

High School Parents[®]

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Loudoun County Public Schools

still make the difference!



Teach your teen how to show respect at home and at school

Teenagers spend a lot of time speaking to their friends. They often use slang and joke around with one another. And more often than not, they may slip into this attitude when speaking to teachers or other classmates, not realizing that it is possibly disrespectful.

Teens need to think about being respectful—and it's up to you to show your teen how to do so. Your teen can show respect through:

- **How he speaks.** Your teen should speak slowly, clearly and calmly. He should also address people properly by saying “yes, sir,” or “yes, ma’am,” or using their titles, such as “yes, Officer.” And of course, using the magic words—*please* and *thank you*—is always a great way to show respect.

- **His body language.** Smiling, nodding and making eye contact show someone that they are being respected. Your teen should also sit or stand up straight and avoid crossing his arms or rolling his eyes.
- **His overall attitude.** By not interrupting others, your teen shows his respect. He should also keep his cool even when he disagrees with what someone is saying. Valuing another's thoughts and beliefs—even if they differ from your own—is a big sign of respect.

If your teen uses these methods to show respect, he'll be respected in turn by teachers, fellow students, friends and family.

Source: G. Vassar, “Respect: One Antidote for Shame,” Lakeside Educational Network, <http://lakesideconnect.com/anger-and-violence/respect-one-antidote-for-shame>.

Your teen can review with a twisting game



Keep your teen active and make memorizing facts fun with a game. All she needs is

a set of colored index cards. Use one color (yellow) to write down a word, date or key concept. Use another color (blue) to write corresponding information.

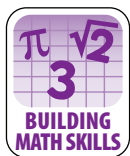
Spread the cards on the floor in rows of four. Have your teen put her left foot on a yellow card. Then place her right foot on the blue card that holds the correct information. Without moving her feet, have her place her left hand on another yellow card and her right hand on its corresponding blue card.

Have her keep her hands in place and repeat the process, placing her left foot on another yellow card and her right foot on the match.

When your teen sees questions on the test, she'll remember how she twisted herself to find the correct answer.

Source: A. Crossman, *Study Smart, Study Less*, Ten Speed Press.

Use manipulatives to boost your high schooler's interest in math



In elementary school, teachers reinforced math concepts with physical items called manipulatives. In high school, more difficult concepts are usually taught with pencil and paper. But you can make math come alive for your teen! Here's how:

- **Go back to basics.** Try a simple card game to reinforce math basics like multiplication. For two players, divide a deck of cards in two. Have each player flip over a card at the same time. The first player to multiply the two numbers and say the answer out loud "wins" the cards. The player who collects the most cards at the end of the game wins.

- **Work with what you know.** When you're determining how much mulch to buy to fill your flower bed or when you need to cut at a 45 degree angle, you're using geometry. Involve your teen in these simple household activities, and you'll be showing firsthand how important these skills are.

Source: M. Curtain-Phillips, M.Ed., "Manipulatives: The Missing Link in High School Math," Math Goodies, www.mathgoodies.com/articles/manipulatives.html.

"Maturity is when your world opens up and you realize that you are not the center of it."

—M.J. Croan

Studies show sleep impacts your teen's learning and memory



For years, researchers thought that the older people get, the less sleep they need. But recently, they have discovered that it simply isn't true—especially when it comes to teenagers. Teenagers actually need as much sleep as young children!

Teenagers need about nine hours of sleep each night, but most high school students only get about seven. This is a concern because lack of sleep affects learning and memory—which in turn affects teens' school success.

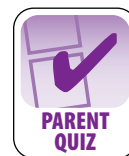
Of course, it's important to get a good night's sleep before a test. But it's equally important to get a good night's sleep after learning something new. While sleeping, the brain categorizes the new information and makes it easier to remember.

