

High School **YEARS**

Working together for lifelong success

Short Clips



Shy? Smile!

Some teens feel nervous or awkward when it comes to starting a conversation. Let your child know that a smile can be a great icebreaker when someone new speaks to her. Then, she can ask questions to get to know the person. *Examples:* “What classes do you take?” “What kind of music do you like?”

DID YOU KNOW?

Internet plagiarism is on the rise. More than half of all students in a recent survey admitted to copying information or whole research papers from the Internet. Let your kids know that they have to do their own work and cite any sources they use for research.

Parent power

Looking for ways to be involved in your teen’s school without “embarrassing” him? Consider attending parent-teacher association or booster club meetings. You might also volunteer at events (college or career fair) or join a committee (snack bar, scholarship).

Worth quoting

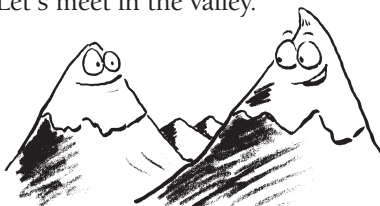
“I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.”

Pablo Picasso

Just for fun

Q: What did one mountain say to the other mountain?

A: Let’s meet in the valley.



Thinking critically

When your child learns new information, does he try to think about it from different perspectives? If so, he’s learning to be a critical thinker.

Students who think critically can draw conclusions from facts, evaluate different arguments, and analyze what works or doesn’t work. They will understand more about what they learn, and they’ll be more ready for college and the workplace. Sharpen your teen’s thinking skills with these ideas.

1. Ask open-ended questions. Help him evaluate information by posing questions that aren’t easily answered. For example, look for questions that have more than one right answer (“Should we continue to explore space?”). Or ask him to make a choice and explain it (“Which Jane Austen book do you like best? Why?”).

2. Consider all the facts. Suggest that your child come up with positive, negative, and interesting points about a question in the news. For instance, should school be year-round? From reading articles and thinking through the arguments, he might say: “We could learn more” (positive). “It would be harder to get a summer job” (negative). “Some schools already do this” (interesting).



This approach will help him take apart the information, clarify his thoughts, and reach a conclusion.

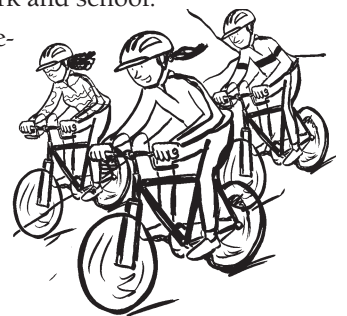
3. Organize information. Play a mind game that teaches critical thinking. Together, list all the items in your family room (books, magazines, a vase, a television, a sofa). Then, have each person put the items in order from most useful to least useful for a made-up scenario (planting a garden, getting ready for a trip). There are no right or wrong answers—this activity just helps kids learn a way of thinking. 👍

Hit the trails!

Here’s a sure route to family fun: set out on a trail adventure. It’s a great way for your family to reconnect after a busy week of work and school.

Hike. Walk a rails-to-trails path or a state park recreation trail. Map out your trek with a hiking guide from the library or a bookstore. Also, look for popular trails by state at www.trails.com/trails.aspx.

Bike. Gear up to ride somewhere you haven’t gone before. Check library books that highlight regional routes. Or find recommendations from cycling enthusiasts online (use phrases like “bike routes Virginia”). 👍



Multi-tasking makeover

It's homework time. You notice your teen has a textbook open. The television is on, and she's texting friends and reading a movie review online. Like many teenagers, she's multi-tasking. But research shows that switching back and forth like this can make tasks take 25–400 percent longer. How can you get your child to cut down on multi-tasking?

Encourage focus. Challenge your child to concentrate on one thing at a time (completing her history paper). She may finish her work more quickly and free up time to do something she likes, such as playing Frisbee with the dog or reading a magazine.



Limit distractions. Consider setting guidelines for watching television, playing video games, texting and online surfing (say, no gadgets until homework is finished). When your teen isn't distracted by technology, she'll be able to focus on what she is studying.

Connect in person. The short and fast nature of instant messaging, texting, and other electronic communication doesn't encourage in-depth conversation. Find time to talk with your teen face-to-face without interruptions. And encourage her to get together with friends in person—not just in the cyberworld. 👍

Science secrets

From earth science to advanced physics, students learn concepts that are both fascinating and challenging. Suggest that your high schooler try these strategies to do well in science.

Find a target. Looking for specific information can help your child stay engaged. Encourage him to scan textbook chapters ahead of time for ideas that spark his interest (“What is the greenhouse effect? How does it work?”). As he reads, he can note the explanations.

Get hands-on. Seeing scientific principles in action can make the “lightbulb” go on. Your child might ask the teacher for hands-on activities to do at home. For example, if he's taking environmental science, he could study samples from a stream near your house.

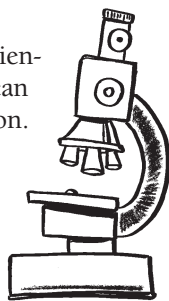


Chart it out. Encourage your child to create a formula chart with definitions and examples. He can add new ones as needed and review formulas from earlier lessons. 👍

Parent to Parent

Prevent underage drinking

I've heard that some parents in our neighborhood allow underage drinking. They provide teens with beer at parties because they feel it's “safer” for their kids to drink at home.

I wanted to make sure my daughter, Daniella, knew how I felt about this. An article I read said that parents' disapproval is a big reason teens choose not to drink. So, one evening while we made dinner together, I shared my thoughts. “Serving alcohol to minors is illegal,” I explained. “Plus, it's not safe for teens to drink, even if they're supervised by parents.”

Daniella said all her friends go to the parties and she didn't like being left out. She asked if she could go if she promised she wouldn't drink. I told her that I understood how she felt, but I couldn't let her go to a party where drinking was allowed. I hope our talk made a difference. Daniella is not happy that she's missing the parties, but she does seem to understand my reasoning. 👍



Q & A “Potential” pitfall

Q My son made good grades until recently. I know he can do better, but he doesn't seem to care. How can I motivate him?

A Children underachieve for different reasons. For example, some fear they can't live up to expectations and stop trying. Others compare themselves to high-achieving siblings and lose heart.

Tell your son why you're concerned (“Mrs. Blair says you haven't been turning in homework”). Explain that you love him regardless of grades and that you believe in his abilities. Then, help your child

create a plan (complete missing homework, schedule tutoring).

Also, encourage your teen to explore a passion. It may spark excitement about learning that transfers to the classroom. If he loves baseball, he could read about famous players and track their pitching speed. Finally, pay attention to your child's effort. Praising him when he tries can motivate him to keep going. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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