

# Helping Students Learn<sup>®</sup>

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School



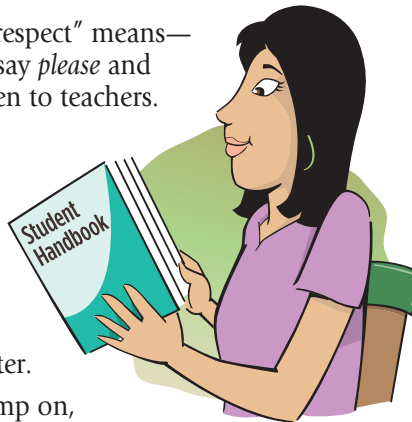
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Courtesy of Fayetteville State  
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## Tell your teen what respect should look like at school

Teens don't always know what "showing respect" means—especially in a school environment. They say *please* and *thank you*, and they know they should listen to teachers. Is that it? Talk with your teen about her:

- **Language.** Your teen should refrain from cursing, using inappropriate language and using racist words while at school—in front of adults and even when she's just talking to friends. Discuss how her words can offend others and reflect poorly on her character.
- **Behavior.** Your teen shouldn't hit, jump on, touch or forcefully bump into others—even if she's just fooling around. She should never talk back to teachers or use disrespectful body language such as rolling her eyes.
- **Treatment of the building.** Your teen shouldn't paint or write graffiti on walls or lockers, or even write on desks in classrooms.
- **Promptness.** Arriving for class on time is a sign of respect for her teachers and classmates.
- **Treatment of possessions.** If your teen is using school-owned textbooks, she should not write in them or tear pages. She should also be mindful of classmates' possessions. Encourage her to treat others' things as carefully as she would her own.



Review the student handbook with your teen. Let her know you support school policies for respectful conduct.



## Requests in writing encourage thinking

When your teen wants a new cell phone or the latest running shoes, ask him to put his request in writing. Have him include:

- **A topic sentence** that clearly states what he wants.
- **Specific reasons** he wants the item. He can explain the benefits he (and you) will receive. Encourage him to check out advertisements and endorsements to see how the item is promoted.
- **Why he deserves the item.** Has he been working hard and saving for the item? Has his responsibility completing homework and chores demonstrated he deserves to receive his request?
- **How he will feel** if he gets the item—and how he will feel if he doesn't.

In addition to thinking through his request, this exercise will help him build important writing skills.

Source: "The Basic Principles of Persuasive Writing," UBC Writing Centre, [www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/workshop/tools/argument.htm](http://www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/workshop/tools/argument.htm).

## Practice adds up to success

Advanced math can be difficult. Share these math studying tips with your teen:

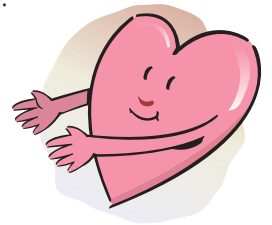
- **Take notes in class**—and review them each evening. Write down any questions and be sure to ask the teacher.
- **Save old quizzes.** They are a reminder of the steps used to solve each problem—and similar problems will likely be on the next test.

Source: "Study Tips from Actual Students," ETSU Developmental Studies, [www.etsu.edu/uac/dsp/studytips.aspx](http://www.etsu.edu/uac/dsp/studytips.aspx).

## Apply three parenting tips

Parenting a teen can be overwhelming. Some simple tips help:

1. **Show your love.** Make sure he's confident that you love him. Show it with hugs and "I love you."
2. **Set limits.** Be specific. Having boundaries is reassuring.
3. **Respect growing maturity.** Listen to your teen's opinions. Allow him to make choices. Reward responsibility.



## Celebrate Valentine's Day

Teenagers might not seem to be as thrilled about Valentine's Day as younger kids are. But show your love anyway! You might:

- **Send** your teen a Valentine. Then, when cards go on sale after the 14th, buy several more to send to her throughout the year. It's a great way to keep the lines of communication open.
- **Think** of what your teen especially enjoys. Tuck her favorite candy in her backpack. Or wrap a copy of her favorite magazine with a ribbon.





## How can parents help teens become 'morning people'?

**Q: My son is struggling in chemistry—his first class of the day. He says he's just too sleepy to pay attention. What can I do?**

**A:** Studies show that most teens are not, by nature, morning people. But they have to get up and get to school anyway. It's their job.

Sleeping in class is a problem. First, your son is obviously missing some of what the teacher has to say. If he already struggles with the subject, this will make the situation worse. To get your son back on track:

- **Establish an evening routine.** That means you'll have to enforce a bedtime. Your son probably won't like it, but say you'll reconsider when his chemistry grade improves.
- **Explain that bedtime means no media.** Don't let him keep his cell phone in his bedroom for recharging—he'll send text messages all night. Turn off the computer and the TV, too.
- **Eliminate caffeine late in the day.** No evening soft drinks or coffee.
- **Evaluate his schedule.** Is he in too many activities or working late at a job? What can he do to make more time for sleep?
- **Suggest that he ask his teacher** for a seat near the front of the room. This should help keep him focused during class.



## Does your teen get along with others?

In this world, not everybody gets along with everyone else. And sometimes, that person with whom your teen clashes may be a teacher. Learning how to deal with this challenge will help prepare a teen for life after high school. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're showing your teen how to make the best of a difficult situation:

- \_\_\_ **1. Have you reminded** your teen that throughout her life, she will have to deal with all types of people?
- \_\_\_ **2. Have you talked** with your teen about her goals for the class? If she wants to earn a good grade, she will have to find a way to work with the teacher.
- \_\_\_ **3. Have you talked** with your teen about the things she can do to improve her relationship with the teacher? She needs to show the teacher respect, for example.

- \_\_\_ **4. Do you plan** to encourage your teen to talk with her guidance counselor if the problem affects her grade?

**How did you do?** Each yes answer means you are helping your teen learn how to handle difficulties with others. For each no answer, try that idea.

*"If you don't like something, change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it."*

—Mary Engelbreit

## Parents affect teens' success

"Teens don't care about their parents."

Actually, research says that most teens *want* close relationships with their parents—and that parent involvement influences academic achievement and responsible behavior. To show you care:

- **Have** conversations about school.
- **Be** ready to listen.
- **Monitor** school progress.

Source: "National Study: Teens with Stronger Parent Influence Fare Better in Health, Education," America's Promise Alliance, <http://americaspromise.org/Resources/Partner-Resources/~media/Files/About/ECEP%20ISSUE%20BRIEF.ashx>.

## Suggest a quick test review

It's been a busy day, and your teen still needs to review for a test. To make the most of her time, have her take 20 minutes to:

- **Define** key terms.
- **Make lists.** What information can be itemized? Five causes of the war? Three steps in the process?

Source: "Big test tomorrow, need strategic tips," The George Washington University, [http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/asc/index.gw/Site\\_ID/46/Page\\_ID/14572/](http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/asc/index.gw/Site_ID/46/Page_ID/14572/).

## Together, prepare your teen for college

Far too often, neither students nor parents know exactly what students need if they want to attend college after high school. To prepare:

- **Don't wait** until your teen is about to graduate. Talk with the guidance counselor now.
- **Get involved.** Be sure your teen signs up for all the classes he needs.
- **Stay in touch.** Be sure your teen's teachers and counselors know your goals.



### Helping Students Learn®

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