To help your teen get enough sleep, suggest that she:

- **Stick to a routine bedtime.** Experts suggest 10 p.m. Tell her to dim the lights about an hour before bed to get her body ready to sleep.
- **Make her room "sleep friendly."** Keep the temperature cool. Turn off all music. Keep the computer and TV out of her room. Place her cell phone and charger in the kitchen at night.
- **Don't oversleep on weekends.** If your teen usually gets up at 6 a.m. on weekdays, don't let her sleep till noon on Saturdays. That extra sleep confuses the body. One to two hours of extra sleep is plenty.

Source: S. Spinks, "Adolescents and Sleep," Frontline: PBS, www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/from/sleep.html.

Are you helping your teen prepare for the future?



It's never too early to start talking to your teen about his future. Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to see

if you are helping your teen stay on the right track:

- __ **1. Have you scheduled** a meeting with your teen and his counselor to discuss his goals?
- __ **2. Have you made sure** your teen is taking the classes he will need to be admitted to college?
- __ **3. Have you helped** your teen prepare for some type of training after high school if he isn't going to college? Not all good jobs require a college degree, but they do require more than a high school diploma.
- __ **4. Have you encouraged** your teen to choose elective classes that will help him meet his goals?
- __ **5. Have you talked** to your teen about how important his grades are? Slacking off will not help him prepare for college or a job.

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* answer means your teen is on the right track. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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The Parent Institute®, 1-800-756-5525,
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Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
Editor: Rebecca Miyares.

Writers: Kris Amundson & Jennifer McGovern.
Illustrator: Joe Mignella.

'E-grounding' your teen can be an effective discipline strategy



"Go to your room!" This common punishment might not have quite the bite it used to—especially if your teen has a cell phone or a computer in his room. So what's a parent to do when a teen misbehaves? Try "e-grounding" your teen.

E-grounding your teen means restricting his access to technology in some way as a form of punishment. But that isn't always easy—especially when he needs to use the computer for homework or needs a cell phone to call you when it's time to pick him up from practice.

Here are some parents' suggestions for effective e-grounding:

- **Go for the prized possession.** If it's too much hassle to limit *all* of your teen's technology, aim for the item he loves most. If he's a gamer, take his Xbox. If he's

always texting, take away his phone while he's grounded.

- **Change the password.** Your teen won't be able to access the Internet if you change the wireless password. He'll have to ask you for it, so you'll know when he's trying to get online—and that gives you a chance to remind him the Internet is for homework use only.
- **Get help.** If you don't feel tech-savvy enough to try any of these changes on your own, call your Internet or cell service provider. Many companies offer tools that allow you to restrict your teen's use of these services—like only letting text messages be sent or received by a phone during certain hours.

Source: J. Ludden, and A. Lenhart, "'E-Grounding' Parents' New Disciplinary Weapon," National Public Radio, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129727769.

Help your teenager think ahead and solve problems with SWOT



It's tough for teens to plan ahead and solve problems—their brains just aren't developed enough yet. But you can help by teaching your teen a four-step process called SWOT Analysis.

Here's how it works:

- S Strengths.** Have your teen start thinking about problems by considering his strengths. What does he do well? Thinking of strengths helps teens feel that they can solve problems.
- W Weaknesses.** Taking a look at his weaknesses will help your teen head off problems before they get worse. Teens who know they put

things off can set aside time for a project before the last minute.

- O Opportunities.** Teens are more likely to carry out a plan if they can see what lies ahead. "If I get my research paper done before the weekend, I'll be able to go to Jeff's. Otherwise, I'll have to study and miss the party."
- T Threats.** There are always obstacles that threaten progress. It helps to think about these obstacles before they occur. "I'll turn off my cell phone so I can concentrate on writing the paper. I'll text my friends back when I'm finished."

Source: "SWOT Analysis," MindTools, www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm.

Q: I know many teens don't talk with their parents. Mine does—about every five minutes when she's doing homework. If she's writing an essay, she asks, "What's the best way to say this?" If she's doing math, she wants me to check her answers. She's having trouble in many of her classes and I don't want her to fail. But I also want to stop doing her homework. What should I do?

