

High School Parents[®]

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Kent City Community Schools
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still make the difference!



The end of the school year can be a stressful time for teens

Your teen has a test tomorrow. Her history paper is due next week. The math teacher just assigned a group project. And she has a summer job interview this weekend. No wonder she's stressed!

The end of a school year is often a time when students feel overwhelmed by all they have to do. And, since stressed teens are rarely at their best, that can lead them to perform poorly—and below their capabilities.

The good news is that there are ways parents can help teens deal with the stress of this time of the year. You can:

- **Listen to her.** Sometimes, just giving your teen a chance to let off steam can be a help. Don't try to "fix" her problem. Just let her talk and really listen to her.

- **Encourage her** to find solutions. Ask her questions to help her figure out a way to work through the problem. Could she create a study schedule? Is it possible to reschedule her interview? She's more likely to stick with a solution if she's the one who developed it.
- **Teach her** some helpful stress relievers. Taking a few deep breaths before an exam or a job interview can make her feel more in control. A brief walk outside can help her regain her focus. Eating a healthy snack will give her energy to keep going. But she should avoid high-caffeine energy drinks. They will only make her feel more agitated.

Source: E. Block, "Helping Teens Deal with End of School Year Stress," Examiner, <http://tinyurl.com/ae43jdk>.

Substance abuse derails achievement



Recent studies by the Centers for Disease Control prove what most schools already

know: There is a negative association between substance abuse and academic achievement. Students who earn higher grades are less likely to engage in alcohol or other drug use than their classmates who earn lower grades.

Students with higher grades are less likely to:

- **Have tried alcohol** before turning 13 years old.
- **Drink alcohol** or use marijuana at least once a month.
- **Binge drink**, or have five or more alcoholic drinks within just a few hours.
- **Use ecstasy** in their lifetime.
- **Take prescription drugs** without a doctor's permission.

Talk with your teen about the connection between substance use and academic achievement. Remind him that drugs are illegal and that they can have a negative impact on his future.

Source: "Alcohol and Other Drug Use and Academic Achievement," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://tinyurl.com/aoyycr8>.

A good night's sleep is critical for your teen's school success!



Your teen may think he's able to perform at school without getting a proper night's sleep, but that's far from the case!

A lack of sleep will keep your teen from being able to focus on his schoolwork and learn in class.

Share these research-based facts about sleep with your teen:

- **Teens need** between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep each night to function properly the next day. Only 15 percent of teens report getting 8.5 hours of sleep each night.
- **Nothing replaces good sleep.** Caffeinated drinks, vitamins and pills are not a substitute for a restful night of sleep.
- **Sleep deprivation** causes the same impairment as having a blood alcohol content of .08 percent. This means that driving while sleepy is extremely dangerous.

- A consistent sleep schedule will help a person feel less tired. Your teen may be tempted to sleep until noon on weekends, but remind him that it only makes waking up harder on Monday morning. Create a routine for going to bed and waking up.
- **Technology usage**, eating, drinking and exercising in the hours right before bedtime makes it harder to sleep. Suggest quiet, calm activities that will relax his brain.

Source: "Teens and Sleep," National Sleep Foundation, www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-topics/teens-and-sleep.

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

—William Butler Yeats

Many students don't consider cheating a serious offense



Studies consistently show that the majority of high school students cheat—probably because most teens

don't view cheating as a serious offense.

Teens are under a lot of pressure to do well, and many see cheating as a way to lessen some of that pressure. Therefore, anything from plagiarizing a paper to copying someone's homework or test paper has become regular behavior.

So what can parents do to prevent teens from cheating? You can:

- **Talk to your teen.** Explain that even though it may seem like "everybody does it," cheating is wrong.
- **Be sure that your expectations** are not unrealistic. If your teen is resorting to cheating to get an A, explain that you'd rather she do her best and earn a lower grade than to score higher by cheating.
- **Explore** the real-life applications of what your teen is learning. If she realizes that she may use geometry beyond that test on Thursday, she may be more interested in studying and learning than cheating.

Are you prepared for year-end celebrations?



Teens celebrate a lot at the end of a school year. Unfortunately, those celebrations often include behavior like

drinking—and the pressure for your teen to join in.

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to see if you are prepared to stay on top of that peer pressure:

___1. **Have you and your teen read** the school's behavior code to know what could be at risk at school if he is caught drinking?

___2. **Have you reminded** your teen that under-age drinking is against the law?

___3. **Do you call** parents to make sure they'll be home before letting your teen attend a party at their house?

___4. **Have you practiced** ways for your teen to say *no* to alcohol?

___5. **Does your teen know** you will always come pick him up from a party with no questions asked?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you are helping your teen be safe and resist negative peer pressure. For *no* answers, try those ideas from the quiz.

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Share study strategies to help your teen prepare for tests



As the end of the school year approaches, your teen may be faced with challenging final exams.

Help him prepare for these upcoming tests by reminding him of the following study strategies:

- **Prioritize** what you need to study. Find out what will be covered on the exam. Will it cover new material since the last test, or will it be a review of the entire semester? Spend a little time reviewing material you've already mastered, but focus on learning information that you're unsure of.
- **Organize your time.** Create a schedule for studying and stick to it. It is helpful to block off one-hour chunks of time to commit to learning.
- **Use extra time.** Ten minutes here and there really add up. Use waiting time before practice or at the bus stop. Keep study materials, such as flashcards or outlines, handy for unexpected study sessions.
- **Study with a partner** or group only when everyone is prepared. Otherwise, it may turn into a tutoring session. With your study group, discuss what you think may be on the exam. Talk through concepts that may be covered in essay questions.
- **Make a practice test.** Turn facts into multiple choice or short answer questions. Write down prompts that could be used as longer essay responses. Talk through answers or practice writing them within a time limit.

