

College Applications and Career Choices

Review with your child these and other planning steps that will help to accomplish all-important future goals. For both college and career-bound...

- ♥ **Knowing the ABCs of finances** is vital to your teen's future success. Banks, libraries and school guidance offices have many types of information on preparing a young person to be smart in money matters. Share facts about family finances, bill-paying, banking and saving. Be aware that your young adult may receive many offers of credit cards. Warn about the dangers of credit abuse and living beyond one's means.
- ♥ **Living independently and responsibly** is an essential life skill. Prepare your teen for the transition to more independent living. Being responsible about one's health, finances, belongings, studies and obligations is the sign of maturity. Help your teen learn to make the right choices.

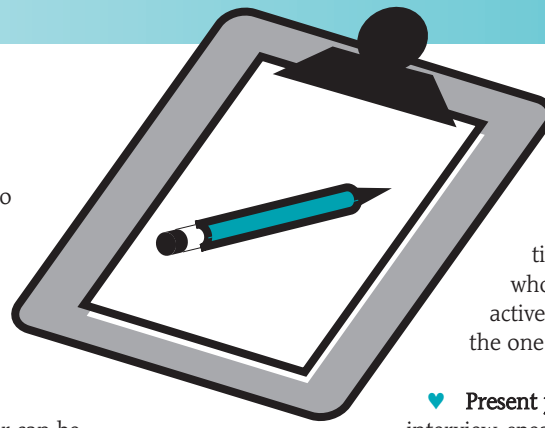
For the college-bound...

- ♥ **Now's the time** to take or retake SAT, ACT or other required college entrance tests... to send off applications to colleges...to fill out financial aid forms and check scholarship availabilities... to visit colleges of interest.

- ♥ **Decisions, decisions:** should your senior go to a local college or university? Go away to school? Should high school pals be college roommates? Set time aside for frequent talks with your teen to resolve these and other issues. Encourage talks with school guidance counselors also.
- ♥ **Maintain good grades.** Though senior year can be stressful, be sure your teen knows that colleges look for solid performance in course work. It sends the message a teen has matured and can handle the challenges of college-level studies.
- ♥ **Volunteer!** Encourage your senior to participate in volunteer opportunities and look for possible internships in a field of interest.

For the career-bound...

- ♥ **Prepare a resume.** School and public libraries have excellent resources on how to prepare a clear, attractive resume stating part-time work experience, extracurricular activities, special scholastic achievements and other facts that present a young person's skills and work assets.



♥ **Be confident and enthusiastic.** In a competitive market, the job seeker who is bright, smiling and actively interested in working is the one who'll get the job offers.

♥ **Present your best self.** On the job interview, speak clearly, firmly and pleasantly. Don't chew gum. Dress neatly. Avoid extremes in dress, hair, nails, and jewelry. Answer questions fully, politely and with self-assurance.

♥ **Look further than "Help Wanted" ads.** Employment experts report that a large percentage of job openings are never advertised. Advise your teen to select firms he or she is interested in and apply in person or send a resume with a cover letter.

♥ **Volunteer work** can look impressive on a resume and can offer contacts that may become meaningful reference sources for a teen. Internships can provide experience in what it's like to be "on the job."

Check These Out!

For special resources related to parent education and support in your community, contact local social services, schools, hospitals, libraries or United Way.

There are many books, pamphlets, videos and periodicals that can be of great help to teens and their parents in senior year. Many of the books listed below are available in public libraries. If one is not in your library's collection, ask the librarian to arrange for an inter-library loan. Another option is to order one or more from a local bookstore, as they can be an excellent investment in helping a senior prepare for college or career.

Teens under the influence: the truth about kids, alcohol, and other drugs— how to recognize the problem and what to do about it / Katherine Ketcham and Nicholas A. Pace. (B)

America's 101 fastest growing jobs: detailed information on major jobs with the most openings and growth / Michael Farr. (B)

300 best jobs without a four-year degree / developed by Michael Farr and LaVerne L. Ludden. (B)

Helping your child choose a career / by Luther B. Otto. (B)

