

High School Parents[®]

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West Valley School District #208

still make the difference!



Artificial intelligence can be used to enhance learning

Artificial intelligence (AI) is shaping every aspect of our lives, which means students need to understand how to use the technology responsibly. Knowing what AI can and cannot do will help teens analyze the data it provides—and even use it to enhance their own learning.

Explain that AI systems:

- **Are created and controlled** by humans—they are not conscious or all-knowing.
- **Learn by analyzing** information provided by people. But they can't judge the accuracy of that information or think "outside the box," so your teen may receive incorrect or incomplete answers.
- **Target data for particular users**, which means they can present

biased information. Your teen should always verify information using multiple trustworthy sources. Encourage your high schooler to use AI to dive deeper into class material. Your teen could ask a chat bot to "explain the Pythagorean theorem" or "tell me about the periodic table of elements." However, be sure to caution your teen against using AI to plagiarize.

Also, have your teen research ways AI is used in careers. From human resources to agriculture to entertainment, many industries now incorporate AI. For example, AI may screen candidates for jobs, power drones that monitor crops, and even generate music and art. What other examples can your teen find? Does working with AI in these ways sound interesting to your teen?

Show your teen how to manage test anxiety



Whether they are preparing for a driver's test or an end-of-unit test, high school students

have to learn how to perform well under pressure.

Studying thoroughly is the best way to go into a test with confidence. In addition, to help your teen keep test stress under control:

- **Put things into perspective.** Remind your teen that tests are just a part of life. It's important to always try your best, but also realize that a test merely reflects what happened on one day. A poor grade on one test doesn't mean your teen is a failure.
- **Share relaxation strategies.** Teach your teen to tense and then relax muscles. Your teen should start by tightening toes, counting to three, and then relaxing them. Then do the same with legs, arms, shoulders and neck.
- **Teach visualization.** Athletes practice "seeing" themselves winning the game. Help your teen do the same, and picture going into the test feeling confident and prepared.

Show your high schooler how to become self-sufficient



The next stage in life for teens is adulthood—and that will require them to take care of themselves.

Developing self-sufficiency now will help when your teen heads off to college or enters the workforce. It can also boost responsibility for learning in high school.

To promote self-sufficiency:

- **Emphasize choices and results.** Encourage your teen to think before acting about what could happen as a result of the action.
- **Applaud** when your teen makes a good decision. If a decision doesn't work out, ask what your teen learned.
- **Don't rescue your teen** unless it's a matter of safety. Teens need to be given the opportunity to learn

from the consequences of their actions.

- **Let your teen solve problems.** Your teen is out of money, but wants a new video game. If you buy it, your teen won't learn the value of working for the money or saving it up.
- **Don't redo work.** Your teen's English paper may not be as organized as you think it should be, but don't offer to "fix" it.

"Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts. This is the secret of success."

—Swami Sivananda

Every college-bound student should find out three things



Applying to college can be pretty stressful. Schools have different requirements and students have different

strengths. Figuring out how to find schools that fit can seem overwhelming to high schoolers.

The U.S. Department of Education has collected information on every college in the United States. Their College Scorecard (collegescorecard.ed.gov) makes it easy to learn three key things that every college-bound student should know:

1. **What fields of study are offered?** The Scorecard allows students to sort the top fields of study by program size and earning potential.
2. **How many students graduate?** It's important to note that some

schools have a higher graduation rate than others. Other things being equal, your teen should choose the school where more students finish.

3. **What's the cost** and how much debt does a typical student leave with? Families worry about the cost of tuition and whether or not their teen will graduate with a lot of debt. You may be surprised to learn that some seemingly expensive schools can actually wind up costing less. That's because they offer programs that help eligible students graduate with very little debt. Don't rule out a college until you check these figures.

The College Scorecard is not the only tool students should use. But it can help your teen learn important things about a college before applying.

Do you help your teen work with tough teachers?



Sooner or later, every student encounters a tough teacher. Are you helping your teen rise to this challenge?

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

- ___ 1. **Have you explained** that your teen will need to work with all kinds of people throughout life?
- ___ 2. **Have you discussed** your teen's goals for the class?
- ___ 3. **Have you brainstormed** together about things your teen can do to improve the relationship? Encourage your teen to ask the teacher about strategies for learning the material.
- ___ 4. **Have you said** that you believe your teen is a capable student who works hard and can be successful?
- ___ 5. **Will you encourage** your teen to talk with a school counselor if problems persist?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you are helping your teen learn how to address issues with teachers in constructive ways. For each *no* answer, try that idea in the quiz.

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Feeling a sense of purpose can motivate students to succeed



Students who have a sense of purpose in life tend to be emotionally healthier than those who feel less purposeful. They experience more positive emotions and fewer negative ones, one recent study shows. Those positive emotions stimulate motivation and lead to school success.

Your teen can feel more satisfied with life and more purposeful by:

- **Setting a goal.** Whether your teen wants to run a 5K or a half marathon, learn sign language or computer programming, having an achievement to work toward is sure to provide a sense of purpose.
- **Helping others.** Encourage your teen to look for volunteer opportunities at food pantries, animal shelters,

mentor programs, etc. Or your teen might shovel driveways for older neighbors or help younger ones with homework.

