

September 2006

# High School YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips

### Memory builder

Remembering facts becomes more important than ever in high school. Help your teen prepare for tests by encouraging her to use a highlighter to mark key information in her notes or text. That way, she'll be able to find important material quickly the next time she reviews.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Graduating students today need the same academic skills whether they plan to go to college or straight into the workforce. So no matter which direction your teen is heading in, encourage him to take a full load of English, math, and science courses.

### Teen friendship

Does your child spend more time with friends than with you these days? It may comfort you to know that time with friends is time well spent. Peer relationships help teens become more independent, and teach important skills like conflict resolution and listening.

### Worth quoting

"You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take."  
Wayne Gretzky

### Just for fun

**Teacher:** Can you tell me why the law of gravity is useful?

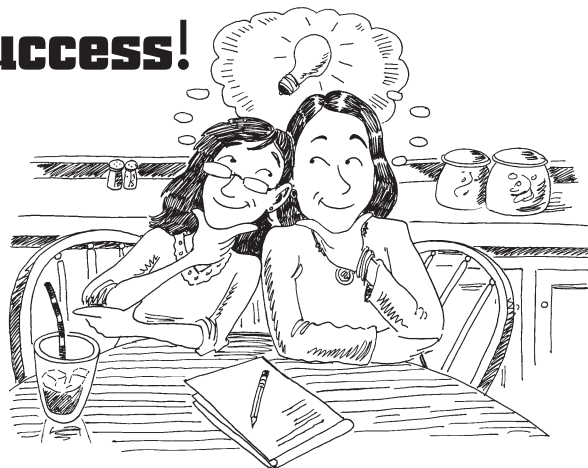
**Student:** If I drop something, it's easier to get it off the floor than off the ceiling.



## Get set for success!

What does a new school year mean in your house? Excitement about seeing friends...new game plans for homework and studying...worries over grades?

This year, help your teen gear up for success with these simple back-to-school strategies.



### Learn from the past

Have your child think about what didn't go so well last school year. Maybe she had trouble scheduling homework time or getting up in the morning. Encourage her to come up with a way to work around those problems. *Examples:* Create a homework plan; go to bed a half-hour earlier. Knowing her weaknesses can help her turn things around.

### Lock up clutter

Being able to find books and supplies quickly can make the difference between stressful transitions and smooth ones. That's why it's smart for your child to take time now to arrange her desk at home and her locker at school. As the

year goes on, suggest that she clean out her locker and organize papers every Friday.

### Set routines

Like younger children, teens take cues from their parents. If you establish morning and evening routines—such as a wake-up call or a regular dinner-time—your teen will know what to expect.

*Note:* Try to make yourself available as much as possible the first few weeks of school. Teens feel secure knowing you're there—even if they don't have much to say to you! 👍

## Hit the ground running

Nothing spells success in high school like getting involved from the start. Joining activities such as yearbook, choir, environmental club, or the track team helps teens:

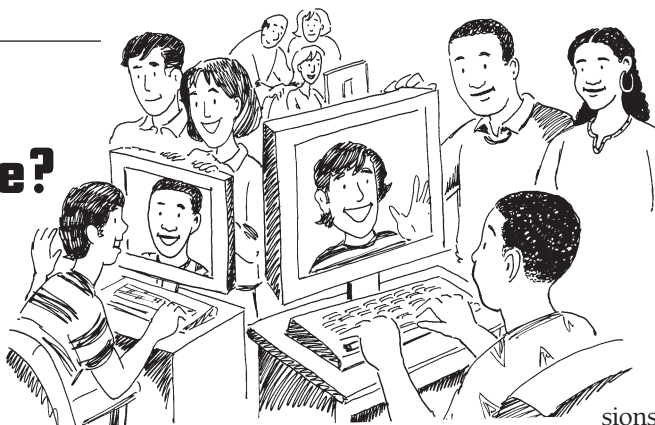
- **Discover more about themselves...**Activities show teens what they like and dislike, which can guide college and career decisions.
- **Become connected...**Students who get involved with faculty, staff, and other teens feel like they're an important part of their school.
- **Manage their time better...**Teens learn to stick to a schedule when their free time is more limited (after school—play practice; after dinner—homework).
- **Stay out of trouble...**Kids who are busy with after-school activities are far less likely to use drugs, be involved in crimes, or get into car accidents. 👍



# MySpace: Whose space?

You may have noticed your teen logging onto something called MySpace.com or Facebook.com recently. That's because these "cyber communities," which didn't even exist a few years ago, are now incredibly popular with high schoolers.

