

# High School Parents<sup>®</sup>

May 2020  
Vol. 27, No. 9

Jessieville School District

***still make the difference!***



## Use a school-year review to help your teen set new goals

**A**s this academic year draws to a close, review the school year with your teen. This will give him a benchmark to use as he sets academic goals for next year.

Schedule time to sit down with your teen to discuss his views on his progress this past year:

- **Did he do as well** in his classes as he had hoped he would?
- **Does he feel** that his grades reflect what he learned?
- **What was his favorite class** and why?
- **What was his least favorite class** and why?

Then, ask your teen what he would like to improve. For example, would he like to strengthen his writing and

earn a higher grade in English next year? Encourage him to come up with a list of goals he'd like to accomplish and have him write them down.

Next, work together to list steps your teen will have to take to reach each goal. Is there anything he can do now to work toward these goals? For example, he might take a writing class at a local community college over the summer to build his writing skills.

Whatever plan he comes up with, be sure to support him along the way. Knowing that you have high expectations—and that you believe in him—helps to motivate your teen to work hard so he can reach his goals.

## Create a plan to tackle summer assignments



Many high school teachers require students to do an assignment over the summer.

Encourage your teen to:

- **Review the assignment** *before* the school year ends. That way she can get clarification if something is unclear. She should also make sure she has contact information for the teacher.
- **Make sure** she has the resources she needs. If your teen must read a book for the assignment, she should get it early. The library may run out of copies of the title if she waits too long to check it out.
- **Get started early.** Some teens put off their assignments until the last few days of the summer. That usually leads to sleepless nights and rushed work. Help your teen create a plan that will allow her to finish early.
- **Give her best effort.** First impressions matter. Let your teen know that this assignment will help shape what next year's teacher thinks of her.

# Teach your teen that respect is vital in healthy relationships



When people use the words *teens* and *respect* in the same sentence, they are usually remarking on disrespectful behavior toward adults or teens' self-respect. It is unusual to hear someone talk about teens' respect for one another, even though that is equally important.

Relationships—with friends and significant others—matter to teens. However, many teens find themselves in abusive relationships. One in three teens is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner.

To promote healthy relationships, talk with your teen about the importance of respect. Explain that people who respect each other:

- **Can talk openly.** They aren't afraid to be direct and honest.

- **Work together to make decisions.** They also support and listen to each other.
- **Balance their time** between friends and family. A relationship where two people see no one but each other isn't healthy.
- **Feel free to be themselves.** People in a healthy relationship accept the other person's differences.

Source: "Dating Abuse Statistics," Loveisrespect, [niswc.com/high\\_loveisrespect](http://niswc.com/high_loveisrespect).

**"Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year."**

—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Encourage your teen to exercise and stay healthy this summer



Does your teen think she is going to sleep all day, every day during summer break? Don't let her waste her summer!

Encourage your teen to get some exercise. It doesn't take long for a habit to form—and daily exercise is a great habit to have.

Teens who exercise regularly:

- **Earn better grades.**
- **Are less likely to become overweight.**
- **Have stronger bones and muscles.**
- **Sleep better** than those who don't exercise regularly.
- **Have higher self-esteem.**
- **Are less stressed** and better able to handle problems.

The key is to make exercise fun.

Your teen doesn't have to run nine

miles every day (unless she really enjoys running). She can split her workout time into shorter bursts.

Maybe she'd prefer to walk for 15 minutes in the morning and swim at the local pool for 30 minutes later in the day. Or maybe your teen and her friends would like to join a summer sports league. Then they can experience the benefits of exercising their bodies and their social skills at the same time.

And while your teen is exercising, make sure she has the proper fuel for her body. The summer is a great time to incorporate plenty of water, fresh fruits and vegetables into her diet.

Source: I. Esteban-Cornejo and others, "Independent and Combined Influence of the Components of Physical Fitness on Academic Performance in Youth," *The Journal of Pediatrics*.

# Are you boosting your teen's concentration?



As the weather gets warmer, your teen's concentration may start to diminish. Are you helping him stay

focused? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

\_\_\_1. **Do you encourage** your teen to participate in a focus-building activity he enjoys? For some kids, this might be reading; for others, it could be sports or chess club.

\_\_\_2. **Do you set limits** on recreational screen time? Extended time in front of a TV, computer, tablet or smartphone can reduce concentration.

\_\_\_3. **Do you encourage** your teen to finish tasks and praise him for doing so?

\_\_\_4. **Do you discourage** multitasking? It's difficult for your teen to concentrate on homework if he is also watching Netflix and texting friends.

\_\_\_5. **Do you minimize** interruptions when your teen is working hard?

**How well are you doing?**

Mostly *yes* answers mean you are helping your child maintain good concentration. Mostly *no* answers? Check the quiz for some suggestions.

**High School Parents**  
*still make the difference!*

Practical Ideas for Parents to Help Their Children. ISSN: 1523-1291

For subscription information call or write:  
The Parent Institute, 1-800-756-5525,  
P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474.  
Fax: 1-800-216-3667.

Or visit: [www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com).

Published monthly September through May.  
Copyright © 2020, The Parent Institute, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc., an independent, private agency. Equal opportunity employer.

Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.  
Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.  
Editor: Rebecca Hasty Miyares.

# Establish limits for your teen's recreational screen time



Today's teens average roughly seven hours a day of recreational screen time. And 69% of them are spending over an hour each day watching online videos.

Texting with friends has replaced hanging out at the park. Watching Netflix and TikTok videos has replaced reading for fun. But that doesn't mean your teen has to join the crowd.