(B) book

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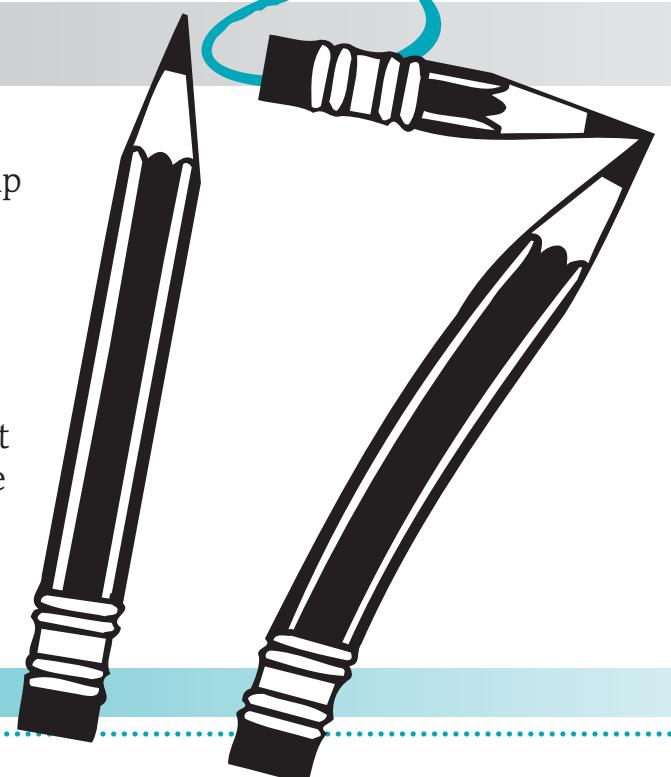
Healthy Stages

12TH GRADE

Tips for Parents of Twelfth-Graders. *Healthy Stages* is a free, once-a-year newsletter. It is designed to reach you during your child's current grade in school. Every effort has been made to pack its short articles with helpful facts. We suggest you keep *Healthy Stages* around for the entire school year. Put it in a folder with other important information about your child. Refer to it

from time to time. Its articles may help you deal with a problem or try a new approach in parenting.

We hope you look forward to all that this year brings. And we hope you'll turn to *Healthy Stages* often. We want to help you make this school year one that both you and your child will remember with joy.



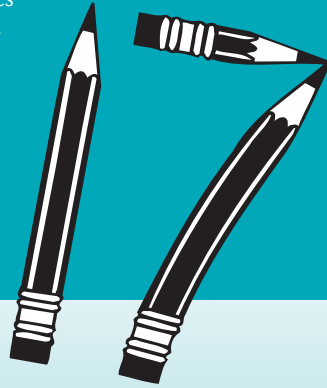
The Bittersweet Times And Trials Of 17

After a long, sometimes difficult climb, your child is at the very peak of a high school career. Everything you've done as a parent, from the earliest bonding of infancy to last week's compromise on curfew, has helped to shape this emerging young adult. Everything your child has done, from studies to friendships to plans for the future, is coming together to create a unique personal identity. This can be a major turning point for some teens – a time when new leaders can emerge, or new talents can be discovered and put to use. Many teens think of this as the year they hope to "leave their mark" on the high school that has nurtured and educated them. As a parent, you'll especially want to continue your involvement with your senior's school this year. Your participation in planning and/or attending banquets, dances, and senior events will mean a great deal to your child.

A senior can be emotionally pulled in several directions. There's the joy of being oldest in the school; the worries

about whether the right career and college choices have been made; the pleasures and pangs of social and dating relationships.

A parent can feel pride now, seeing the milestone of graduation just ahead. But there's also a sense that your job parenting an adolescent is about to change. You will always be a parent, however, and your child will always need you, though in different ways. Recognizing the changes that the next few years will bring, don't let a single opportunity slip by to tell your senior how much you love him or her. As always, it's the best support a parent can offer.



GOODBYE . . . AND HELLO

The creators of *Healthy Stages* wish to take this opportunity to tell the parents of seniors, "Good work!" It has been a real pleasure to search out topics to help you and your teen, and to share our thoughts about adolescent growth and development.

You may have assumed that, as the parent of a senior, you're holding your last issue of *Healthy Stages*. We're happy to report that you'll get one more issue before your child graduates from high school. It will deal with issues typically faced by parents of teens during that transition after high school.

Till then, happy parenting. Take lots of photos this year. Bring extra tissues to graduation ceremonies for those tears of nostalgia and joy that will well up. Thank your youngster's teachers for all they've done to shape a fine young man or woman. Say a silent prayer that the future will bring good things to this precious child of yours. Breathe a sigh of relief. Hug or kiss your senior. And give yourself a pat on the back. You deserve it!

