

## Help Your Child Succeed

### Provide the tools for success

- ▶ Make sure your child has a place to study that's quiet, well-lit, and comfortable.
- ▶ Provide your child with the necessary school supplies (notebooks, folders, calculator, etc.).
- ▶ If your school doesn't provide planners, purchase one so that your child can keep track of his/her assignments, tests, and activities.

### Help your child be better organized

- ▶ Encourage your child to put handouts and assignments in the correct folders, and to keep his/her backpack and locker neat and clean.
- ▶ Show your child how to break large assignments down into smaller, more manageable parts.
- ▶ Encourage your child to get everything ready for the next day before going to bed.

### Make a contract with your child

If your child's grades are suffering because of poor attendance, incomplete homework, or lack of effort, make a contract that spells out your expectations. Having a contract that includes rewards and/or consequences may help improve your child's effort and behavior.

### If there is a problem

If your child is having a problem with a class, contact the teacher. If he/she is having a problem with several classes or with school in general, contact your child's counselor.

## Things to Remember

- ▶ While it's important for students to improve areas of weakness, your child's future lies in his/her strengths. Help identify and develop your child's talents and strengths.
- ▶ Teachers, counselors, and principals are there to help your child get the best education possible. Many schools also have social workers and psychologists available to work with students and parents. Working with the educators at your school is the best way to help your child succeed.
- ▶ It's important that your child have a good diet and get plenty of sleep. Have nutritious food at home and insist on a reasonable bedtime. To help ensure that your child gets a good night's sleep, require that all electronics be turned off an hour before bedtime.
- ▶ Nothing will affect the kinds of opportunities your child will have in life more than education. Make education a top priority in your home.

*"There are two great things that you can give your children: one is roots, the other is wings."*

Hodding Carter, Journalist



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### Parent InfoGuide

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# Help Your Child Succeed in School



Parents Make the Difference





# Help Your Child Succeed in School

**Parental involvement and support are the key to student success.**

## To Help Your Child Succeed

- ▶ Have a positive attitude
- ▶ Share your expectations
- ▶ Help your child set academic goals
- ▶ Be involved
- ▶ Make education a priority

## Have a Positive Attitude

Children's attitudes about school are greatly influenced by what their parents say and do.

Through your words and actions, show that:

- 1) you believe education is important.
- 2) you are interested in your child's progress.
- 3) you support the teachers and administrators at your school.

## Share Your Expectations

Parents who expect good effort and behavior usually find that their children live up to their expectations.

Make sure your child knows that you expect him/her to do the following:

- ▶ be in school every day, on time.
- ▶ obey the school rules.
- ▶ be courteous and respectful to teachers and classmates.
- ▶ complete all homework assignments.
- ▶ take responsibility for his/her grades and behavior.
- ▶ use technology responsibly (cell phones, the internet, etc.).
- ▶ let you know if there's a problem.



## Set Academic Goals

Goals provide students with focus and direction.

At the beginning of each term, help your child set realistic academic goals (e.g., make the honor roll, have no grade below a B or C).

Having goals will help your child understand your expectations. Goals also give your child something concrete to work towards.

## Be Involved

Studies show that parental involvement makes a significant difference in how well students do in school.

## Monitor your child's academic progress

- ▶ Know who your child's teachers are and attend parent-teacher conferences.
- ▶ See all midterm reports and report cards.
- ▶ Know your school's course offerings and make sure your child is taking the right courses. If you have a question, talk to your child's counselor.
- ▶ Expect your child to do homework on his/her own, but be available to help (e.g, read over a paper, listen to a speech, provide assistance if your child is having trouble).
- ▶ Provide encouragement, and celebrate your child's successes!

## Be involved and show interest

- ▶ Regularly talk to your child about what's happening at school, and be a good listener.
- ▶ Show interest in what your child is studying.
- ▶ Be informed. Attend parent programs, read school newsletters and bulletins, and regularly check your school's website.





