone time picks the film for movie night! 👍



## Q & A School attendance

**Q** My daughter has been asking to stay home from school lately. She says she's sick, but I don't see any symptoms. What should I do?

**A** The first step is to find out what's behind her requests. Take her to the doctor to rule out any illness. If her health checks out, have a talk with her to find out what's really going on.

For example, if your daughter is struggling in any classes, suggest that she talk to her teachers about ways to catch up. She might take advantage of their office hours or join a study group. Or if she's having a hard time making friends, perhaps she could join a club or team to help her feel more connected to her school.

Finally, let your teen know that you're there to help, but you expect her to be in school every day unless she's actually sick. 👍



## Parent to Parent Thinking about community college

My son Gerald loves his part-time job at a local business and is interested in a career in marketing. When he said he didn't want to go away to college and leave his job, I suggested we talk to his school counselor to explore options.

The counselor said community college might be a good fit for Gerald. That way, he could keep his job while he

takes classes—and we'll save a lot of money on tuition. And when he graduates with a two-year associate's degree, he can transfer to a four-year university if he decides to pursue a bachelor's degree in marketing.

Gerald stopped by the community college booth at the last college fair, and we're planning to visit the school soon and start the application process. 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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