

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Take a summer class

Does your teen want to complete a high school requirement, get a jump on college, or pursue an interest this summer? Have her consider taking a class. Options include online classes, regular summer school, or dual enrollment at a community college. She can talk to her school counselor now to explore opportunities.

### DID YOU KNOW?

National high school graduation rates have climbed higher than ever—84 percent of the class of 2015–16 graduated on time. To help *your* teenager thrive in school, encourage him to build good relationships with a few teachers. He could schedule after-school chats to ask questions, share ideas, and get advice.

### Helmet safety

Your child might resist wearing a bike helmet, saying it's "not cool." But an approved, properly fitted helmet offers protection in a fall and reduces the risk of head and brain injuries. So let your teen know it's like wearing a seat belt in the car: a requirement. (For quick fit tips, watch [safekids.org/video/safety-seconds-bike-helmets](http://safekids.org/video/safety-seconds-bike-helmets).)

### Worth quoting

"We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon."  
*Konrad Adenauer*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What happened when a farmer counted 95 cows in her field?

**A:** After she rounded them up, she had 100.



## "I can make a difference"

Volunteering is a wonderful way to get involved in the community and help others. It can also give your high schooler skills and experience to list on college applications and to use in the future. Encourage him to choose a cause he cares about and an approach that works for him.



### Serve

Volunteer service opportunities exist everywhere—in formal programs or by helping people informally.

**Examples:** Walk dogs at a pet shelter. Help coach in a wheelchair basketball league. Stock shelves at a food pantry. Make audio recordings of books for the visually impaired. Shop for a house-bound relative. Do yard work for an elderly neighbor. Pack disaster-relief kits.

### Gain skills

Suggest that your teenager get training that could make a difference in others' lives.

**Examples:** Take courses in CPR and first aid. Get certified as a lifeguard. Train to be an EMT (emergency medical

technician). Learn to help lead English conversation classes at your local library. Enroll in training to become a peer counselor or teen crisis hotline volunteer.

### Stand up

Your teen can also have a positive impact by standing up for his beliefs, for people who are "outsiders," and against injustices he sees.

**Examples:** Start a petition. Create a neighborhood watch program. Partner up with a lonely classmate on a class project. Reach out to a student who is being bullied. Help people register to vote. 👍

## Fun with word games

Having a rich vocabulary can make your teen's writing and speaking more powerful. Play these language-building games together.

■ **Letter chain.** Pick a topic, such as music. The first player says a word related to the topic. The next player gives a word beginning with the last letter of the previous word, and so on. *Example:* guitar, rhapsody, yodel. The game ends when a player gets stumped.

■ **Category collection.** Choose a category (trees). Give each player paper and pencil. Set a timer for 60 seconds. Each person writes as many related words as she can (*birch, fir, apple*). When the timer stops, the longest list wins. *Variation for three or more players:* Cross off words another player has. The person with the most unique words wins. 👍



# Boost presentation skills

Learning to speak confidently in front of a group and to give presentations that “wow” prepares your teenager for success in school and the workplace. These ideas can help her develop her technique.

## Watch TED Talks

The popular website *ted.com* features thousands of videos from top speakers. Topics include science, business, education, psychology, and more. Your high schooler can even watch TED Talks on public speaking and making better presentations. *Tip:* After learning from the pros, she could create her own talk on a favorite topic to share with your family.



library. Besides creating PowerPoint slides, she can learn to add sound effects, music, videos, photos, and charts. *Tip:* Encourage her to incorporate these elements for her next class presentation, campaign speech for student government, or proposal at a school club meeting. 👍

## Add tech twists

Great presentations often involve more than “talking heads.” To make a good impression, your teen might include visuals that drive home key points. Suggest that she experiment with different computer programs at home, school, or the



## Q & A Taming teen tempers

**Q** My son often lets his temper get the best of him. How can I help him control his anger?

**A** When you combine the stress of high school with hormone-fueled mood swings, it's not surprising that temper flare-ups are common at this age.

Suggest that your son hit a mental pause button when he feels anger building. He might notice warning signs like

his heart racing, his shoulders tensing up, and his voice getting louder.

Once he knows how his body reacts to anger, he can put coping steps in place. He might take a calming deep breath or count to 10.

Taking just a few seconds to pause allows your teen to gain awareness of his emotions, breathe, and think first. As a result, he'll be less likely to let his anger take control. 👍



## Make prom more affordable

A memorable prom doesn't have to break the bank. Share these money-saving tips with your high schooler.

**Formal wear.** Ask friends, relatives, and neighbors if they have a tux or gown you can borrow. Or shop from sale racks or consignment stores. Also, many schools and community groups hold free prom dress events in the weeks before prom.

**Salon services.** Play salon and spa at home with a group of friends. Do each other's nails, hair, and makeup. Another idea is to get your hair done at a cosmetology school, which will charge less.

**Dinner.** Rather than going out for an expensive pre-prom meal, host a potluck. Each couple can bring a dish, and you could set a table with nice dishes and candlelight. Or everyone can pitch in a few dollars and you can order pizzas to eat at home. 👍



## Parent to Parent Why grammar still matters

In an age of “LOL” and emojis, many teens (including my daughter) wonder whether grammar matters anymore.

I explained to Sarah that poor grammar can get in the way of communicating clearly. She might have a great idea to share, but if it's filled with mistakes, people are less likely to take it—and her—seriously. And when she starts applying to colleges or jobs, sloppy writing could distract from her good qualities.

Bad punctuation may also cause confusion and even change the meaning of a sentence. To let Sarah see this for herself, I pointed out a sign without punctuation: “No trespassing violators will be prosecuted” —it sounded like trespassers *wouldn't* be prosecuted! Sarah realized it should read: “No trespassing. Violators will be prosecuted.”

Now we often look for mistakes on signs and laugh as we correct them. I think she's starting to understand why language rules *do* matter. 👍



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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