

# How to Work With Your Teen's Teachers



**E**ven when kids are in high school, they still learn better when parents and teachers work together. Research says parents have a big influence on children's success all the way through high school. Knowing what your teen is learning makes a difference. Reinforcing what your teen is learning makes a difference. Working with your teen's teachers can make the biggest difference of all. Here are some ways to do it.

## QuickTips®

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## Begin at the Beginning

**A** successful partnership starts early in the year. Here are five things you can do during the first few weeks of school:

**1** Get to know your teen's teachers—the sooner the better. Attend back-to-school night, parent programs and conferences. But, don't wait for a special program if there is a problem or if your teen has any special needs. Write a note or make an appointment to talk with the teachers as early in the year as possible. Teachers need to know everything they can about your child.

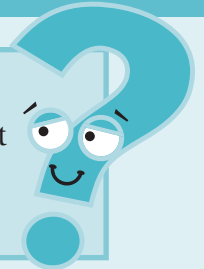


**2** Share important information that can make understanding your son or daughter easier for teachers. Sometimes things that happen at

home can affect how teens learn. A family move, divorce or an illness—even a part-time job—can all leave a child feeling a little off-kilter.



**3** Find out what's expected. Ask your teen's teachers about homework, long-term projects and other special assignments.



**4** Join the parent-teacher organization. Try to volunteer for at least one event during the year. Your involvement will make a difference.

**5** Make sure your teen gets to school on time each day. Attendance is important. Learning builds day by day. Even the best teachers can't do the job if your student is absent. Getting into this habit early means great attendance all year long.



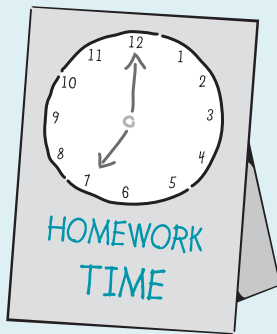
## Stay in Touch

Some parents don't realize their teen is having a problem in school until the report card comes home. But, by acting early, you can work with your teen's teachers to solve problems before they get out of hand. Here are some ways you can monitor your teen's school performance:

- **Agree on a regular time for homework.**

Be a good example by doing some work yourself at the same time.

While your teen is doing schoolwork, you can pay bills or do other work of your own.



- **Show an interest** in your teen's schoolwork. Talk about what's going well—and what's not. Don't nag. The secret to getting your teen to talk about school is to listen. Really listen. Resist the urge to talk. Put down the newspaper. Turn off the TV. Sit down. Make eye contact. If you show that you are interested enough to give your undivided attention, you may be surprised by how much you learn.
- **Work out a way to have regular communication** with your teen and his teachers if your teen seems to be having problems. Ask teachers for a schedule of big assignments or projects so you can help your teen keep up with his work.

## Here's the Help Teachers Recommend

The National PTA asked teachers what they wished parents would do to help their children in school. Here's what teachers said:

- **Encourage your teen** to do her best. Show you believe that education is important. Let her know you expect her to do the best she possibly can.
- **Set a good example.** Actions really do speak louder than words. For instance, when you spend time reading, you show your teen that reading is enjoyable and useful.
- **Emphasize academics.** School is your teen's job. Other interests—athletics, TV, part-time jobs, friends and games—must take a back seat.



- **Provide resources at home.** You don't need a lot of expensive equipment—but you should have a place for your teen to study. (The kitchen table works just fine.) Access to a few basic references—like a dictionary or an atlas—will make study time easier.

## Be Sure to Say 'Thanks'

Has a teacher done something special to help your teen?

Does a teacher make school so interesting that your teen is happy to start each day? Take a few minutes to say "thanks."



Your note can be handwritten or typed—on fancy paper or on a page torn from your child's notebook. Teachers are just like the rest of us—they want to feel appreciated. And, when teachers do something really special, let the principal know.

## It's a Partnership

Neither parents nor teachers working alone can do everything they need to do to help teens learn. But when parents and teachers are on the same team, teens win every time.

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