

January 2007

# High School 1 YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips

### Teaching kindness

Encourage your high schooler to act kindly by modeling everyday ways to be nice. While out with your teen, you could let another driver take the parking space you were about to pull into. Praise your teen when she acts kindly, too: "That was so nice of you to lend your favorite sweater to your sister."

### Science fairs

Does your teen have a science fair project to do? Steer him to the Internet Public Library Science Fair Project Resource Guide at [www.ipl.org/div/kidspage/projectguide/](http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspage/projectguide/). He'll find topic ideas and suggestions for creating winning projects. Or check out *The Complete Handbook of Science Fair Projects* by Julianne Blair Bochinski.

### Cutting caffeine

If your teen has a taste for coffee or drinks a lot of soda, encourage her to go caffeine-free. Because it's a stimulant, caffeine can make people anxious and jittery and interfere with sleep. Suggest that your child drink no more than one small caffeinated beverage a day, including coffee, soda, tea, and energy drinks.

### Worth quoting

"They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for."  
Tom Bodett

### Just for fun



**Teacher:** What does an 800-pound gorilla eat?

**Student:** Anything he wants.

## Off to a good start

January is a perfect time to reevaluate school habits. Suggest these resolutions to your teen, and watch her succeed.

**Resolution:** Believe you can change.

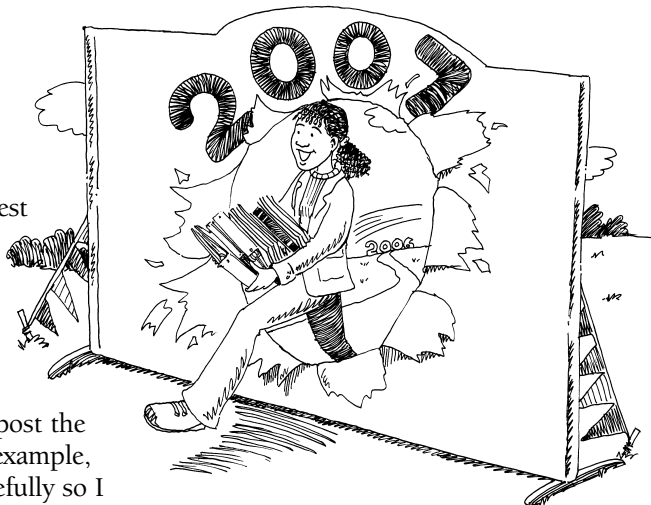
*How to keep it:* Write down a way you can improve, and post the statement by your desk. For example, "I will check all my work carefully so I know it's the best I can do." When you hear yourself thinking, "I'm sure it's fine. I don't need to look at it again," read the statement out loud.

**Resolution:** Take careful notes.

*How to keep it:* When taking notes in class, write neatly and leave plenty of room to add details later. Look over your notes every day to cement the information in your mind.

**Resolution:** Back up computer work.

*How to keep it:* Computers do crash, and networks sometimes go down. When



working on the computer, hit "save" every few paragraphs, and regularly copy your files onto a disk. You also can e-mail copies to yourself as you go.

**Resolution:** Stay on top of your schedule.

*How to keep it:* Maintain a one-stop calendar that includes school assignments, work schedule, and social events. Seeing a day, week, and month at a glance will help you manage your time better. Plan study time first, then work your social life around it. 👍

## Q & A Understanding an underachiever

**Q** My teen could do much better at school. How can I get him to work to his potential?

**A** Start by talking with your child. Why does he think he is not doing better? If he's bored, maybe he needs more challenging courses next semester. Is he unmotivated? Remind him that being successful in school will help him get the college spot or job he wants.

Try to help your child find ways to enjoy his classes more. Look for movies on subjects he's studying, or suggest a volunteer opportunity that relates. Also, talk with your teen's counselor about finding a mentor for him within the school. A teacher he likes, a coach, or the drama director could provide an important connection that will motivate him to work harder. 👍



# Poetry and teens

Poetry is a great vehicle for getting teens to read and write. After all, poems are often about expressing feelings—and teens have plenty of those!

Here are a few ideas to get your high schooler thinking poetically:

- Point out that lyrics for songs are really poetry put to music. Encourage your teen to read the words to his favorite songs (he'll find them online or in the liner notes enclosed in CDs).
- Go to the library together and ask for poetry books that teens like. Two good choices are *The Basket Counts* (Arnold



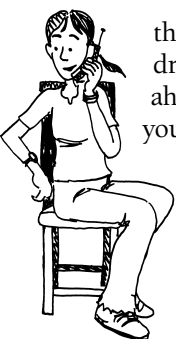
Adoff), which explores basketball through verse, and *Red Hot Salsa*, poems in Spanish and English written through the teen voice (Lori Marie Carlson, editor).

- Sponsor a family “poetry jam.” Have everyone read a favorite poem. Discuss what you think the poem means.
- Encourage your child to write his own poetry. He could discuss a feeling, person, or memory, using his five senses to make descriptions come alive. Remind him that poems can rhyme or not. 👍

## Discipline in action

Discipline vs. punishment. What’s the difference?

Discipline is teaching your child how to behave so he doesn’t make the same mistake again and again, while punishment is a penalty for doing something wrong.



To discipline rather than punish your teen, draw up an action plan ahead of time. Discuss your rules, and set logical consequences for what will happen if your child breaks those rules.

Say you have a rule that your child can use her cell phone only for a specific number of minutes each month. If she goes over her time, have her pay for the extra minutes.

Put the plan in writing so there can be no confusion. Your teen will know what to expect, and you will be more likely to stay calm if she breaks the rule. 👍

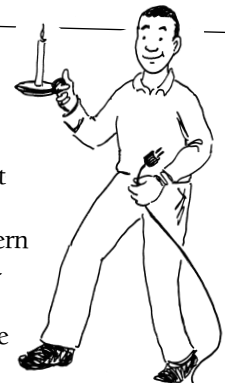
## Then and now

Could your teen imagine growing up without washing machines, DVD players, or microwaves?

Bring history to life for your child by unplugging your gadgets and conveniences for a night. Hungry? Roast marshmallows in the fireplace. Want to read? Light a candle (do not leave it unattended).

When you plug everything back in, let your teen use modern technology to explore the old days at the PBS WayBack: Technology in 1900 Web site (<http://pbskids.org/wayback/tech1900>).

He’ll learn about the world’s first music video, why teenage boys didn’t make the best phone operators, and what speed was considered “fast” for early automobiles (a whopping 24 miles per hour!). After reading the predictions people made in 1900, you and your teen could make up your own forecasts about what life will be like 100 years from now. 👍



## Parent to Parent Speaker anxiety

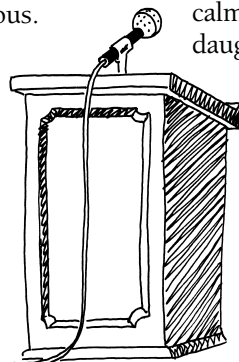
My daughter had to make an oral presentation in front of her English class and, boy, was she nervous.

So I suggested that she practice for our family and let us videotape her. That way, she could get experience speaking for an audience, and she could also review her performance.

Before Samar began, I suggested a trick I use

when I have to make work presentations. I told her to picture herself speaking calmly and clearly. The more my daughter imagined herself doing a good job, the better she would feel about doing it, I told her. I also encouraged her to dress nicely the day of the speech, since feeling good about how you look builds confidence.

In the end, I’m happy to say, Samar not only survived giving her talk—she actually enjoyed it! 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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