## Timeline

Encourage your child to follow this basic college timeline. For additional information and advice, talk to your child's counselor.

### 9th Grade

- ▶ Work hard to get good grades. Your freshman grades will be on your transcript—they will also be used to figure your GPA.
- ▶ Get involved in school and community activities.

### 10th Grade

- ▶ Take college prep courses.
- ▶ Consider taking a college practice test (e.g., PSAT), if one is offered at your school.
- ▶ Develop your skills and talents.

### 11th Grade

- ▶ Research your college options.
- ▶ Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October.
- ▶ Take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring.
- ▶ Meet with your counselor to discuss your college plans.
- ▶ Make college visits in the spring and summer.

### 12th Grade

- ▶ Take the ACT and/or SAT in the fall, if necessary.
- ▶ Complete college applications.
- ▶ If you need help paying for college, complete a FAFSA. For information, visit [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov).
- ▶ In the spring, consider your choices and make a decision.

## Paying for College

Many families aren't able to save enough money to pay for college. For students who qualify, financial aid is available.

Financial aid comes in the following forms:

- ▶ **Grant** – money given, usually because of financial need
- ▶ **Scholarship** – money awarded for academic achievement or outstanding talent
- ▶ **Work Study** – money earned by working at a part-time job provided by the college
- ▶ **Loan** – money that must be repaid

There are many ways to make college affordable. If you need help paying for college, talk to your child's counselor or to a college financial aid officer. They can explain your financial aid options and discuss ways to cut college costs.

For additional information, go to  
[collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org)  
[act.org](http://act.org)  
[studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov)

*Education is an investment in the future!*



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## Help Your Child Prepare for College



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## Help Your Child Prepare for College

**As a parent, it's important that you take an active interest in your child's planning and preparation for college.**

### Academic Preparation

**Encourage your child to take college prep courses in high school, and to work hard to get the best grades possible.**

**Most four-year colleges recommend that students take the following courses while in high school:**

- ▶ 4 years of English
- ▶ 3-4 years of math
- ▶ 3 years of science
- ▶ 2-3 years of the same foreign language
- ▶ 3 years of social studies
- ▶ 1 year of fine or performing arts

## Choosing the Right College

To help your child find a college that will be a good fit, consider each of the following.

### Type of College

- ▶ 2-year colleges offer affordable one and two-year career programs. Students can also start at a community college and transfer to a 4-year college.
- ▶ 4-year colleges offer more courses and more extracurricular activities. A 4-year college degree can also provide a greater number of career opportunities.

**Size** – College sizes vary from a few hundred students to 20,000+. Large colleges can offer more programs and majors; small colleges are more personal.

**Location** – Is your child looking for a college close to home? In your home state? In a big city?

**Academic Programs** – All colleges offer a variety of majors; but if your child wants to study something specific, you must find a college that offers that major.



**Cost** – College costs vary greatly. When calculating college costs, include tuition, fees, room and board, books, and personal expenses.

**Admissions Requirements** – Some colleges accept all high school graduates. Others are very selective. Look for colleges that accept students with academic records similar to your child's.

## Admissions Criteria

Colleges use some, if not all, of the information listed below when determining whether or not to accept an applicant.

**GPA (Grade Point Average)/Class Rank**  
Colleges consider a student's GPA in college prep courses to be the most important admissions criteria. Colleges know that students who do well in high school are more likely to succeed in college.



### Strength of Subjects

College admission officers examine high school transcripts carefully to see if students have taken the recommended college prep courses. They also look for honors and Advanced Placement courses.

### Test Scores

Most 4-year colleges require that applicants submit ACT or SAT scores. The more selective the school, the more important these test scores are.

### Extracurricular Activities

Colleges are most interested in seeing meaningful involvement, commitment, and evidence of leadership. Quality is more important than quantity.

### Recommendations

Colleges often ask for letters of recommendation from counselors and teachers.