Questions & Answers

A: While it may be okay to help kids with homework when they're in elementary school, that should stop when they get to high school. From here on out, it's better to err on the side of doing too little, rather than doing too much.

If you constantly help your teen with homework, you are encouraging her to be dependent. As long as she knows Mom will check her math, she doesn't have to worry about accuracy.

You're also making it harder for her teachers to figure out *why* she's having trouble in their classes. Clearly, she doesn't understand the work if she is doing poorly even with your help.

Share your concerns with your teen. Tell her that your *help* has not been very helpful. Set limits on what you will and won't do. You will help her get organized. You will act as a sounding board when she's trying to figure out what to write. But you will not check every assignment.

It may be a rough adjustment, but as you do less, your teen will do more. And with her teachers' help, she can work on bringing up her grades.

—Kris Amundson,
The Parent Institute

It Matters: Reading

Three ways to enjoy reading with your teen



In some ways, your teen may be more challenging to parent now than when he was younger.

The risks he can take are bigger. The consequences for bad choices may be longer lasting.

But there are also some wonderful benefits to raising a teenager. One is that you can truly enjoy reading in a way you couldn't when he was younger. (Be honest: Didn't you get just a little tired of reading *The Cat in the Hat*?) Now you can talk about characters or themes.

Here are three ways to enjoy reading with your teen:

1. **Read what he's reading** in English class. Get a copy of the novel he is reading. The two of you can take turns reading it aloud. But you can also discuss the book before and after he talks about it in class.
2. **Read one of the books** he and his friends are reading. There's some terrific fiction that is aimed at young adults. Ask a librarian for some recommendations. Or just look to see what books he and his friends are carrying around in their backpacks.
3. **Enjoy the movie?** Then read the book. Some of the best young adult fiction series have been made into movies. Try reading and discussing the book. Then watch the movie again. Talk about which version you prefer.

Source: M. Borba, "9 Tips to Get Kids and Teens to READ! (and even like it)," Reality Check, www.micheleborba.com/blog/2009/11/28/9-parenting-solutions-to-help-beat-the-summer-reading-slump/.

Encourage your teenager to evaluate what she reads online

Where does your teen get the news of the world (or your neighborhood)? Odds are, she's reading it online.

Studies show that teens prefer to learn about the news by visiting online news sites. More than six in 10 teens say they go online to find out about current events.

Of course, not all online news sites are created equal. Some present the news in a balanced way. Others have a clear point of view. Be sure your teen understands which is which.

You may also want to:

- **Share some websites** you like to visit. Ask your teen to show you where she gets her news.



- **Make comparisons.** Watch a news story on a television news show. Then go online to read how the story is covered.

Source: "Teens Prefer Reading News Online to Twitter," The Guardian, www.guardian.co.uk/media/pda/2010/feb/04/pew-research-teenagers-online-behaviour.

New study highlights benefits of independent reading



Doing assigned reading for school is important. But research shows that there are benefits from independent reading.

Yet many teens never read anything that isn't assigned. They spend less than two percent of their free time reading. And that figure declines as they grow older.

According to a number of research studies, these teens are missing out. Students who read more have better grades. They score higher on achievement tests in all subject areas. They get into better colleges. And they are more successful as adults.

Teens who read outside of school develop a larger vocabulary. Their reading comprehension is also stronger. Best of all, they simply know more about a wider range of subjects.

What can you do to encourage your teen to read more? Keep plenty of reading material around. Don't worry if your teen isn't reading "heavy" material. Light reading leads to more reading. Look for articles to share with your teen. And turn off the TV for just 30 minutes a day so everyone can read.

Source: B.E. Cullinan, "Independent Reading and School Achievement," American Association of School Librarians, www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume32000/independent.cfm.