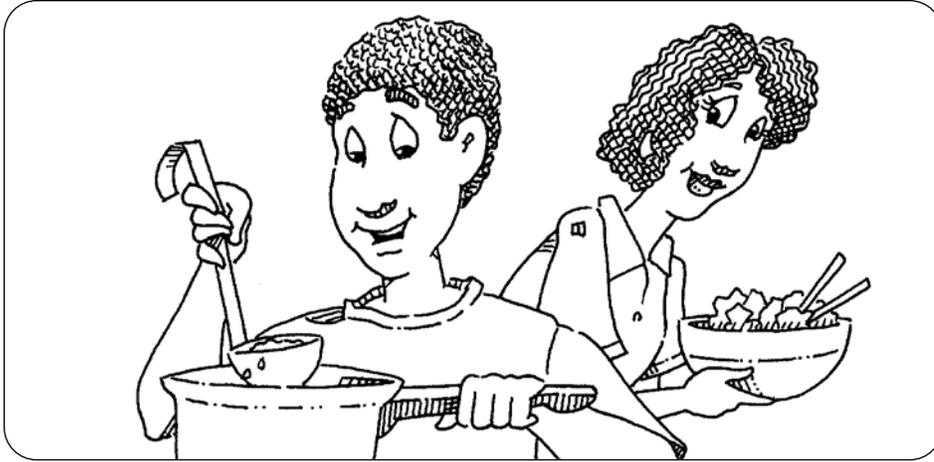


High School Parents[®]

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Yuba County Office of Education

still make the difference!



Recent research uncovers five key tasks for parents of teens

Did you think that most of the big parenting jobs were over? Hardly. The Harvard School of Public Health collected the latest research in *Raising Teens*. It outlines five key tasks for parents of teenagers:

- 1. Love and connect.** Spend time together as a family and spend one-on-one time with your teen. Do familiar things like cooking a meal or watching sports, and add new things like volunteering as a family.
- 2. Guide and limit.** Figure out what's non-negotiable—issues like safety and health. Let your teen know you won't give in on those things. But talk about how you can work together to compromise on issues like clothes, hair and schedules. Give your teen practice in making choices and then living with the results.
- 3. Monitor and observe.** Stay in touch with where your teen is going—and who he's with. Talk with other adults (teachers, coaches) who know about changes in your teen's life. Keep in contact with the school about your teen's grades and attendance.
- 4. Model and consult.** Be a good role model. Take care of your health. Put your values into practice. Your example is more powerful than any words you speak.
- 5. Provide and advocate.** If your community doesn't provide what you think teens need, get active. Network within the community to provide the support you know all teens need. Work with others to add positive support and remove negative influences.

Source: A. Rae Simpson, *Raising Teens*, Harvard School of Public Health, www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/parenting/report.pdf.

Keep your teen motivated in math & science



Studies show that most parents know advanced math and science classes can pay off in higher earnings later in life. But only about one-fourth realize the key to getting those good jobs. It's taking classes like calculus and physics in high school.

Here are ways to keep your teen motivated:

- **Don't let her drop math or science** from her schedule. Many teens (especially girls) take the minimum number of math classes in high school. This almost guarantees that they won't be able to take advanced level courses in college.
- **Help her believe in herself.** Math and science are subjects that require concentration and hard work. Let your child know she can do well if she keeps at it.
- **Encourage her** to take part in math or science club to help her think of herself as good in these subjects.

Source: Ann M. Gallagher and James C. Kaufman, *Gender Differences in Mathematics: An Integrative Psychological Approach*, ISBN: 0-521-82605-5 (Cambridge University Press, 212-924-3900, www.cambridge.org).

Help your teenager brainstorm about ways to change the world



Teens often want to change the world. But some don't see how they can make a difference. Here's an activity that might focus your teen.

Give her a piece of paper, some magazines and some markers. Have her take 10 minutes to answer the question: "If I could change the world, what would it look like?"

She may draw a picture. She may find a quotation that reflects her idea. After she has time to work on the project, have her explain it to you.

Talk about the picture together. Where does she most want to make changes? How could she start making those changes right away? If she's

worried about the environment, could she join the Ecology Club? (Or could she start one at her school?)

Put up the poster where she can see it. It will remind her of how she wants to help change her world.

