

# High School Parents<sup>®</sup>

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Educational Service Unit #8

*still make the difference!*



## High schoolers should begin preparing for final exams now

**T**here's probably only one thought on your teen's mind right now: summer! So remind him that final exams stand between him and that nice, long break. And he'll do himself a favor if he starts preparing for those exams sooner rather than later.

Encourage your teen to spend a few days this month getting a jump start on his final exams. Suggest that he:

- **Stock up on materials.** Ask your teen what he needs for effective studying—note cards, sticky notes, highlighters. He should get more supplies now if he's running low.
- **Talk with teachers.** Many teachers will offer hints about what to focus on when studying. A comment like, "Remember how often we referred to the concepts in Chapter 6," can be very telling.
- **Organize class materials.** Finals are all about review. Your teen will be ahead if he has his notes, tests and homework in one place, and in an order that makes sense to him.
- **Create a study plan.** Most tests require serious study and review. Encourage your teen to use a calendar to block out study time and schedule the other things he needs to do before the end of the school year.

Don't forget to do your part to help your teen get ready for those final exams! Make sure he has a quiet place to study and gets a good night's sleep the night before tests.

## A healthy summer starts with 9-5-2-1-0



If they had it their way, some teens would probably stay up until 2 a.m., sleep until noon,

live on pizza and soda, and look at social media all day. Without the routine provided by school, many teens spend their summers exactly like that!

This summer, make sure your teen sticks to a healthy routine. That's where the 9-5-2-1-0 initiative comes in.

Experts suggest teens aim for the following each day:

- **9 hours** of sleep.
- **5 servings** of fruits and vegetables.
- **2 hours** of recreational screen time (or fewer).
- **1 hour** of physical activity.
- **0** sugar-sweetened drinks.

By following the 9-5-2-1-0 initiative, your teen will be maintaining healthy habits and practicing self-discipline. After all, you're not always going to be watching over her to make sure she doesn't drink half her body weight in soda!

**Source:** "Health in the Balance: 9-5-2-1-0 for Health!" Community Health Solutions, [niswc.com/high\\_95210](http://niswc.com/high_95210).

# Teach your teen how to accept and cope with disappointment



Life, sadly, does not always give us what we want. That's as true for teens as it is for adults. Learning to accept and cope with disappointment is a big step on the road to responsibility.

To help your teen handle life's disappointments:

- **Encourage her to talk** about them. Often, teens tend either to overreact or to clam up entirely. Help your teen express her disappointment in words.
- **Don't try to fix things.** You won't help your teen learn coping skills. Be sympathetic, of course. "I'm so sorry that happened." Be supportive. "I think you're

a talented soccer player." But don't call the coach and insist your teen get on the team.

- **Be a good role model.** It may not be easy to share your personal disappointments. But it's one of the best ways to show your teen how you have learned to cope. "I am so disappointed that I didn't get that promotion," you might say. "I'm going to keep trying."

**"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."**

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

# Share strategies to help your high schooler take better notes



It's not what your teen reads, it's what she remembers. It's not what she heard in class, it's what she can remember when it's time for the test. Note taking can help. Share these strategies with your teen:

- **Create a structure.** Have your teen draw a vertical line down a sheet of paper, dividing it into two columns of about one-third and two-thirds of the page. She should take notes in the wider column.
- **Take notes by hand.** Even if teachers allow devices in class, studies show that writing notes by hand helps students process information better.
- **Create a list of abbreviations.** Teachers can talk faster than students can write. So using abbreviations will help your teen keep up. Try b/c for because, > and < for greater than or less than. A written

list will help her remember her own shortcuts!

- **Review notes shortly after class.** Time spent looking over class notes will pay big rewards. As your teen rereads her notes, she can jot down questions or quick summaries in the narrow column. This review time will also let her add any extra explanations she may need when it's time to study for the test.
- **Supplement notes** with key information from the textbook. The book may expand on a subject the teacher only touched on.
- **Use color to highlight.** Some teens create a color-coding system to highlight key points in their notes. Your teen can devise a system that will help identify key details when it's time to review for the test.

**Source:** J. Rich, "Six Strategies for Taking High-Quality Notes," Edutopia, [niscw.com/high\\_notetips](http://niscw.com/high_notetips).

# Do you stand firm or are you a pushover parent?



Nearly every time a parent imposes a rule, a teen is likely to push back against it. "It's not fair! Nobody else's parents make them do this."

But what happens then? Some parents stand firm. But others seem to let themselves get pushed around. Have you fallen into the pushover parent trap? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

\_\_\_1. **Does your teen** have a regular curfew that you consistently enforce?

\_\_\_2. **Do you stand firm** on your rules, even if you know your teen will be angry?

\_\_\_3. **Do you impose** and enforce consequences when your teen breaks a rule?

\_\_\_4. **Do you only adjust** rules as your teen matures and shows responsibility?

\_\_\_5. **Do you understand** that your teen needs you to be his parent—not his best friend?

## How well are you doing?

If most of your answers are *yes*, congratulations: You are not a pushover parent. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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# Summer is a great time for rising seniors to work on college essays



Senior year means it's time for college applications. Students can reduce the pressure and the stress of the application process by getting their essays written during the summer before their senior year.

