April 2017

Golden Valley High School
Mr. Kevin Swartwood, Principal

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success

Short Clips

Positive body image

Does your teen feel that his body doesn't "measure up"? Kids this age are often self-conscious about their appearance. Encourage your child to see himself as more than his body shape. He could focus on how strong and healthy his body is, the things he can do, and what's unique and interesting about him.

World aware

Help your high schooler stay on top of local, national, and world events. Try reading a daily newspaper or watching the nightly news together. Or ask your teenager about news she's read online. You'll give her a larger view of the world—and may spur her to get involved in issues she cares about.

Excellent explanations

Clearly explaining things is a communication skill that will serve your teen well in school and at work. He might practice by giving his grandparents step-by-step directions for downloading and opening phone apps. Or he could describe the best bicycle route for a new neighbor to take to the park.

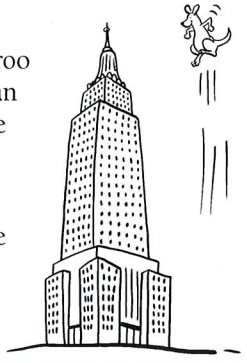
Worth quoting

"The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why." *Mark Twain*

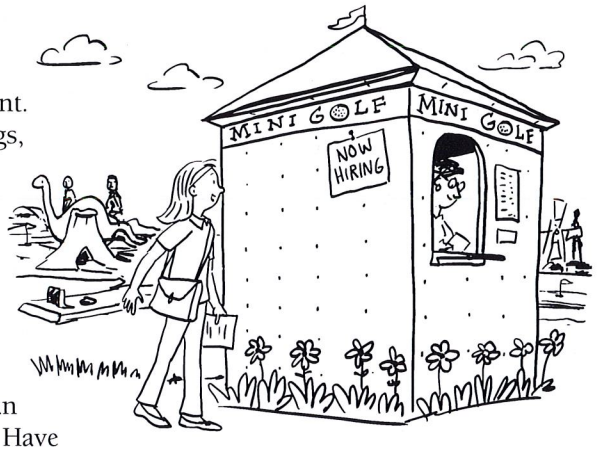
Just for fun

Q: Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

A: Of course—the Empire State Building can't jump!



Summer job search



As the school year winds down, encourage your teen to gear up for her summer job hunt. It can take time to find openings, complete applications, and go through the interview process. Share these ways to get started.

Work at it

Suggest that your high schooler treat the search itself like a job. She might set aside an hour each day for job hunting. Have her look online, as well as make calls to relatives, friends' parents, neighbors, coaches, and former employers and coworkers to see if they know of any prospects. She could also go store to store in shopping centers to see who's hiring or to fill out applications at department store kiosks.

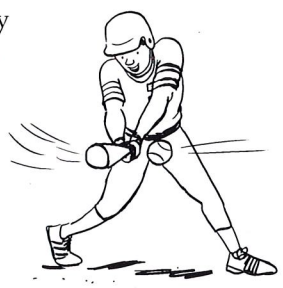
Seek seasonal spots

Many types of businesses staff up for the summer. Possibilities include swimming pools, amusement parks, miniature golf courses, hotels, resorts, and tourist attractions. If your teen enjoys being with younger children, she might ask neighborhood parents if they need summer babysitters. Or she can try for museum or park program positions. She'll earn money while teaching *and* learning new skills.

Boost chances

Preparation goes a long way toward impressing potential employers. To stand out from other applicants, your teenager should get to interviews early, dress neatly, and be ready to describe her strengths and weaknesses. In addition, suggest that she take a list of references (with correct phone numbers and email addresses). *Note:* She'll need to get permission from references ahead of time.

Make science come alive



Drive home the real-world aspects of science class by helping your high schooler tie what he's learning to his everyday life.

Say he's studying the periodic table in chemistry class. He could print a copy and check off all the elements he identifies around the house. These might include aluminum in foil, titanium in a tennis racquet, lithium in batteries, or fluorine in toothpaste.

Or if he's taking physics, encourage him to find examples of it in the sports he plays. He can note that the force and direction of his baseball swing direct the ball's velocity and angle after it makes contact with the bat. Or in pole vaulting, he could observe that the faster he runs, the greater the kinetic energy that can be converted into a higher jump.

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How *not* to argue with your teen

If you find yourself arguing with your teenager, don't despair. It's a normal part of life with a teen. And the good news is that disagreements can be constructive ways to work out problems. The key is to keep them focused and under control. Here's how.

Stick to the issue. Say your high schooler wants to go on a beach weekend with friends. Talk about *only* that trip, and try not to bring up the past. Sticking to the request at hand will simplify the discussion and help you both remain calm.

Avoid criticism. Stay away from using "always" and "never" statements like "You *always* make bad decisions when you're with this group" or "You *never* consider our feelings." These types of statements may make your teenager feel ashamed or hurt—and they don't solve the problem.

Tell your side. Try using "I" statements to put the focus on your feelings rather than the blame on him. *Example:* "I get upset when I think you're ignoring the risks." Your honesty will make it easier for him to tell you his side. And open communication will help you reach a fair decision.

Q&A Prepping for IEP meetings

Q *My daughter's IEP meeting is coming up this month. How should we prepare?*

A Getting ready ahead of time will help you feel more comfortable, and you'll be in a better position to help draft the best possible Individualized Education Program for your daughter. Keep these ideas in mind:

- Gather documents like report cards, test results, and her current IEP. (Ask her counselor for a copy if you need it.) You also could request a copy of the proposed IEP to preview it.
- Sit down with your daughter to go over this year's IEP. Write down any questions or suggestions you each have. For instance, maybe she feels that she needs more time to take math tests.
- Let your teen practice advocating for herself. She may think an online writing program would help her meet a goal. Role-play so she feels at ease speaking up during the meeting.

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Reduce stress

The end of the school year can be a particularly stressful time for high schoolers. Help your child tame any stress with these coping strategies.

Be healthy

A good first step is having your teenager clear her schedule of unnecessary activities. She should also eat nutritious foods, get plenty of rest, and plan fun time on weekends to give herself a mental break. Feelings of all-around wellness ease anxiety.

Be positive

If your teen works herself up with high-pressure thoughts like "I have to ace my history final," suggest that she rephrase her worry. *Example:* "I'll do my best on the final by studying a little every night." Spreading out the study time will let her feel more on top of her schedule.

Be relaxed

Finally, encourage your teenager to try relaxation exercises. Have her start with her head and, working her way to her toes, tense her muscles, hold for several seconds, then release.

Parent to Parent Why should I graduate?

My son, Joel, has dreams of starting his own lawn care business, which is great. The problem is that he wants to get started *now*—and doesn't think a high school diploma is important.

I told Joel that my own decision to drop out is one I regret, and it's one way I don't want to be a model for him. I explained that dropping out has limited my job choices and my salary. If I had stayed in school, I might have a manager's job with benefits instead of working three part-time jobs. I also pointed out that the courses he takes in high school will give him skills to help him run a successful business one day.

In the meantime, talking to Joel gave me an idea. I realized that it's never too late, and I looked into getting my GED. Now Joel and I have made a pact: He's going to stay in school, and we're going to get our high school diplomas together!