



5 tips

to help your teen succeed
in high school

Starting high school is a big milestone. You and your teen may be feeling both excited about all the new opportunities and nervous about how to adjust to the high school environment.

As a parent, you have an important role in helping your teen build the confidence and skills needed for a successful transition to high school. Here are five tips to help you guide students from grade eight to grade nine and help them thrive throughout the high school years.

1. Stay involved with your teen.

Keep your relationship positive and strong. Being involved with teens means less direct supervision and more communication about what is happening in their life.

- Take an interest in what your teen likes to talk about. Help them find their passion!
- Have fun together; set aside family time on weekends and weekday evenings.
- When your teen goes out, ask where they are going, with whom, and when and how they will get home.
- Involve your teen in decisions about chores, ground rules and other choices that affect them; be open to negotiation.
- Agree upon consequences for poor decisions.
- Discuss course selections and volunteer hour expectations.
- Stay connected to your teen's school. Register for school email updates and connect with the school on social media if applicable.
- Consider joining school council as a parent representative.



2. Help your teen connect with new people, friends, and experiences.

Teens who are connected to family, friends, school and community are more likely to get better grades, make healthy choices and be resilient.

- Encourage your teen to try meeting people, and try new programs and activities.
- Suggest they get involved in school activities such as clubs, music, arts or sports teams. Most high schools have competitive and intermural sport level activities.
- Help them look for volunteer opportunities that are meaningful to them.
- Encourage supportive friendships by welcoming their friends into your home.
- Encourage your teen to know and help your neighbours.
- Take advantage of any opportunity to visit your teen's future school with your teen before the school year begins.



3 Help them balance school and homework with extracurricular activities, jobs and personal time.

Learning to balance commitments, interests and downtime is a life skill. Teens often need help with scheduling, setting priorities and learning to manage their time.

- Establish healthy routines: teens need at least eight to ten hours of sleep each night, regular meals and snacks and 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Help them set a time and space for homework.
- Encourage teens to be involved in an activity they enjoy, even if homework is heavy.
- Set guidelines around screen time (TV, video games, texting and online activities) and try to keep screens out of bedrooms at night.
- Limit part-time work and volunteering to a maximum of about 15 hours a week.
- Ensure they build time for themselves and spending time with their friends into their schedules.

Looking for more information about physical activity? [smho-](#)

Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guide for Children and Youth
(5 to 17 years of age)

csepguidelines.ca



4 Help your teen feel comfortable in their new school.

Parents show support through love, acceptance, responsiveness and communication. Teens who feel supported develop empathy, confidence and problem-solving skills.

- Reassure your teen that it's normal to feel nervous when starting high school.
- Ensure your teen has all the necessary tools for high school such as technology, stationary items, proper footwear and clothing.
- Help them learn ways to cope with their changing emotions.
- Stay alert to signs that your teen may be struggling; encourage them to talk to you or another trusted adult about any problems.
- Encourage them to ask for help when needed and ensure they know where to get it.
- Encourage your teen to learn about all the in school supports available such as guidance, mental health counsellors and school health nurses.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's mental well-being contact:

Children's Mental Health Services

613-966-3100 | <https://www.cmhsonline.ca/>



5 Be a positive role model.

Parents who make healthy life choices set a positive example for their teens. Identifying clear roles helps your teen understand what is expected of them.

- Be present and take the time to connect face-to-face; put aside any technology/ devices when speaking to each other.
- Make commitments and keep them; encourage your teen to do the same.
- Be accepting of others' differences.
- Recognize and praise your teen's efforts, not only their achievements.
- Demonstrate healthy choices such as healthy eating habits, being active, and managing stress.
- Demonstrate consistent routines such as regular bed times and packing lunches and snacks.

Looking for more health-related resources? [smbo-](#)

Visit hpePublicHealth.ca



Stay connected with your teen to help them manage stress.

Starting high school can be stressful for teens. In addition to worrying about getting lost and fitting in at their new school, they may also be concerned about an increased workload and social issues such as peer pressure. Stress is normal and can motivate teens to work hard and succeed.

However, when excess stress is not managed, it can lead to anxiety and risk-taking behaviours like using alcohol or drugs.

Staying connected and involved with your teen will help guide them toward positive attitudes and behaviours. It will also help your teen build strong relationships and valuable life skills. Enjoy the journey!

For more information on how you can support your teen and information on specific topics such as alcohol, tobacco, healthy sexuality and much more, visit:

hpePublicHealth.ca/school-age-children-youth

We are committed to providing accessible information. To request this document in an alternate format, call 613-966-5500; TTY: 711, email accessibility@hpeph.ca, or visit hpePublicHealth.ca.

This resource has been adapted with the permission of The Regional Municipality of Halton.

April 14, 2023