# Technology Tips

## Cyberbullying

*Cyberbullying is using technology to harass, taunt, embarrass, or threaten another person online.*

Young people often don't tell their parents they're being harassed or bullied because they are embarrassed, afraid, worried their parents will overreact or that the bully will retaliate.

If you see any of the following signs, ask your child if someone is causing problems for him/her online or at school:

- ▶ more anxious, quiet, insecure
- ▶ a drop in grades
- ▶ not wanting to go to school

If your child is the target of cyberbullying, support him/her, and work with the school until the problem is addressed and resolved.

## Be a good role model

We adults give up the right to preach and lecture if we don't exhibit the self-control and self-discipline we're expecting of our children. If our faces are buried in our devices rather than interacting with our children, friends, and family, we have no credibility.

Try to reserve your online use to specific times, and as much as possible, only use your devices when you're not in the company of your children.



# Let's Be Realistic

As much as parents may want to monitor or control their child's online behavior, this is very difficult, if not impossible to do.

*The most important thing you can do is to pay attention to your child's technology use. Have ongoing conversations with your teen about what is appropriate to share, and what content is appropriate to view. Also emphasize the importance of treating others respectfully online.*

*Technology isn't inherently "good or bad," "healthy or unhealthy." It is what we make it. If we set reasonable limits, provide guidance, and have open lines of communication, our children will grow up healthy and strong.*

For more information on internet safety, go to  
[commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)  
[netsmartz.org](http://netsmartz.org)



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# Help Your Child Be Tech Smart



**Parents Make the Difference**



## Help Your Child Be Tech Smart

Today's youth are often more tech-savvy than their parents. Young people today, however, still need their parents to provide guidelines and set limits.

### According to recent studies...

- ▶ 92% of teens report going online daily—24% “almost constantly.”
- ▶ 50% of teens say they feel addicted to their mobile devices.
- ▶ Today's teens spend, on average, more than nine hours a day consuming media—watching TV, listening to music, browsing the web, and playing video games.
- ▶ Approximately 25% of all driving accidents involve texting and driving.

*While statistics never tell the whole story, it is apparent that our youth are spending more and more time using technology—and it's changing how our children are growing up.*

## What You Can Do

Help your child enjoy the benefits of technology, while minimizing the risks.

- ▶ Tap into your child's interests and expertise. Ask your child to show you some websites that are popular, and to share some of his/her favorite sites. This is a great way to stay connected, keep up on technology, and bond with your child.
- ▶ Discuss what information is appropriate for social networking sites, and what information is appropriate (and inappropriate) for your child to share online.
- ▶ Find websites that support your child's interests and passions, and that help him/her prepare for a career and/or college.



- ▶ Discuss the importance of being respectful and kind to others online. Also remind your child to never put anything online he/she would not want a parent, teacher, or college admissions officer to see.
- ▶ Remind your child that people online may not be who they say they are—and to never put personal information online (e.g., phone number, address, etc.).
- ▶ Make sure your child understands that when you send or post something, *it becomes permanent*. Remind your child to never send or post something he/she doesn't want to be seen *forever*.



- ▶ There is so much online that is inappropriate (violent videos, pornography, etc.). If you don't entirely trust your child to be transparent with you, there are ways to monitor and limit his/her cell phone/online activities. If you need assistance with parental controls, contact your phone and/or internet provider, or search online for “parental controls.”
- ▶ If your child plays video games, sites such as [esrb.org](http://esrb.org) and [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org) can help you determine if a game is appropriate.
- ▶ Consider creating a Technology/Internet contract that spells out how you expect your child to use the internet, his/her phone, etc. You can find sample contracts online, or you can create your own.

## Unplug!

Insist that all communication devices be turned off and put in a basket during dinner and other family times.

To ensure that your child gets a good night's sleep and isn't on his/her phone late at night, require that all phones be plugged in for recharging in a central location (e.g., your bedroom) an hour before bedtime each night.



## Educational Options

Help your child determine how to best prepare for a career by exploring these educational options.

