

February 2007

# High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips

### Smart research

Your teen's research projects will go more smoothly if he understands library cataloging systems. Suggest that he ask a librarian how to search online card catalogs and use print and online indexes. Also, have him get familiar with how books are organized on shelves so he can easily find titles he needs.

### A lesson in credit

Give your teen money-management practice with a reloadable, prepaid debit card. These cards allow users to spend only money deposited ahead of time and are not tied to a bank account. Try putting allowance money on the card or having your child add job earnings. To order one, call your credit card company or bank.

### New words

When your child comes across a word she doesn't know, tell her to look at the rest of the sentence for hints. Also, keep a dictionary handy so she can look up words she can't figure out. By building her vocabulary, your teen will improve both her reading and her writing.

### Worth quoting

"I can accept failure, but I can't accept not trying."  
*Michael Jordan*

### Just for fun

**Mrs. Thomas:** It's clear that you haven't studied your geography. What's your excuse?

**Samuel:** Well, my dad says the world is changing every day, so I decided to wait until it settles down.



## Homework helpers

By the time children enter high school, they need to be responsible for their own homework—but they still need support from parents. Use this guide to plan where you can help your teen and where he can help himself.

### Parents:

- Try to be available while your teen studies. He may have questions or need someone to quiz him or proofread his work.
- Supply needed tools such as graph paper, highlighters, and an atlas. *Hint:* Offer to help organize his work space so he can find what he needs.
- Keep in touch with teachers to be sure your child is finishing homework. You could phone or e-mail instructors, or check homework grades online if your school offers this option.

### Students:

- Identify the best place to work. That might be your room, the dining room table, or the library. You should consider whether you like to be around others or prefer silence, and which books and supplies you need nearby.



- Learn how to motivate yourself. For example, if you are too tired to concentrate, you might take a 20-minute nap. If you can't seem to get started, you could take a walk around the block to clear your mind.
- Mixing up the work can keep your brain sharp. Consider completing part of a reading assignment and then solving math problems before going back to finish your reading. 👍

## Stay involved

Attending school functions sends teens the message that their school matters to you. Consider:

**Student activities.** There's never a shortage of sporting events, art fairs, and school plays at high school. Try to attend—whether or not your child is involved. Your support may even encourage your teen to try a new activity down the road.

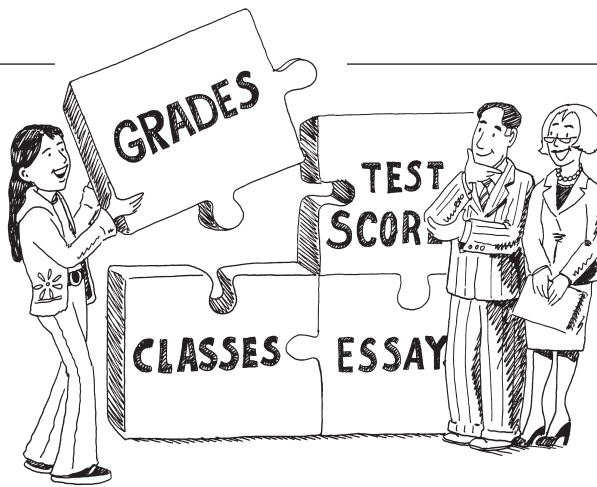
**PTA functions.** Most parent-teacher groups have monthly meetings. This is a good place to meet other parents and learn what is going on during the day.

**Teacher events.** Some schools sponsor teacher breakfasts; others might have award ceremonies. Attending them will show that you appreciate the people who work with your teen. 👍



# What counts with colleges

Scott, a high school junior, wants to be able to put together the best possible college application when the time comes—but he isn't sure what colleges are looking for. He can increase his chances of acceptance by knowing these criteria.



**ACT and SAT** scores usually count a great deal. Students should commit time to studying for these tests so their scores reflect their abilities.

**Class rank**, or where students place in their graduating class, is another factor. Higher grades in honors courses, which are weighted more heavily than regular classes, can help move students higher on the list.

**Grades** need to be consistently good or to improve during high school. Colleges especially want to see solid scores in academic courses. They also like to see students challenging themselves with higher-level, honors, or Advanced Placement classes.

**Other factors** will help college hopefuls round out their applications. Students should strive for well-written essays, extracurricular involvement that shows they've stayed with a meaningful activity over time, recommendations from teachers or advisers who know them well, and job experience or internships that indicate their commitment to work. 👍

## To tell the truth

Why would your teen lie to you? For several reasons, actually.

Maybe he's afraid you'll say no to something he wants to do. Perhaps he thinks you'll be mad about something he has already done. Or he may just want to keep you out of the loop so he feels more independent.



Whatever the reason, let your child know you value honesty. When he tells the truth, tell him how much you appreciate it. Use everyday chances to model honesty, such as telling a waitress that she undercharged you.

Try to keep the lines of communication open so your teen will feel safe telling you the truth. Also, you could consider a lesser consequence if he breaks a rule but is honest about it. Giving your child a harsh punishment could encourage him to lie the next time to avoid being punished. 👍

## Q & A "Dealing" with poker

**Q** My son has started playing poker on Friday nights, and I'm concerned that he might be gambling. What should I do?

**A** Poker has become popular recently among teenage boys, thanks in part to tournaments on TV and Internet gaming. Some parents don't mind, since their children are with friends and probably spending about what they would at the movies. They may not realize, however, that gambling before age 20 triples their chance of becoming a compulsive gambler.

Consider setting guidelines about whether your son may play poker and if betting is allowed. If he plays, make sure there is adult supervision so things don't get out of hand.

Also, talk to your son about the risk of addiction. You might even take him to a Gamblers Anonymous meeting to hear stories firsthand (find chapters at [www.gamblersanonymous.org](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org)). 👍



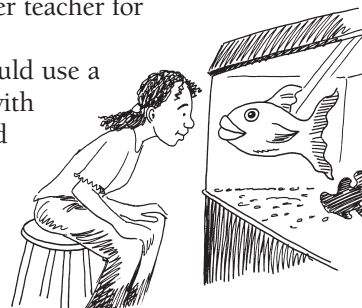
## Parent to Parent The pursuit of science

I was pleased when my daughter showed enthusiasm about her biology class, and I wanted to encourage her interests. Since I don't know very much about science, I asked her teacher for ideas.

Mr. Waters said he could use a classroom aide to help with in-class experiments, and he would see if Allison was interested. He also suggested we look for opportunities for her to see science in

action, perhaps through an internship at the zoo or in a hospital lab. Finally, he suggested we try to take her to the science museum, botanical garden, or aquarium to expose her to different areas of the field.

We're working on all these ideas. It's been fun watching Allison's interest blossom, and I'm excited to be learning right along with her! 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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