

New Family Orientation

Communicating With Your Teen

Communication: A TWO-WAY STREET

LISTEN

- Let your child know that what he/she has to say is important to you.
- Listen to him/her daily.
- Look and act and be interested without interrupting or being distracted.
- Show respect for his/her feelings and opinions without being judgmental.
- Ask him/her to do all of the above when *you* are talking.

REFLECT

- Make sure you understand what he/she means by repeating back what you think you heard and asking if you understood him/her correctly.
- In a positive manner, rephrase what you thought he/she said until you both agree that *now* you understand what he/she meant.
- This feedback process doesn't necessarily mean you agree, but it shows that you understand what he/she is saying and that you are really listening.
- Ask him/her to do the same when you are expressing yourself.

SHARE

- Since communication is a two-way street, your feelings and opinions and those of your child must both be stated without criticizing or lecturing.
- Every single exchange does not need to be balanced, but make sure your communication is a genuine two-sided haring.
- Besides creating a warm and caring environment, this process gives your child practice in developing communication skills.

DISCUSS

- Talk about issues. Sometimes if you do not agree, you simply can agree to disagree.
- When a solution is needed, work together to solve the problem.

—**Define the problem.**

—**Set out the options.**

—**Look at the pros and cons of each and at possible consequences.**

—**Make a decision.**

—**Plan to reexamine the decision after a certain time has passed.**

EFFECTIVE PRAISE

- Should immediately follow the desirable behavior.
- Must be sincere.
- Is specific.

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

- **Is specific and immediately follows** the undesirable behavior.
- Gives your child the chance to be part of the solution.
- Must be consistent and fair.

Resources for Parents: The High-School Years

Books

Majoring in High School: Survival Tips for Students

Carol Carter covers a range of academic, social, and emotional issues that high school kids deal with. This book is an excellent reference, well written and insightful.

Countdown to College : A Student's Guide to Getting the Most Out of High School

This book provides information and useful guidelines on all the major aspects of high school life--from planning coursework and charting academic progress to developing reading, writing, and note-taking skills, overcoming learning problems, avoiding scheduling mistakes, and making the most of extracurricular activities.

Kaplan High School Handbook

This is a step-by-step guide designed to help students use their high school experiences to develop as top college admissions candidates. From figuring out which courses to take and extracurricular activities to pursue, to selecting the best colleges and researching scholarships, the HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK shows students how to make the most of their high school years and get into the college of their choice.

The Real High School Handbook: How to Survive, Thrive, and Prepare for What's Next

Designed for all teenagers, whether college-bound or not, The Real High School Handbook empowers students with practical information and real-life stories.

South of Heaven: Welcome to High School at the End of the Twentieth Century

An award-winning journalist writes about the year he spent in a Florida high school, in a shocking look at young America, as seen through the eyes of five students whom he followed closely.

Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers

In a question-and-answer format, this book helps parents to understand and cope with issues of alcohol, drugs, parties, academics, sex, eating disorders, homosexuality, divorce and remarriage.

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR STUDENTS

- Show more positive attitudes toward school,
- Display higher achievement in reading,
- Are assigned higher quality and more grade appropriate homework,
- Complete more homework on weekends,
- Observe more similarities between family and school.
- See parents, school, and the larger community contributing to their education,
- Demonstrate improved achievement, and
- See the link between schoolwork and future careers.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Research over the past 20 years has shown consistently that parent involvement increases student achievement and self-esteem. When families are involved in their children's education in positive ways, their children:

- achieve higher grades and test scores,
- have better attendance at school,
- complete more homework, and
- demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior.

The results have been consistent in large and small communities, from pre-school through high school, in poor and affluent areas, in urban, rural, and suburban communities. Students whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with the school score higher than students of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved.