

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Lake Cormorant High School

HIGH SCHOOL



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Help your high schooler develop Artificial Intelligence literacy

The rapidly developing field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is in the news every day. Becoming “AI literate” will help your teen use this technology safely and effectively—and it may even spark your teen’s interest in an AI-related career.

Help your teen understand:

- **What AI is.** AI systems learn and improve by collecting and analyzing data. A robot vacuum cleaner, for example, learns the layout of a house by bumping into walls and furniture. Soon it knows where everything is and vacuums more efficiently.
- **How AI is used.** Ask your teen to research ways people interact with AI. For example, AI *algorithms* (programs) can recommend movies and help determine what your teen sees on social media. AI can also help doctors diagnose patients and banks decide whether to approve loans.
- **The risks of AI.** Explain that companies use AI to collect personal data—which they can sell or use for their own reasons. That fun game that turns your teen’s uploaded picture into a celebrity? It now has a picture of your teen. And since AI systems—including digital assistants—deliver information targeted for particular users, they may present limited, inaccurate and biased information or viewpoints. Your teen should always use multiple sources for research—especially when using AI.



Create a learning culture at home

If you aren’t sure how to reinforce what your teen is learning in subjects you never took or don’t remember, don’t worry. What matters most is that you create a family life that values learning and makes it possible.

Here are some ways to do it:

- **Express interest** in hearing about things your teen learns in school. Ask your student to explain the concepts to you.
- **Play to your teen’s** strengths. Look for ways your student can apply them in everyday life. “We need an eye-catching sign for our yard sale. Can you use your design skills to create one?”
- **Ask your teen** to help you figure things out, such as the best place to get a service you need, or where your family could go for a free and fun weekend outing.
- **Tackle household projects** together that involve learning skills such as budgeting, time management and organization.
- **Ask your teen’s** opinion—and why your teen thinks that way.

Build up reading speed

Students who read with speed and accuracy tend to have a better understanding of what they read. Encourage your teen to:

- **Read silently.** Whispering words slows reading down.
- **Focus on clusters** of words, rather than a single word at a time.
- **Practice reading** as quickly as possible with light fiction. Then, slow down a bit for more complex material.



Suggest fun things to write

Encourage writing practice by offering prompts that make it interesting. Suggest that your teen write:

- **A inspirational** speech. What would your teen like to tell younger students? What are the secrets to your teen’s success?
- **A future journal.** What kind of life does your teen expect to have in 10 years? Suggest describing activities, friends and surroundings, and thoughts about them.



Support changing needs

Your teen’s brain is developing as rapidly now as it did in the first two years of life—and that can lead to mood swings. To provide support through these changes:

- **Show your love.** Spend time together and make it clear that you’ll be there when your teen needs you.
- **Say often** that you believe your student is capable of success.
- **Be patient.** Teens are “trying on” new looks, new ideas and new interests. Listen respectfully, encourage healthy risks and choose your battles carefully.

Source: “Understanding the Teen Brain,” Stanford Medicine Children’s Health.



How can I help my teen figure out what comes next?

Q: When I ask what my 11th grader wants to do after high school, the answer is always, "I don't know." Other kids are thinking about colleges and careers. How can I help my teen find a path to the future?

A: It's OK for high school students to be uncertain about what they want to do after graduation. But it's not OK to avoid thinking about the possibilities.

To help your teen focus on the future, sit down together and ask a few questions:

- **"What are your favorite subjects in school?"** Is there an area or skill your student feels is a strength? Is there a particular type of assignment your teen enjoys doing?
- **"What do you like to do outside of school?"** Does your student like to read? Spend time outdoors? Lead or be part of a team? Would your teen prefer to do activities with friends or alone?
- **"How could you explore your options?"** Encourage your teen to talk to anyone you know who works in a field of interest. Are there career and technical classes at school that your teen might like to take? A school counselor may have assessments and information that can help your teen consider career paths. Then your teen can learn about the education or training needed to pursue them.



Do you encourage learning from mistakes?

Mistakes happen. So it's essential for students to know how to react to them. Are you helping your teen use mistakes to learn and move forward in better ways? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you keep** your emotions under control when your teen makes a mistake?
2. **Do you encourage** your teen to admit mistakes and set an example by doing it, too?
3. **Do you ask** what lessons your teen has learned? How will your teen avoid repeating the mistake?
4. **Do you discuss** the valuable lessons you have learned from your own mistakes?
5. **Do you say** that it isn't necessary to dwell on mistakes?

After learning from a mistake, your teen can move on.

How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean you are showing your teen how to use mistakes to improve. For each no, try that idea.

"Experience is making mistakes and learning from them."
—Bill Ackman

Avoid the friend trap

Teens need different things from parents than from friends. To maintain authority and avoid falling into the friend trap:

- **Expect respectful behavior** toward you and other adults. Don't continue a conversation if your teen is being rude.
- **Base decisions** on what is best for your teen, rather than to please your teen and friends. Don't try to be "one of the kids."

Give vocabulary a boost

A strong vocabulary helps students get more out of reading and express their ideas precisely when speaking and writing. To help your teen learn and recall new words:

- **Make it a family game.** Choose a word and challenge family members to use it throughout the day.
- **Promote reading.** Reading widely exposes students to more new words and ways to use them than conversation does.
- **Use flash cards.** Have your teen make cards with words and terms from classes and their definitions. Quiz each other.

Foster wise decision-making

High school students face choices that can affect their success, academically and socially. The responsibility for making those decisions will shift more from you to your teen. Help your student learn to think decisions through. Encourage your teen to:



- **Describe the situation** in detail.
- **Discuss possible actions**, and how their results could affect your teen's goals.
- **Evaluate the decision** after making it. Would your teen make the same one if faced with a similar choice in the future?

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