Share these four tips from college admissions officers on how to write great application essays:

- 1. Start early.** More than 600 colleges now use the Common Application. Encourage your teen to visit [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and check out the 2018 application essay prompts.
- 2. Be yourself.** The college essay is a good way for a college to get to know your teen. But it's important that the essay show who he really is, not who he thinks the college would like him to be. If he doesn't sit around discussing philosophy, then he

shouldn't write an essay about it. If you're tempted to write the essay for him, don't. Admissions committees know what teens sound like—and that's who they want to hear from.

- 3. Tell a story.** Every teen has a story to tell, and the college essay can be the place to tell it. Be creative. One student wrote a great essay about reading the morning announcements at school!
- 4. Write.** Edit. Rewrite. Repeat. A good essay takes time. It's not something that can be dashed off the night before the application is due. So encourage your teen to write a couple of drafts during the summer. That way, he'll have a polished draft ready to show to a trusted teacher for editing when school starts in the fall.

**Source:** A. Pannoni, "Top College Officials Share Notes on Great Application Essays," *US News and World Report*, [nswc.com/high\\_essay](http://nswc.com/high_essay).

# Challenge your high schooler to brush up on geography



It may seem like the world is shrinking. Social media and the internet allow your teen to connect with people and research information from all over the world.

That's why geography—often misinterpreted by teens as something involving dusty maps—is still important. Geography is about knowing where places are, why they're there and why they matter. And just because your teen is chatting with a friend in Colombia doesn't mean he actually realizes his friend is in South America, not Columbia, South Carolina.

To help your teen strengthen his geography skills, challenge him to:

- **Use a subway map,** bus or train schedule and a city map to plan a trip from home to a point of interest using public transportation.
- **Use a topographic map** to lay out a hike through the countryside or your community. He should note the elevation, distance, direction and geographic features along the route.
- **Explore his social network.** He can use a map to determine which of his friends lives the closest. Who is the farthest away?
- **Eat "around the world."** He can try ethnic foods and then locate their countries of origin on a map. Have him investigate why some cultures use forks and others use chopsticks—or no utensils at all!

**Q:** My daughter and I used to be very close. But in the last few months, I feel like she has become a stranger. She rolls her eyes when I ask her about school or anything else. I want to remain involved, but she barely talks to me. What should I do?

## Questions & Answers

**A:** You are smart to want to stay involved in your daughter's life. Experts agree that parent involvement has a positive effect on school success. But there is no need to panic.

Your daughter is going through a normal phase. And she's been through a similar phase before. Remember when she was a toddler? Back then she shouted *no* and threw tantrums. Now she rolls her eyes.

It's the same basic behavior. And the things you did when your child was a toddler will, with some adjusting, work now as well:

- **Don't take it personally.** She's trying to carve out a new, independent life. And while she still knows that she needs you, she's not about to admit it. So ignore as much as you can. Stay calm. Don't respond to anger with anger.
- **Set limits.** Don't allow your teen to be disrespectful. Family rules still apply—she can't insult you, she can't yell at you, and she has to be polite. If she can't do that, tell her you aren't going to listen to what she has to say.
- **Let her know** that you will always be on her side. This truly is a phase. If you were close before, you'll be close again. For now, let her find her own way—because sooner or later, that way will bring her back.

# It Matters: Summer Learning

## Use six strategies to promote summer reading



Studies have long shown that when students read for pleasure outside of school they benefit academically. While your

teen may not *need* to read for school over the summer months, he should still plan to spend some time reading.

To motivate your teen:

1. **Focus on reading for pleasure.**  
The most important lesson your teen may learn over the summer is that there are things he *likes* to read. Whether it's magazines or news articles about his favorite athlete or even the Sunday comics, be sure he keeps reading.
2. **Visit the library regularly.**  
Encourage him to browse through books and other reading material to see what catches his eye and his interest.
3. **Connect on a different level.**  
Reading is a good way to let your teen know you are aware he is maturing. Look for an article on a more mature subject and discuss it with him. Or pass along a book you have enjoyed.
4. **Listen to an audiobook** in the car. This may spark your teen's interest and encourage him to download a book to listen to on his phone.
5. **Read some books** written for teens yourself. You may learn more about the things that are on your teen's mind. These books can also open the door to interesting conversations.
6. **Set a good example.** As with so many things, your example is a powerful teacher. So let your teen see you reading often.

## Prevent a summer slump with fun learning activities

**T**oo many teens turn a summer off from school into a summer off from learning. It's OK to let your teen spend a week or so de-stressing from the previous school year, but don't let this last all summer long.

Help your teen realize that learning doesn't happen only in the classroom. Use the break to help your teen reinforce her skills in:

- **History.** If you're going on a trip this summer, ask your teen to do a little research on the area. She may be surprised to find out that a sleepy seaside town was once the hideout of a pirate captain.
- **Science.** Challenge your teen to plant a flower or vegetable garden. She'll learn about what plants need in order to grow—and might even be interested enough to look up the details on photosynthesis or how new varieties of plants are developed.
- **Writing.** Encourage your teen to keep a summer journal. Having "nothing to write about" because her days are "so boring" might encourage her to strike out on a learning adventure of her own.



## Part-time jobs can teach high schoolers important lessons



A summer job may be your teen's first step into the workforce and can help him 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 will be depending 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 him in the same courteous fashion.
- **Behave professionally.** An employee's behavior and speech reflect on the company. It's important that your teen be on his best behavior.