### Career and Technology Education

Most high schools offer a variety of career and technology programs. To find out what programs are available in your district, contact your child's counselor.

### Two-Year Community College

Community colleges provide affordable, career-oriented one- and two-year programs. Students can also start at a community college and then transfer to a four-year college.

### Career and Trade School

Career and trade schools offer short-term training in a variety of career fields. Some programs last a few weeks; others take up to two years to complete.

### Four-Year College

A four-year college education (bachelor's degree) can provide students with a wide range of career opportunities.

### Apprenticeship

Apprentices learn a skilled trade through classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

### Military

The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties.

## Hot Careers

Career fields that are growing provide greater opportunities. Here are three fast growing career fields.

**Health Care** – As our population ages, our health care needs increase. New technologies and medical advances will also continue to create new careers in health care.

**Information Technology (IT)** – IT refers to any computer related career, including systems analyst, software engineer, and computer support specialist. Our increasing use and dependence on technology will continue to create excellent career opportunities in the tech industry.

**“Green” Careers** – With today's increased interest in environmental issues, careers that protect the environment are some of the fastest growing.

*Approximately 80% of all careers require education or training beyond a general high school education.  
Encourage your child to continue his/her education.*

## Help Your Child Plan for a Career



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## Career Exploration

Below are seven career areas, along with some examples of each. Have your child choose an area that sounds interesting, and explore the various career opportunities in that area.

**Business** – accountant, administrative assistant, banker, business manager, paralegal, salesperson

**Education** – pre-school, elementary, middle school, high school, and special education teachers

**Health Care** – dental hygienist, dentist, medical assistant, medical lab technician, nurse, occupational therapist, paramedic, pharmacist, physical therapist, physician, radiologic technologist, veterinarian

**Human Services** – child care worker, counselor, fitness trainer, occupational therapist, psychologist, recreational therapist, social worker

**Science and Technology** – biologist, chemist, computer support specialist, engineer, environmental scientist, meteorologist, systems analyst

**Skilled Trades** – carpenter, construction worker, electrician, machinist, mechanic, plumber, welder

**The Arts** – actor, dancer, graphic artist, interior designer, musician, photographer, writer



## Help Your Child Plan for a Career

**In order to find a career that's a good match, students need to first think about who they are.**

**Help your child identify his/her interests, abilities, talents, and values by answering the following questions.**

- ▶ Which school subjects does your child do well in and enjoy?
- ▶ Does your child like hands-on activities, desk-type activities, or is your child more of a "people person"?
- ▶ Will your child want to continue his/her education after high school? For one year? Two years? Four years?
- ▶ What natural talents does your child have?
- ▶ What things might be important to your child in a career (e.g., adventure, money, making a difference, working outside)?

## Career Research

Once your child has chosen a career area to consider, help him/her learn about the careers in that field.

### Research careers of interest

Numerous resources are available to help students learn about careers. One of the best resources for career information is the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Information from this book is available online at [www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh).

### Talk to people

Encourage your child to talk to friends and relatives about their careers. Also encourage your child to talk to people who know something about the career(s) he/she is considering. Counselors and teachers are a good place to start.

If possible, arrange for your child to job shadow someone for a day.



### Get some related experience

The best way for your child to learn about a career is to do one or more of the following:

- ▶ take a related course in school.
- ▶ get involved in related extracurricular activities at school or through your local community center.
- ▶ volunteer or get a part-time job in a related field.



## Drug and Alcohol Info

The following are some of the substances most commonly abused by young people.

**Alcohol** – Underage drinking is widespread. Alcohol affects brain development, and there's a danger of alcohol poisoning.

**Cocaine and Crack Cocaine** (smokeable cocaine) – These stimulants speed up all body processes. Cocaine is addictive and can be snorted or injected.

**Ecstasy/Molly** – A popular “club drug,” this stimulant produces psychedelic effects for several hours.

**Heroin** – The use of heroin is on the rise among teens. It is easy to obtain, very potent, and highly addictive. It can be injected, smoked, or snorted.