Take four steps to help your teen monitor and limit his recreational screen time this summer:

1. **Ask your teen** to pay attention to how he uses digital media. How many hours per week does he spend watching online videos, playing video games and browsing social media? Have him keep track of his time for one week. He may be surprised by how much time he actually spends staring at a screen.

2. **Discuss what your teen** is doing. New video games come out every month. Take a look at the games your teen is playing and check the age ratings. Make sure you are aware of the apps he uses and the websites he visits online, too.

3. **Encourage your teen** to become a critical viewer. When watching a show, help him question what he sees. Would he act the same way the main character did? Does he think that movie's violence was necessary to develop the plot?

4. **Offer your teen** other choices. Suggest that he have friends over instead of talking to them online for hours at a time. And always have plenty of reading materials around for him to browse.

**Source:** "The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens," Common Sense Media, [nismc.com/high\\_media2](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/high-media2).

# Is community college a practical option for your teenager?



According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), community colleges enroll almost half of all undergraduates in the United States. That's more than 13 million students!

Students choose community colleges for many reasons, such as:

- **A need to work** and go to school at the same time. Community colleges usually offer flexible schedules of classes.
  - **The cost.** Typically, the cost of tuition and fees at a two-year community college is less than half the cost of a four-year college.
  - **A shorter route to employment.** Many jobs do not require a four-year degree. Programs in many technical occupations offer students a two-year certificate and quick entry into work.
- If your teen thinks community college could be a good fit for him, encourage him to schedule a meeting with a college counselor and ask about:
- **The courses** and programs the school offers.
  - **The cost** to complete a program that interests him. Is financial aid available? Do they have a work-study program?
  - **Options for transferring** to a four-year university. Where do most students from the community college enroll after they complete their first two years? What credits would transfer?

**Q:** There's clearly something bothering my daughter, but she refuses to open up to me. I've asked her to tell me what's upsetting her, but she says nothing. How can I get her to tell me what's going on without being pushy?

## Questions & Answers

**A:** Teenagers are notoriously tight-lipped when it comes to sharing problems with their parents. But you *must* keep trying to find out what is bothering your daughter.

Although it's very likely that the issue is relatively minor, it's important to address it. This is especially true if it drags on for days or weeks.

To encourage your teen to share what's happening—without pressuring her in the process:

- **Tell her you are concerned.** "I feel like there's something you're not telling me. I want you to know I care about you and I'm here for you no matter what. You can talk to me about absolutely anything. Part of my job as a parent is to help you figure things out."
- **Be clear** about your expectations. "I respect your privacy and the fact that you want to handle things on your own, but I need you to tell me what's wrong. You can have a little more time to think it over by yourself, but let's try to figure this out together after dinner tomorrow night."
- **Call in reinforcements.** If your daughter still refuses to talk, go to a teacher, doctor, school counselor, coach or other trusted figure in her life. By working together, you should be able to uncover what's going on with your teen.



# It Matters: Summer Learning

## Summer school benefits teens in three ways



Your teen may be looking forward to a summer job. Or he may be thinking about taking a break

from his studies. But there are several reasons he may want to consider summer school instead.

While summer school isn't for everyone, your teen may be able to:

1. **Master a difficult subject.** If he anticipates that a science or math class is going to be a big challenge for him, taking it in the summer will allow him to concentrate on it. This can be a great option for students who want to make sure they earn good grades for college admission.
2. **Gain credits** toward graduation. If your teen failed a course, summer school will give him an opportunity to take it again. Or if he has been in classes for English language learners, he may want to try a regular English class.
3. **Free up space** for an art or music class. During the regular school year, a student in a demanding academic program may not have room for music or art. Taking a required class in the summer will allow him to include these enriching classes in his school-year schedule.

If your teen decides to take a class over the summer, make sure he understands how important it will be to complete his homework and assigned reading. Because summer classes are taught in such a short time period, missing even one day's homework can put him far behind.

## A part-time job can reinforce skills for school success

A summer job may be your teen's first step into the workforce. It can help her prepare for the demands and responsibilities of the real world. It can also teach her many valuable lessons about responsibility and respect—important ingredients for school success.

A summer job helps your teen learn how to:

- **Be on time.** An employer will depend on your teen to show up when expected. Punctuality demonstrates responsibility.
- **Work with others.** Your teen will have to get along with others and take direction from a supervisor.
- **Be respectful.** Many entry-level jobs involve working with the public. Your teen will need to be polite and helpful to all kinds of people—



even those who may not treat her with the same respect.

- **Think about her future.** Experience in a job can help your teen decide if a line of work is right for her.

## Studies show summer reading improves student achievement



Teens love summer. They look forward to vacations, no school and time with their friends.

But summer can also leave teens with too much time on their hands. Research shows that they strongly benefit from time spent reading, so this summer:

- **Challenge your teen** to read at least four books. One study found that the more books students read during the summer, the higher their academic gains.
- **Encourage your teen** to keep track of new words she learns.

Teens who read one million words a year add at least a thousand words to their vocabularies. And it doesn't matter what they read.

- **Go to the library** often with your teen. Students who use the library over the summer are more likely to read regularly than those who do not.
- **Ask your teen to write reviews** of what she reads. Writing reviews can help her improve her comprehension and strengthen the writing skills she needs for school success.

**Source:** *Kids and Family Reading Report: The Summer Reading Imperative*, Scholastic, [niscwc.com/high\\_summerread2](https://niscwc.com/high_summerread2).