

Three Keys to HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS

Your high schooler probably has a lot to juggle: challenging classes, extracurricular activities, friends, family commitments, and possibly a part-time job. How can he thrive in school?

Knowing how to get organized, manage his time, and study efficiently can help him do his best. Share these strategies to help your child succeed in high school.



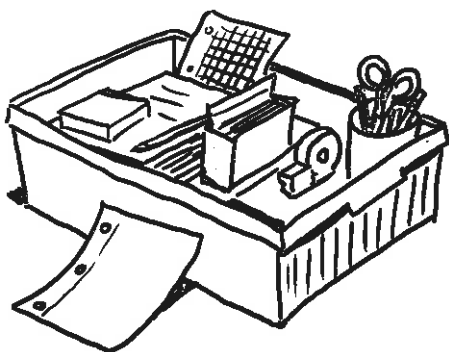
ORGANIZATION

Being organized lets your teen be more productive, because she'll have what she needs when she needs it. Suggest that she try these ideas.

Create a workspace. Your child should have a comfortable place to work that's well lit and free from distractions. It's best if she finds a place she can dedicate to schoolwork so she starts associating it with getting things done. She may be better off working at a desk in her room or at the kitchen table rather than on her bed or the couch by the TV. Wherever she works, she needs room to spread out materials. *Hint:* Cleaning out her workspace on occasion (say, once a month) can help her stay organized.

Stock supplies. Keeping graph paper, index cards, highlighters, and other supplies on hand will help your teenager stay on task—he won't have to stop what he's doing to search

for them. At the beginning of the school year or semester, suggest that he inventory what he has and make a list of what he needs to buy or find



around the house. As the year continues, he should keep an eye on what's getting low.

If your child works in a common space like the dining room table, he might want to make a portable supply kit. He could fill a plastic tote or shoebox with his supplies. Then, each day when he's finished, he should put everything away.

Sort papers. Multiple classes mean several sets of books and notebooks, only some of which need to come home on any given day. Your high schooler can keep track by using separate color-coded materials for each class so she can easily spot history (red binder and folder) or calculus (blue binder and folder). *Hint:* Using loose-leaf binders for notes and handouts instead of spiral notebooks makes it easier to move or add papers.



Each week, your child should sort papers from the week before. She can file them in binders or folders. *Tip:* Having a three-hole punch nearby can make this task easier.

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TIME MANAGEMENT

Knowing what's on her agenda will give your teen a sense of control and help prevent stress. It can also ensure that she has time for everything from schoolwork to socializing. Here are some tips to help her get a handle on her day.

Keep calendars and to-do lists. Your child needs to see how much time she has and how she uses it. Suggest that she use a daily planner to schedule her time in half-hour increments and keep the planner with her at school so she can update it with assignments, tests, and due dates.

Also, reviewing her planner each night or in the morning will prepare her for the day ahead. She could transfer big items to a master calendar on her bulletin board or wall so she can see them at a glance. She can also use sticky notes on mirrors or dressers for reminders.

Schedule study time. Encourage your high schooler to set aside specific times to study, picking periods when he's more alert. *Idea:* Have him experiment with different times and see what works best. Also, he should plan short breaks (maybe a 10-minute walk around the block after a 50-minute study session). Have him review his schedule weekly—he may need to make adjustments for evening activities or work.

To get the most from his day, your teen should also take advantage of free time in his schedule. During study hall, between school and sports practice or club meetings, or while riding in the car, he can review notes, study vocabulary, or go over end-of-chapter questions.

Overcome time wasters.

Help your child learn to say “no” to distractions that can throw her off track. Say a friend calls to ask her to go to the mall when she's supposed to be researching a science project. She can simply say, “Today's not good. How about Thursday?”

Have her turn off her cell phone completely and stay off Facebook or instant-messaging sites when she's doing homework or studying. That way, she won't be tempted to check a vibrating phone or a beeping computer.



Avoid procrastination. If your teen has a tendency to procrastinate, suggest that he tell himself things like, “Do it now, and I can have a fun weekend.”

He can also set a timer for 10 minutes and start on something he doesn't want to do, telling himself he can stop

when the time is up. Odds are, he'll probably get into the project and keep going.

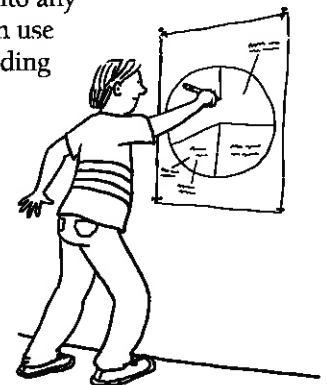
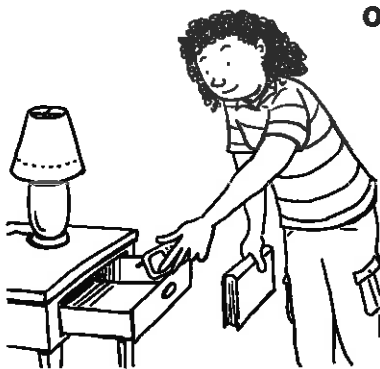
STUDYING

Good study skills help your high schooler be efficient so he can get the most out of what he learns in school in the least amount of time. Smart students know secrets like these.

Start at school. Studying doesn't begin when your teen sits down at home to do his work—it starts when he's in school each day. Being in class, listening, taking good notes, and participating in discussions are a big boon to your child's learning. Then, when he reviews at home, it's the second time he's seeing the material, making it easier to remember.

Stay focused. Study time doesn't benefit your teenager if her mind wanders. She can learn to stay focused with some simple techniques. For instance, she might notice a stray thought and remind herself, “Be here now,” or she could visualize the thought in her mind and “watch” it float away. Getting enough sleep and eating nutritious foods (fruit, vegetables, protein) can also help your teen focus, since they fuel her body and boost brainpower.

Shape information. Working with information is like molding clay on a pottery wheel. Your high schooler can take the material and shape it into any form that makes sense so he can use it. When reviewing notes or reading his textbook, he might create charts, graphs, or drawings so data is visual and easy to digest (for example, a chart of survey results or a picture demonstrating a math formula). Or he can pull out crucial points and make study sheets for quick review.



High School Years