**Inhalants** – Aerosol cans, gasoline, freon, and paint are all used as inhalants, often by preteens. Inhaling the fumes from these substances is called “huffing.”

**Marijuana** – It can be rolled into a “joint,” smoked in a pipe, consumed in food products (edibles), or smoked from a tube (bong). *Marijuana is the drug most often used by teens.*

**Prescription and Over the Counter (OTC) Drugs** – Prescription drugs and OTC drugs (cough syrup, cold pills, etc.) are often the “drugs of choice” because they can easily be obtained from homes and stores.

## Drug and Alcohol Facts

- ▶ Binge drinking is consuming five or more drinks for males and four or more for females during one drinking session. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, nearly one in five high school seniors reports binge drinking in the past two weeks.
- ▶ The use of electronic cigarettes or “vapes” is on the rise. Like regular cigarettes, e-cigarettes contain nicotine and are addictive.
- ▶ Common street names for marijuana include *pot, grass, ganja, weed, Mary Jane, and reefer*. Common names for heroin include *Big H, horse, smack, black tar, and China white*.
- ▶ Rohypnol, also known as the “date rape drug,” is tasteless, odorless, and it dissolves easily in beverages.
- ▶ Alcohol-related auto accidents are a leading cause of death for high school age students.
- ▶ Opioids include a number of commonly prescribed painkillers. They are highly addictive, and their use among teens is on the rise. Prescription opioids include hydrocodone (Vicodin), oxycodone, and fentanyl. Heroin is also an opioid.

For additional information, go to [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)



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## Help Your Child Drugs and Alcohol



Parents Make the Difference





# Help Your Child Drugs and Alcohol

**Parents are the #1 deterrent to young people becoming involved with alcohol and drugs.**

Most parents have concerns about their children using tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs. There is, however, a great deal that parents can do to keep their children safe and on the right track.

## To help keep your child safe:

- ▶ be involved in your child's life
- ▶ set guidelines and limits
- ▶ be informed
- ▶ know the warning signs
- ▶ take action if needed

*Spend quality time with your child. Children who have a good relationship with their parents are less likely to do things that would betray their parents' trust.*

## Keep Your Child Safe

- ▶ Encourage your child to be involved in school and community activities.
- ▶ Have rules regarding acceptable social activities, having friends over, and curfews.
- ▶ Know what activities your child is involved in and who your child's friends are.



- ▶ Find "teachable moments" to talk about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, smoking, and vaping. *One discussion about drugs and alcohol isn't enough.*
- ▶ Know what's happening in your school and in your community. Talk to other parents, and be aware of the places teens go "to party."
- ▶ Be clear about your position on tobacco, alcohol, vaping, and drugs. Let your child know that the use of these substances will not be permitted.
- ▶ Let your child know that there will be consequences for tobacco, alcohol, or drug use. *Knowing there will be consequences gives your child a reason to "say no."*
- ▶ Make prescription drugs inaccessible, and talk about the dangers of taking other people's prescriptions.
- ▶ Understand that your number one responsibility is to keep your child safe. If you have reason to believe that your child is involved in risky behavior, you need to take action to ensure his/her safety—even if that means violating your child's privacy.

## Warning Signs

When students are using alcohol or drugs, there are often warning signs. The following are some of the most common warning signs:

- ▶ drop in grades
- ▶ change in behavior
- ▶ more defiant attitude
- ▶ change in friends
- ▶ getting in trouble at school
- ▶ talking about alcohol or drugs
- ▶ change in physical appearance (e.g., weight loss, red eyes)
- ▶ lack of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed
- ▶ change in sleeping or eating patterns
- ▶ physical evidence of use (e.g., beer cans, drug paraphernalia, odors on clothing, eye drops, extra cold medicines, extra aerosol cans, vaporizer pens that resemble USB sticks, drawings of alcohol or drug related items)
- ▶ dropping out of school activities and/or sports

If you suspect that your child is vaping or using alcohol, drugs, or tobacco, talk to your child about your concerns. For help and advice, talk to your child's counselor or physician.