Source: Mariam G. MacGregor, *Teambuilding with Teens*, ISBN: 9781-5754-2265-7 (Free Spirit Publishing, 1-800-735-7323, www.freespirit.com).

"The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year."

—John Foster Dulles

Encourage your teen to succeed by setting goals for the future



High school is a great time for your child to start thinking about his goals for the future.

Teens with vivid mental pictures of their futures—and the steps they can take to get there—are more likely to stay in school. They are also more likely to succeed in school, as their future plans are great motivation.

Ask your teen if he has given any thought to what he wants to do in the future. He may surprise you with what he says!

Suggest that your teen research his possible plans, either on the Internet or at the library. He may even want to talk to people in his chosen line of work to see what the day-to-day job is like.

Encourage your teen to write down some goals. Ask him to think about:

- **Long-term goals.** What would he like to be doing 10 years from now? Realize this is an eternity to most teens. Fun activities are goals, too—if he'd like to travel the world, he should add that to his list.
- **Short-term goals.** What does he hope to be doing three years from now? How about one year from now?

Have your teen pick his "top three" goals from each list. Then have him list the pros and cons of each one to help him make his decisions.

Source: P. L. Benson and others, *What Teens Need to Succeed: Proven Practical Ways to Shape Your Own Future*, ISBN: 1-57542-027-9 (Free Spirit, 1-800-735-7323, www.freespirit.com).

Is your teenager ready to get an after-school job?



He's desperate to earn some spending money. You're not so sure he's ready for the responsibility of a part-time job.

Here's a quiz to see whether your teen is really ready for after-school work. Answer *yes* or *no* to each question below:

- ___ **1. Does your teen** get himself out of bed and to school on time almost every morning?
- ___ **2. Does your teen** usually make good decisions? Do you trust him to choose good friends?
- ___ **3. Does your teen** take responsibility for his mistakes and try to do better?
- ___ **4. Does your teen** take responsibility for getting his schoolwork completed every day without your nagging?
- ___ **5. Is your teen** able to stick with projects until they are finished?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means your teen is a little closer to accepting the responsibility of a part-time job. If you answered *no* several times, you may want to wait until he is a little more mature.

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Regular exercise can decrease stress and boost school success



No matter how much she has studied the night before, a teen who shows up to school stressed out is not ready to learn.

Stress has a negative effect on student achievement. So how can you help your teen? Promote healthy exercise. Exercise:

- **Helps teens feel happier.** The endorphins also increase energy levels. If your teen is facing writer's block, a quick run might help her come back focused and energized.
- **Is calming.** When your teen is focused on the exercise or game at hand, she's likely to stop focusing on her worries.

- **Increases self-confidence.** If your teen feels like she has more control over her body, she may feel more in control of her life as well.
- **Improves memory.** Studies have shown that the increased blood flow to the brain caused by exercise can help teens remember more.

If your teen says she is so busy that she doesn't have time for exercise, suggest that she try to schedule a workout in her daily routine. Or work out together—you could probably use the decrease in stress as much as your teen!

Source: "Exercise: Rev up your routine to reduce stress," MayoClinic.com, www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise-and-stress/SR00036.

Research shows most parents are aware of teen substance abuse!



It is commonly assumed that most parents are in the dark on the topic of their teenager's cigarette, alcohol or marijuana

habits. But a recent study conducted by the University of Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions found that, in fact, most parents are aware of their teen's drinking, cigarette smoking and marijuana use.

In the study, 82 percent of parents accurately reported teen cigarette smoking. Eighty-six percent reported their teen's alcohol use. And 86 percent of parents were able to verify their teen's marijuana habits.

Parents who were not aware of their teen's substance abuse habits tended to have younger teens (about 14 or 15) or were dealing with their own addictions.

Research suggests that you can be more aware of your teen's substance abuse if you:

- **Reduce your own substance use.** As much as your teen claims to be an "adult," she still looks to you as a role model.
- **Keep tabs** on what your teens is doing—all of the time. It is especially important that you know what your teen is up to after school, at night and on weekends.
- **Look for signs** of substance abuse, even if your teen is young.
- **Get help.** Programs on how to cope with teen substance abuse can help you gain vital parenting skills and lessen the effects of stress on the whole family.

