

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Maps still matter

Map and navigation skills are important, even if your teen has GPS. It's often helpful to have alternate routes, and GPS may not always be available. Have your child use a map and serve as "copilot" on road trips this holiday season. You could ask her to navigate your walking routes from a map, too.

### Consider your approach

When your high schooler makes a decision you don't agree with, try approaching him as you would another adult. He'll be more likely to take your advice if he feels like you're conferring with him, rather than telling him what to do. *Example:* "If you make plans for Sunday, when will you finish your project?"

### "Survey says"

Give your teen a taste of survey tools she might need on the job one day. Suggest that she find out the most popular movie of the year among her friends. Or have her determine the activities for your family reunion next spring. She can use free technology like SurveyMonkey, Zoomerang, or Poll Everywhere—and report back with the answers.

### Worth quoting

"We know what we are, but know not what we may be." *William Shakespeare*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What does an alien call his patio?

**A:** Outer space!



## Showing grit

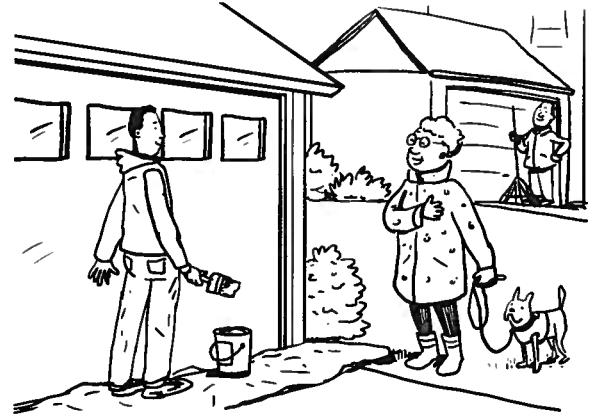
Does your teenager face obstacles with courage and determination? Can he take challenges in stride? *Grit*, or mental toughness, will help him stay strong even when it seems difficult. Here are characteristics of people with grit.

### "I finish what I start."

When your teen feels like quitting a project or an activity, sticking with it will build mental strength. If he agrees to paint a neighbor's garage or enters an engineering contest, he should keep his commitment even if he doesn't want to. Collecting his own success stories can inspire him to keep going in the future.

### "I learn from setbacks."

Tell your high schooler to think of setbacks as stepping-stones. For instance, failing his driving test might make him realize that he needs to practice coming to a complete stop, which will make him a safer driver. Or not getting the



after-school job he wants could show him that he needs to work on interview skills—a lesson that may help him land his dream job someday.

### "I'm my own cheerleader."

Suggest that your child cheer himself on. First, tell him motivating things you say to yourself when you're struggling with something (say, a tough project at work). *Examples:* "I've got this!" or "I've handled bigger challenges before." Then, when he struggles with chemistry equations or with memorizing his part in the school play, ask how he plans to encourage himself. 👍

## Conferences in high school

Meeting with teachers can help you keep your teen on track for graduation and beyond. Prepare for parent-teacher conferences with these suggestions:

- Carry a list of questions. Ask your high schooler what she wants you to mention, and add questions you have. Aside from specific concerns, find out about her overall performance. ("Does her effort match her potential?" "What are some ways she can improve?")

- Make minutes count. Plan to arrive a little early so you're not rushed. Then, agree on a way to follow up if time runs out.

*Note:* If you can't attend a conference in person, try to touch base with teachers on the phone or by email. 👍



## Stay focused in a high-tech world

When high schoolers do homework, they may be tempted to check Instagram, text friends, or watch music videos. But if your teen is multitasking, she's probably not doing as good a job or working as efficiently as she could. Consider these ideas.

**Don't look!** Some kids constantly check for texts and notifications. Encourage your child to fight the urge by physically removing distractions from her study



space. She could put her phone in another room and close Twitter and Facebook windows on her computer. That way, texts and notifications won't pop up and steer her attention away from homework.

**Take breaks.** Suggest that your teenager make a deal with herself: After she has focused on studying for an hour, she can use social media, chat with friends, or play with apps on her phone for 10 minutes. Having time set aside for those activities can help her stay on task. *Hint:* She should set a timer and get back to work when the 10 minutes are up. 👍

## Grateful teens

Showing gratitude can make your teen feel better about himself—and make him more pleasant for others to be around. Try these tips.

### Start a “thank you” habit

Thank people for small acts of kindness, and your teen will notice—especially if you're thanking him!



For instance, you could say, “Thanks for noticing our car windows were down.” Also, make it a family habit to write thank-you notes immediately after receiving gifts.

### Recognize what others do

Teenagers sometimes take others' help for granted. If a teacher tells your child about an internship he might like, encourage him to thank the teacher rather than brushing it off as part of her job. Then, he could update her about whether he got the internship and how it's going.

### Reflect on gratitude

Encourage your child to incorporate gratitude into his life. Make it a tradition to say what you're thankful for at a holiday dinner. Or suggest that he write down what he's thankful for each day in a gratitude journal. 👍



## Parent to Parent

### Foreign language success

When my son Austin began studying German, he was worried about pronouncing words wrong and sounding silly. His teacher, Mr. Taylor, had some advice that made him feel more comfortable.

First, he suggested that Austin say words and phrases aloud when he studies rather than reading and repeating them in his mind. That way, he could practice pronunciation alone without feeling embarrassed.

Mr. Taylor also encouraged Austin and his classmates to try using German words with each other outside of class. Because they're all learning, they might feel less anxious about making mistakes. And he recommended that Austin memorize a few “fallback phrases” in German, such as, “How do you say...,” “I'm not sure...,” and “Could you help me...”

Little by little, Austin's pronunciation is improving—and so is his confidence. 👍



## “I wasn't invited!”

**Q** My daughter sometimes feels left out when friends do things without her. How can she handle these situations?

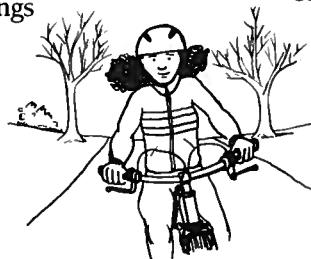
**A** Feeling rejected isn't easy, and it can especially sting for teens since friendships are so important now.

You can help your daughter cope by acknowledging her feelings (“I know you're upset that Jess and Danielle didn't invite you”). Also, point out that there may be an explanation that has nothing to do with how they feel

about her. For instance, maybe her friends had field hockey practice together before going out, or perhaps it was easy for them to make last-minute plans since they live near each other.

Explain that it's normal for friends to hang out one-on-one sometimes, too. Maybe she has asked one friend to do something without the other and didn't think twice about it.

Finally, encourage her to forget about it by doing things she enjoys, like riding her bike or reading a book. Or she could even meet up with other classmates. 👍



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5605