- **Pursuing a passion.** Does your teen love music? Engineering? Suggest joining a school or community club or team. Your teen can also look for a part-time job related to the interest.
- **Thinking about careers.** Have your teen meet with the school counselor to discuss options and plans. While your student doesn't have to decide on a career now, exploring options can provide direction for the future.

Source: K. Ratner, et al, "Daily Adolescent Purposefulness, Daily Subjective Well-Being, and Individual Differences in Autistic Traits," *Journal of Happiness Studies*; M. Strickland, "Positive emotions lead to higher achievement," Idaho Education News.

Help your high schooler get the most out of group projects



The idea of a group project is appealing. Students can learn more when they tackle a big project together. They can develop skills like collaboration that employers are looking for.

But the reality of a group project is often quite different. Some kids may not meet deadlines. One student may not do anything at all. Another may try to dominate the group. And your teen might get stuck with trying to pull everything together on the night before the project is due.

To make the most of group projects, encourage your teen to:

- **Choose group members carefully.** They can be friends, but this is not the time to rely on a best friend who is disorganized and overcommitted.
- **Set deadlines for each step.** Group projects work best if all members

do their share. But if one person is not pulling his weight, the rest of the group still has time to fill in.

- **Allow for some "disaster" time.** Things happen—computers break down, people get sick. Your teen should make sure the group builds in extra time in the schedule.
- **Make sure one person** doesn't dominate. Studies show that one person who refuses to listen to the rest of the group can have a negative impact on the overall project. Your teen should encourage everyone to feel ownership in the finished product.
- **Ask the teacher for help** when it's needed. If it's a week out and no one has done any work, your teen should talk to the teacher and ask for advice on how to proceed.

Source: K. Eckart, "Group project? Taking turns, working with friends may improve grades," Science Daily.

Q: I caught my teen copying all the answers from a friend's school assignment. My teen said it was no big deal and that other students do it all the time. What should I do?

Questions & Answers

A: Unfortunately, the pressures of high school cause many students to turn to cheating. Students are highly aware of how they compare with their peers and they may view cheating as necessary to keep up.

In one Josephson Institute of Ethics study, 90% of students admitted to copying a friend's homework and 75% admitted to cheating on tests.

Cheating is very serious. But you can keep your teen from turning one mistake into a more severe problem. Here's how:

- **Send a clear message** that cheating is wrong. It's dishonest and it robs your teen of learning the skills and information needed for success in life.
- **Ask why your teen cheated.** Many students are worried about disappointing their parents or getting punished for less-than-perfect grades.
- **Emphasize learning** more than grades. Explain that your teen's best effort is what matters. Let your high schooler know that mistakes are learning opportunities and don't affect your love.
- **Help your teen** strengthen study habits. These help students earn better grades on their own.
- **Find help** if your teen has fallen behind. The teacher may be able to suggest a tutoring program or a student who might work with your teen.

It Matters: Responsibility

Include time for learning over winter break



It's nearly winter break, and students are looking forward to time off from school. While it's important for high

schoolers to use breaks to relax and recharge their batteries, including some time for learning will keep their skills sharp and reinforce knowledge.

To foster productivity over the winter break, encourage your teen to follow a daily schedule that includes time for:

- **Sleeping.** Establish a reasonable bedtime and don't let your teen sleep in more than one hour past normal wake-up time. That will only make it harder for your teen to readjust once school starts back up in January.
- **Schoolwork.** Your teen should schedule at least 30 minutes of studying every day. If there is no assigned work, your teen can review class notes, read ahead, or work on college applications.
- **Exercise.** Your teen should spend at least 30 minutes a day engaged in some sort of physical activity.
- **Writing.** Ask your teen to schedule a few minutes each day to write in a journal. The topic doesn't matter.
- **Reading.** Help your teen find something interesting to read. Then, encourage 30 minutes of pleasure reading each day.
- **Contributing.** Once a week, ask your teen to take over a responsibility, such as a preparing a family meal. Your teen will sharpen math and life skills and give you a break at the same time!

Time management is a vital skill for success in high school

Using time wisely is one of the best lessons in responsibility that students can learn. Time management can help teens meet deadlines, keep appointments, stay up to date with schoolwork, and lead less stressful lives.

Encourage your teen to:

- **Use a planner or calendar.** Your teen should write down everything on the schedule for the week and check it throughout the day.
- **Schedule a "catch-up day"** once a week to work on a task that has been put off—or work ahead on something.
- **Do a little at a time.** Studying 30 minutes each day is much more effective than trying to cram for six hours the night before a test.
- **Say no to things.** If your teen already has a packed schedule, there probably isn't enough time to take on an optional activity.



- **Limit recreational media use.** Digital devices are usually the biggest time wasters. Challenge your teen to find ways to limit their use.

Notice and encourage signs of responsibility in your teen



Responsibility is about more than completing chores or turning in schoolwork on time.

It's also about thinking ahead and considering how your words or actions will affect others and yourself.

Let your teen know that responsible people:

- **Keep their promises.** People must know that they can count on your teen to follow through on commitments.
- **Admit their mistakes.** Being responsible does not mean being perfect. In fact, it's actually the opposite. Responsible people make mistakes all the time. However, they don't just shrug them off. They admit their mistakes and then they make amends if needed.
- **Accept the consequences.** Responsible people deal with the results of their mistakes without trying to blame others. They learn from mistakes and rarely make the same mistake a second time.