Source: "Most Parents Can Accurately Evaluate Their Teen's Substance Abuse, Study Says," ScienceDaily, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/10/071025080834.htm.

Q: My teen says he can't do his homework unless he is listening to music. I think it's too distracting. I'd rather not keep arguing, but if music is going to hurt his ability to study, then I'll stick to my position. Frankly, his grades aren't that great.

Questions & Answers

A: You are not the only parent who is having this conversation. One study found that 53 percent of all teens do at least one other thing while studying. Some listen to music. Some text message or IM their friends. Some watch TV.

This multi-tasking can cause real problems. Here are two:

1. **Kids have to learn** to concentrate. Teens can't concentrate when there are three or four different things competing for attention.
2. **Research shows** that students who try to study while they are distracted learn less and remember even less of what they did learn.

A recent UCLA study found that multi-tasking affects how the brain learns and remembers. People who are distracted have a much harder time learning facts and concepts. (And most homework does involve learning facts and concepts.) In order to remember things, teens have to pay attention while they are learning.

So the key for homework is to find a way to keep distractions to a minimum. For most students, listening to quiet music—no head banger stuff, and probably no lyrics—is not too distracting. But say *no* to the TV, the cell phone and the Internet.

—Kristen Amundson,
The Parent Institute

It Matters: Discipline

Work with your teenager to set a proper curfew



Setting a curfew for your teen can be a challenge. Almost all teens think they should be exempt from curfews for one reason or another.

To establish an effective and fair curfew:

- **Talk to your teen** about why he needs a curfew. Stress that it isn't (necessarily) that you don't trust him—it's more to help you sleep at night, knowing that he's safely in bed after a certain time.
- **Choose a "regular" curfew** together. Curfews work best when teens have a say in them.
- **Agree that your teen** will call you if he thinks he is going to be late. He should also call you if his destination changes.
- **Consider allowing** a later curfew for special events. But explain that he may have to be home earlier than curfew when he has to be up early the next day.
- **Trust your teen** to follow through on his end of the bargain. Don't just sit by the front door with a clock.
- **Reevaluate the curfew** after a few weeks. If your teen has been consistently coming home later than curfew, it may be time to set stricter rules. But if he has been coming home on time, praise his responsibility and consider allowing him greater freedom in the future.

Source: Denise Witmer, "Tips on Curfews," ParentingTeens.com, www.parentingteens.about.com/library/weekly/aa111699.htm.

Show your teenager that you discipline because you care

To discipline your teen effectively, you need to show her that you care—that you really are doing this "for her own good" and not for the joy she thinks you get from grounding her.

There are many simple ways to show your teen how much you care. Here are just a few:

- **Smile when you see your teen.**
- **Cook your teen's favorite food** for her—or with her.
- **Keep promises.** This shows your teen she is important to you.
- **Support your teen's choices**—and help her learn from the ones that didn't turn out so well.
- **Listen to your teen's favorite music** with her—without judging it. Just "hang out" together.



- **Praise her** when she does something well. Even praise for little things, like remembering to take out the trash, can mean a lot.

Source: Dianne Lancaster, "44 Ways to Show Kids You Care," Partnership for a Drug-Free America, www.drugfree.org/Parent/Connecting/44_Ways_to_Show_Kids_You_Care.

Break the cycle of criticism, disrespect in your household



Your teen's report card is less than impressive. Your question is really a criticism: "What's your excuse this time?"

You are not likely to get a positive response. Instead, your teen is probably going to focus on your criticism—and not on what he needs to do differently.

Try changing the way you ask questions. Turn the focus from your irritation to your teen's behavior.

Here's how:

- **Instead of asking:** "What did you do this time?" try asking: "What could you do differently next time?"

- **Instead of asking:** "Do you really think I'm going to believe that story?" try asking: "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
- **Instead of asking:** "Do you expect me to believe that grade reflects the best you can do?" try asking: "What are some things you can do to bring up your grade in math?"

Asking these questions shows respect for your teen and will help him develop problem-solving skills.

Source: SiriNam S. Khalsa, *Teaching Discipline & Self-Respect*, ISBN: 9781-4129-1548-9 (Corwin Press, a SAGE Publications Company, 1-800-233-9936, www.corwinpress.com).