September 2012

Manhattan Village Academy
Mr. Hector Geager, Principal

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success

Short Clips

Presidential politics

The upcoming elections are a good opportunity for your teen to see how our political process works. You might watch debates together, encourage her to read articles, and discuss the candidates. Talk about which candidates you each support and why. *Note:* If she's 18, have her register to vote, and go to the polls together on Election Day.

Time-out

Taking care of yourself can help you handle the ups and downs of life with a teenager. Be sure to keep doctor appointments, eat well, and stay active by walking during your lunch break or after dinner. Also, take time to relax—perhaps by listening to music, meeting friends for dinner, or enjoying a hobby such as scrapbooking or golf.

On campus

If your child is thinking about college, try visiting different schools so he can figure out where he might be most comfortable. If possible, arrange tours when classes are in session so he can get a feel for student life. *Tip:* If you're traveling out of town for other reasons (family reunion, vacation), consider stopping at nearby schools to explore.

Worth quoting

"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door." *Milton Berle*

Just for fun

Q: What belongs to you but is used more often by your friends?

A: Your name!

Great expectations

What is one of the best ways to help your teen succeed in school? Expect a lot from him! If you make your expectations clear from the start, he will work harder to meet them. Try these strategies.

Be clear. Think about what you want your youngster to do or accomplish this year. For example, you might expect him to attend school every day, complete all assignments, and do his best. Be sure to set expectations that are high—but doable. (Anticipating all A's, for instance, could simply set him up for failure.) Then, communicate your expectations to him clearly.

Keep in view. As the year goes on, weave your expectations into daily conversations. You might say, "Do you want to watch a movie when your homework is finished?" rather than "Do you want to watch a movie?" Also, don't give in if he asks for "exceptions." If he wants to stay home from school to catch up on sleep, you could respond, "You can sleep in this weekend, but you have to go to school every day unless you're sick."

Follow through. Try to support your teen in ways that will help him meet your expectations. Say he has a big project due Monday. Ask about his weekend plans, and mention that you know he needs time to work. Then, before he leaves for a football game or a party, check on his progress. Listen to his plans for finishing the project, and discuss whether they're viable.

Note: When your teen meets your expectations, be sure to let him know you've noticed.

Organized in a snap

Setting up systems now will save your high schooler time throughout the year. Share these ideas for organizing her school materials:

- Your teen can keep her schoolwork in order by assigning a color to each subject. If her history folder is orange, for instance, she could put an orange cover on her history textbook.
- Encourage her to use her student planner regularly. During class, she should write down assignments as they're given.
- Suggest that she place materials (handouts, study guides) in the correct folder. At home, she might keep another set of color-coded folders in a drawer or box so she can file graded work or old papers she'll need later when studying for tests.

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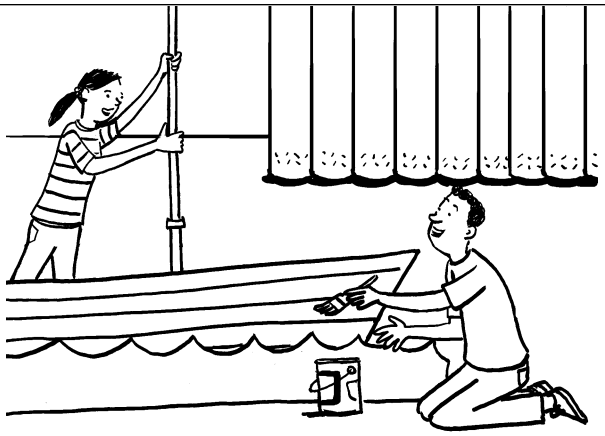
Involved at school



Extracurricular activities can help your teen form stronger ties to her school and to her classmates. Try these suggestions to encourage her to be a joiner or a leader.

Find your place

First, help her think about what suits her. Does she like to be in the limelight or out of it? Does she like making things? Does she want to explore a career? Then, encourage her to use her personality and interests to find the right organization or activity for her, whether it's building props for the school play, joining the robotics club, or participating in Future Farmers of America.

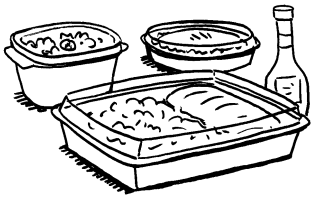
Take a role

Maybe your high schooler is already part of a group and she's ready to get more involved. She might run for treasurer of Key Club or apply for an editor's spot on the school newspaper. *Tip:* If her school doesn't have a particular activity, suggest that she consider starting it. She could ask a gym coach about creating an intramural bowling team or talk to her science teacher about starting a gardening club.

Parent to Parent

Lessons in kindness

At breakfast, we usually go over our plans for the day. One morning, I mentioned I'd be home late because I was taking a meal to a sick friend. My son David seemed surprised that I'd "go to all that trouble." I realized that I rarely talk to him about how my friends help each other.



Now I make it a point to share examples. I'll say, "A coworker helped me when I was running behind yesterday. I really appreciated it." And I ask David questions like "What's the nicest thing someone did for you this week?" Then, he'll tell me about a friend who helped him work on his fastball or spotted him while he lifted weights.

A few times lately, I've noticed him going out of his way for someone. For instance, when he discovered a classmate didn't have Internet access at home, he invited him over to work on a project. I'm hoping that mentioning kind acts is encouraging David to be kind himself.

Q&A

Alert to alcohol

Q *My daughter is just starting high school, and I'm concerned about drinking. How should I approach this?*

A Talking to your child is the first step. Let her know how you feel about underage drinking, and explain that it's dangerous and illegal. Bring up the subject regularly, and ask whether kids are drinking around her. She may not say much, but she will know where you stand.

Also, encourage her to invite friends over so you can get to know them. And introduce yourself to her friends' parents at back-to-school night or soccer games. That will make it easier to call them later to make sure a party will be supervised or to share concerns.

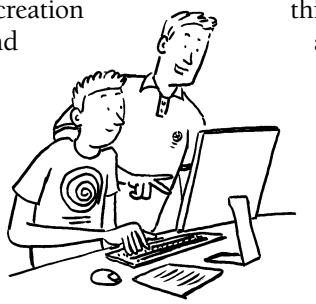
Finally, watch for signs of alcohol use. Casually smell her breath, look for changes in her sleeping habits, and watch for falling grades or dropping out of activities. If you suspect anything, talk to her and to her school counselor or pediatrician.

Learning together

Spend time with your child while helping him pick up new skills or sharpen existing ones. Here's how:

- Local communities are full of opportunities to try one-time or weekly courses for little or no cost. The two of you might sign up for a nature hike or watercolor class. Check recreation centers, libraries, parks, and community colleges for activities.

- Board games can provide practice with logic and math. Choose a game to play throughout the school year, and track the results. You could play Monopoly an hour each week and keep a running tally of everyone's money. Or try Mancala, backgammon, or chess. Keep a list of wins and losses, and crown a champion when school is out.



- Your teen may know how to do something you don't, such as starting a blog or making playlists. Ask him to show you how. By giving you step-by-step instructions, he'll practice communicating clearly. In return, teach him a skill of yours (fixing appliances, making fudge).

OUR PURPOSE

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

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