Five ways to help teens develop self-discipline and responsibility



Discipline and responsibility are essential ingredients for academic success. And there are many ways

parents can help teens become more self-disciplined and responsible.

Have your teen:

1. **Use a calendar** to manage his time. Seeing his test and project dates alongside those of his other activities will help him see which evenings he has time to relax—and which nights he'll have to buckle down and study.
 2. **Schedule his own appointments.** This will prepare him to be responsible for managing his time in the future.
 3. **Set a budget** and stick to it. He may have some spending money
- from an allowance or a part-time job. The budget will help him pay attention to his spending—and see that adding to his savings can be more rewarding than buying another shirt.
4. **Plan a family outing**—even just a local day trip. Planning a trip teaches your teen to be responsible. Have him research places to visit and come up with a budget. He should include travel expenses and money for meals.
 5. **Read the newspaper.** Learning about the issues world leaders deal with will help him see that his responsibilities (like washing the car and taking out the trash) aren't the inconvenience he previously thought they were.

Q: My daughter is failing two classes. She has missed a lot of school this year—sometimes because she cut classes. Now she says she just wants to give up and drop out. What should I do?

Questions & Answers

A: Students who fall behind in one or more classes often begin to feel that there is no chance they can ever catch up. But if you work with the school, you can help get your daughter back on track. The steps you and your teen take now will affect her entire future. Be sure to:

- **Talk with her teachers.** Find out if it is possible for her to bring her grades up before the end of the year. Can she make up any missed work? Can she do extra credit? If she struggles with the class material, should she work with a tutor to get caught up?
- **Talk with her counselor.** Together, develop a plan to help your daughter get back on track so she can graduate on time. Find out what additional support is offered at the school for struggling students.
- **Help your teen see why staying in school is so important.** Have her research the kinds of jobs she can get without a high school diploma. A minimum wage job may seem fine now if she's living at home. But how far will that money go when she wants to move out, drive a car and have a life of her own?
- **Monitor her attendance.** Your daughter needs to make a commitment to be in *every* class *every* day.

—Kris Amundson,
The Parent Institute

It Matters: Summer Learning

Volunteering can teach your teen valuable lessons



Teens can learn important lessons outside the classroom. That's especially true if they can volunteer during the summer.

Research shows that teens can develop skills they'll use in the classroom and on the job through their summer learning experience. They can learn critical thinking as they try to figure out how to solve a real-world problem. They can learn how to work with others. And they can develop self-confidence.

But they need to choose their summer volunteer experience carefully. Here are ways you can help:

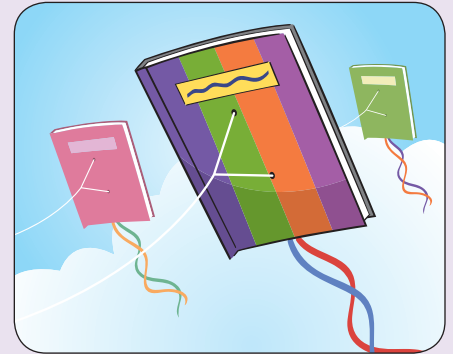
- **Start from your teen's interests.** She will learn more and have a better time if she's working at something she finds interesting. If she loves people, look for a volunteer job that will let her interact with others. If she has a career in mind, see if she can get some hands-on experience as a volunteer.
- **Do some research.** Talk to other teens about what they have done. Ask friends if they know places your teen can volunteer. Let your teen take the lead in looking for a summer volunteer job that will match her interests.
- **Expect a commitment.** Although your teen isn't earning a paycheck, she still must be dependable. Keeping promises is one of the lessons your teen can learn.

Source: M. Price-Mitchell, "What's Summer? Hands-On Learning Time for Teens," *Psychology Today*, <http://tinyurl.com/ap7bo7v>.

Reading should be a regular part of your teen's summer routine

There's no question that teens who read during the summer get a jump start on the next school year. Still, some teens think that time off from school also means time off from reading. Here are a few fun ways to keep your teen reading this summer:

- **Join a summer reading program.** Today, many public libraries sponsor summer reading programs for teens. They may encourage teens to compete to see who reads the most. Or they might organize teens who have read the same book into book clubs where they can talk about what they've read.
- **Read the book before or after you see the movie.** Many great books have become good films. So encourage your teen to read the book, see the movie and then decide which version he prefers.



- **Read the same book.** When both you and your teen have read the same book, you can have an interesting discussion. It's a great way to keep the lines of communication open.
- **Redefine "reading."** Remember that nonfiction books, comics and magazines are a great way to encourage students to read.

Source: Reading is Fundamental, "Primer on Summer Reading Loss," www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/articles/primer-on-summer-reading-loss.htm.

Teens can use social media to sharpen their writing skills



Most teens think they don't do any "writing" outside of school assignments. But what about all of the text

messages they send or the postings to their Facebook pages? Teens often do not think of these as writing.

One way to help your teen improve her writing over the summer is to focus on social media. Instead of sending a very brief text message, she should take a few seconds to compose a response.

She should also check her messages for misspelled words or incorrect grammar. Studies indicate that teens who get lax about these basics find it harder to write correctly when they need to.

Maybe you could work together with your teen to write a blog. There is no better way to improve writing than by having it read—and responded to—by a large audience.

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Writing, Technology, and Teens," <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/808/writing-technology-and-teens>.