22. Pay attention to your child's technology use, and have ongoing conversations about what is appropriate (and inappropriate) to share online. Also discuss the importance of treating others respectfully online.
23. Use rewards and consequences to encourage a change in behavior.
24. Provide consequences that are logical and reasonable. For example, the consequence for abusing a privilege might be to have that privilege taken away for a period of time.
25. Be aware of the music your child listens to and the videos and TV shows your child watches. Provide guidelines and set limits.
26. If your child has done something wrong, focus on the behavior, not the person. Good kids sometimes make bad choices.
27. When your child leaves the house, know who your child is going to be with, where they are going, and what they will be doing. Have your child check in periodically.
28. If you have a feeling that your child is involved in an activity that's wrong or harmful, listen to your instincts.
29. Never use physical punishment, and never take away a positive activity (e.g., sports, choir, scouting) as a punishment.
30. Be aware of how, and for what purposes, your child is using his/her computer and phone.
31. Give your child space, and respect your child's privacy.
32. Expect your child to contribute to the running of the household. All children should have household responsibilities.
33. Be a parent. Your child has friends. Your child needs you to be a parent.
34. Keep your sense of humor.
35. Don't be afraid to apologize or admit you were wrong. Children need to know that it's okay to make mistakes.
36. Celebrate the things that make your child unique.
37. Provide a stable home environment.
38. Encourage independent problem solving. When children learn how to solve their own problems, they become more confident.
39. Be a good role model. Children learn their behaviors and attitudes from their parents more than from anyone else.
40. Remember that a hug can do wonders.

## Help Your Child Thrive and Grow



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# Help Your Child Thrive and Grow

**Helping your child thrive and grow doesn't involve doing extraordinary things. It's the little things you do every day that provide the guidance and support your child needs.**

**Use these tips to help your child thrive and grow.**

## 40 Parenting Tips

1. Spend one-on-one time with your child doing something you both enjoy.
2. Encourage a healthy lifestyle. Have nutritious food at home, insist on a reasonable bedtime, and make sure your child does something physical on a regular basis.
3. Get to know your child's friends.
4. Help your child regularly set short-term and long-term goals.

5. If your child is involved in athletics, theater, band, or orchestra, go to every game or performance, and cheer loudly.
6. Help your child explore various career options, and talk about the education needed for the careers your child is interested in.
7. Make sure that your child knows basic social behaviors (e.g., writing thank you notes, having a firm handshake).
8. Help your child choose clothes that are in style and flattering, and that adhere to your school's dress code. Talk about personal hygiene and grooming.
9. If your child has a job, make sure he/she isn't working too many hours or working too late.
10. Teach financial responsibility. Help your child learn how to manage money.
11. Pay attention to your child's moods, sleeping patterns, and eating habits. These can be good indicators of how things are going at school and with friends.
12. Help your child develop his/her talents and interests. Also, help your child find something he/she has a passion for.



13. Discuss serious topics and encourage your child to express his/her opinion. Show respect for your child's ideas.
14. Ask open-ended questions that require more than one word answers. Instead of "How was school?" say "Tell me about your day."
15. Talk to your child about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, smoking, and vaping. Make sure your child knows where you stand on these issues.
16. Be specific in your communication. Instead of saying, "Be home early," say, "Be home by 9:00."
17. If your child talks to you about a problem, don't feel that you have to fix it. Often young people just want someone to listen. Be available to listen when your child wants to talk.
18. Tell your child to use you as an excuse if he/she is in a difficult or uncomfortable situation. "I can't do that. I have to get home."
19. Eat dinner as a family. Turn off the TV, silence all phones, and talk about your day.
20. Tell family stories. Hearing family stories gives children a sense of belonging.
21. Give your child a little more freedom each year.