

April 2008

High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

Short Clips

Artfully smart

Music, drama, and visual arts allow teens to use creativity and think critically. In fact, students who participate in the arts tend to do better in school. Suggest that your teen sign up for arts courses, and consider visiting museums or attending orchestra concerts together.

Say no to tobacco

Adolescents looking for a “safe” alternative to smoking may turn to chewing tobacco. But tobacco of any kind contains nicotine, which is addictive and causes cancer. Chewing tobacco also leads to cracked lips and mouth sores. Encourage your child to stay away from the substance altogether.

Stepfamily fun

While it can take time for blended families to form comfortable bonds, stepparents can use special activities to make connections. Find out what your stepchild enjoys (movies, working out), and spend some time together. *Tip:* Post pictures of the two of you on the refrigerator to show you’re proud to be with her.

Worth quoting

“Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.”

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Just for fun

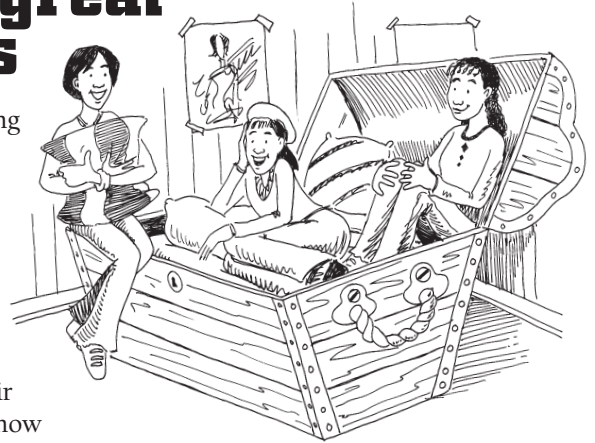
Teacher: Who invented fractions?

Student: Henry the 1/8.



Secrets of great friendships

Making friends means having special people to share life’s ups and downs with. Teens can learn to find—and keep—friends by treating them like treasures. Share these tips with your child.



Be a good listener. Let others talk as much about their lives as you do about yours. Show them you’ll be there if they need you. Make a point of calling just to say “hi,” not only when you need something.

Be trustworthy. Keep friends’ confidence by guarding their secrets. (If you think a friend is in danger, though, tell a trusted adult.) Also, avoid talking about your friends behind their backs. If others say something that isn’t nice, refuse to join in.

Be happy for their success. It’s easy to feel jealous of a friend’s success, such as making a team when you don’t.

But true friends can put on a smile and congratulate each other, even when they’re disappointed. Your friend will feel loved and can return the favor when you have good news.

Be a partner in fun. Put your heads together to come up with great things to do. Throw a surprise party for a mutual friend’s birthday, create a “do it yourself” spa, or organize a touch football game in the backyard. After all, the best part of friendship is sharing good times. 👍

Homework tech support

Computers are great for listening to music and IMing friends. But they’re terrific tools for homework, too. Suggest that your teen use the computer for:

● **Researching papers.** Online reference desk LibrarySpot (www.libraryspot.com) includes links to Internet-based encyclopedias, government libraries, and atlases.

● **Solving math problems.** Webmath (www.webmath.com) provides help with algebra, geometry, calculus, trigonometry, and general math.

● **Looking up words.** Merriam-Webster Online (www.m-w.com) can be used as a dictionary or thesaurus. Also, type in words to convert between English and Spanish.

● **Making flash cards.** Flash Card Machine (www.flashcardmachine.com) allows students to create flash cards they can share online. Use them to study formulas, concepts, or definitions. (*Note:* Free registration is required.) 👍



Ace that interview

Your teen may be eager to make money through summer work. Help him wow prospective employers by sharing these interview basics.

Getting ready...

- Look up directions to the business. Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early.
- Think about how your experiences make you perfect for the job. *Example:* Being on the school debate team requires a clear speaking voice—a must for answering office phones.
- Practice interviewing with family or friends so you'll be comfortable tooting your own horn.
- Have neat hair and wear nice clothing (dress pants, shirts that aren't too tight or baggy).



When you arrive...

- Be nice to everyone. Receptionists and other staff may give employers their opinion of you.
- Turn your cell phone off. A phone ringing during an interview shows a lack of respect.
- Use a confident voice, and avoid “like,” “um,” or other unnecessary language.
- Be enthusiastic. Tell the interviewer you'd love a chance at the job, and ask when he'll be making a decision.

Tip: After the interview, write or e-mail to thank the person for his time. 👍

Q & A Spring slump

Q Now that it's spring, my daughter wants to go outside rather than do homework. How can I help Elise stay motivated?



A Sunlight sparks feel-good chemicals in the brain and draws people outside after a long winter indoors.

Indulging your daughter's urge to be outside will give her more energy to get work done. Suggest that she go for a jog or shoot some hoops before sitting down to concentrate. Or encourage her to study outside by taking books to the backyard.

Another way to satisfy spring fever is to bring the outdoors in. Have your child open her bedroom window for fresh air. Cut flowers to put in a vase on her desk. She'll be happier working in bright, sunny spaces that match her mood. 👍

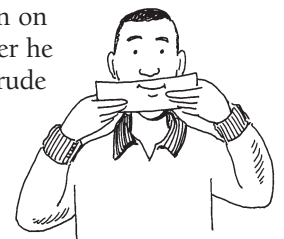
Parent to Parent Taming rude tongues

When my son Ryan started talking back, I didn't know how to react. Should I overlook it as typical teenage behavior or put my foot down and punish him?

Information I read on parenting Web sites suggested the answer is somewhere in between. Teens may talk back to show they're growing up, especially when parents “hover” too much. On the flip side, talking rudely can signal they're having trouble and need support.

I told Ryan I understand it's easy to take out his frustration on me, but I feel hurt when he treats me disrespectfully. I'd rather he say what's really bothering him so we can discuss it without rude comments.

Ryan and I agreed that if he talks back, I'll say, “Would you like to try again?” If he doesn't start over, I'll walk away, and we'll chat when he's in a better mood. It seems like this is beginning to work—Ryan is speaking a little more politely to me already. 👍



Everyday science

Think children outgrow their natural curiosity? Think again! Most high schoolers will be intrigued by science when it relates to their lives. Help your teen explore with these tips.

Experiment at home

Suggest that she browse library books or visit www.SciFun.org for science experiments to try. She can investigate density by discovering if bowling balls float or learn about air pressure by collapsing a soda can in boiling water.

Watch the weather

Have your child read forecasts in the newspaper and observe clouds for a week. Can she predict the weather? *Example:* “The clear sky tonight probably means cooler temperatures in the morning.”

Solve “mysteries”

Encourage her to keep a log of questions she thinks of and look up answers when she has time. She might visit www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries to learn how the GPS (Global Positioning System) works or why roller coasters need gravity. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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