These sites offer fun, as well as practice in communicating by computer—an important work skill today. But they also can lead to safety risks. Make your child cyber-safe with these tips.



**Follow Internet safety rules.** That means no posting of anything personal—including last name, screen name, age, school, city, phone number, picture, or even nearby malls.

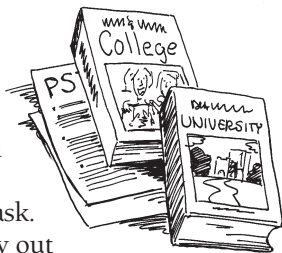
**Be wary.** The people you meet in cyberspace may not be who they say they are.

**Tread carefully.** College admissions officers and employers are checking out these sites. A simple rule: Don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandmother to see!

*Note:* Ask your teenager to show you pages he has posted. If he's reluctant, you can search MySpace.com or other sites using his name or e-mail address. You can even "Google" your child. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), type in his name, and see what comes up. Talk to your teen about what he has written, and go over rules for the future. For more safety tips, check out [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org). 👍

## How to pick a college

For teens—and their parents—selecting the right college can seem like an overwhelming task. Take the mystery out of the process by encouraging your child to plan these steps:



**1** Research your options. You could consult your school guidance office, look for college guidebooks at the library, or do an online search at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**2** Decide what's most important. *Examples:* specific programs, size, location. Visit nearby campuses to see if you like a large or small campus, a city or rural setting, a two-year or four-year school.

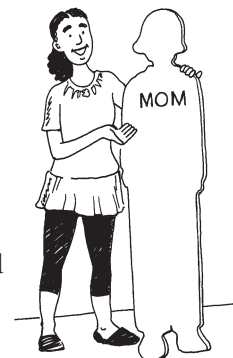
**3** Narrow your list to several colleges in each of these categories: "safety" (will probably get in), "target" (good chance), and "reach" (a long shot). Speak to students who have gone to the schools you're considering and, if possible, visit your top choices. 👍

## Parent to Parent "Invisible" volunteering

When my child started high school, I still wanted to volunteer. But she didn't want me anywhere near her at school! So I talked to the school secretary and found out I could volunteer in many ways—without embarrassing my daughter.

Both the front office and the guidance staff needed help answering phones. One school assistant told me some parents work as aides in classes their children aren't taking. Volunteers also help plan teacher appreciation events, such as luncheons and book giveaways. I found I could even serve on school advisory panels, including one that makes suggestions on the school's curriculum.

My teen was glad to know I could be involved in her education—and be "invisible" at the same time. 👍



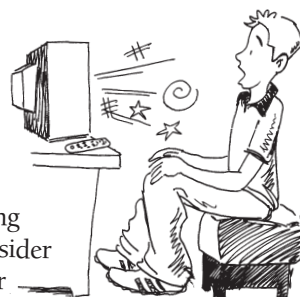
## Q & A Swear off swear words

**Q** My teenager hears curse words everywhere—in school hallways, at friends' houses, and on television and radio. How can I keep him from using foul language when the phrases seem so common today?

**A** With curse words now being used so widely, your teen may not even realize which terms are considered swearing. Start by spelling out the phrases you consider off limits. Then, tell your

child you don't approve of bad language—even if he hears it from friends or on TV. Let your teen know people might swear to look "cool," but that cursing really creates the opposite effect.

Also, set an example by avoiding bad language yourself. If you hear your child swear, ask him to find another way to express himself. *Example:* "I don't want to hear that word. Please use another one." 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
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[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)  
ISSN 1540-5605