Emotional Health Alert

Late Adolescent Depression

A psychiatrist who specializes in the emotional health issues of adolescence says, "Virtually any family doctor or pediatrician will tell you there's an increase in the incidence of colds, viruses, and other illnesses among young people in their senior year of high school and the first year of college. Often it's seen as a response of the body's immune system to assaults by all kinds of stresses." He adds, "Depression can show up at this time in a young life as a function of the mixed feelings about anticipating leaving home. Seniors profess excitement at the prospect of going out and being an adult on a conscious level, but on a less conscious level, they can also be scared – though they'll never tell you – about reaching 18!"

Knowing the danger signs of serious depression can enable a parent to help a child before consequences become more severe. For depression's effects can range from problems with health and schoolwork to thoughts of suicide. Following are symptoms that may indicate a problem that's more than "just the blues."

- ♥ Loss of interest in friends and activities.
- ♥ Changing sleep patterns – too much or too little.
- ♥ School problems; falling grades, cutting classes, dropping activities.
- ♥ Drug or alcohol abuse.
- ♥ Significant weight changes – up or down.
- ♥ Talk of death or suicide.
- ♥ Worrisome changes in appearance or personality.

Rather than tell a glum, sad, or worried child to "snap out of it," "be grateful for all you've got," or "cheer up," a parent should show loving concern. The above symptoms are cues to seek professional help for your child. Start by scheduling an appointment with your child's physician. Above all, never ignore talk of suicide. It is a cry for help to be taken seriously – immediately.

This article was prepared from an interview with Spencer D. Marcus, M.D., psychiatrist.



Health Matters

Coaching Your Teen in Adult Self-Care

Throughout your child's life, you've taken temperatures, spooned out cough syrup, cleaned skinned knees and applied bandages. You've also been there to decide when to call the doctor. Now your child may be on the verge of leaving for college or starting a career. How can you help your child begin or maintain a regimen of healthy independence? Here are some ways.

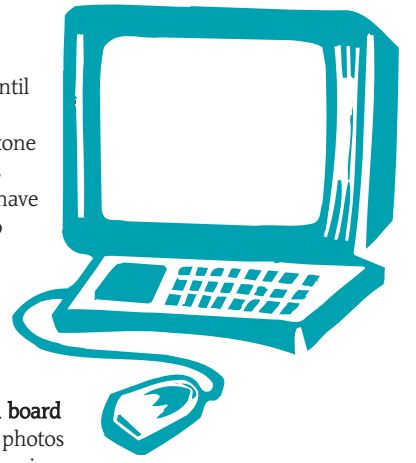
- ♥ **Set a good health example.** If your child sees you eat wisely, avoid health risks like smoking and treat your body with respect, it will send a message more powerful than words.
- ♥ **Start each day with a good breakfast.** Some easy breakfast ideas are: cereal with lowfat milk and fruit, whole grain toast with peanut butter and a glass of milk, small bagel with low-fat cream cheese and fruit, tortilla filled with scrambled eggs and a glass of milk.
- ♥ **Maintain a relationship with your child's doctor.** By now, your senior may have "graduated" from a pediatrician to a family specialist, internist or other physician. Advise your child to think of that doctor as an ally and advisor. Does your child need a pre-college physical? Or special tips on managing a chronic illness? Certainly, frank advice about sexual issues is critical. A visit with his or her doctor could help prepare your young adult for future self-care.
- ♥ **Have continuing talks about health.** In his or her younger days you demonstrated how to use a handkerchief and reminded about hand-washing. Keep up the communication! Remind your teen that abstinence is the only "safe sex." If your youngster is sexually active be sure to pass on important information about protective measures. Talk frankly about the health consequences of tobacco, alcohol and drug use. Emphasize the need for adequate nutrition and exercise. Your example and advice can offer a wise perspective on health issues.
- ♥ **Emphasize mental and emotional health, too.** Alert your child to the fact that high levels of stress can sometimes be experienced in early adulthood. Provide information on the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Describe your own strategies for reducing stress. Let your child know it's just as appropriate to seek help for a mental or emotional problem as for a physical one.
- ♥ **Dental and eye care are important.** Remember to keep your senior's checkups for eyeglasses and dental care up to date.
- ♥ **Plan early for special health needs.** For a child going away next year to college, you'll need a list of health needs that must be packed. They include:
 - Vitamins
 - Refillable prescription medications
 - All types of hygiene supplies
 - Extra glasses or contact lenses
 - An up-to-date health history for your child's personal files and for the college health center.

Nurturing Your Teen

Graduation Gifts

You don't have to wait until the week of graduation to celebrate this major milestone in your son's or daughter's young life. And you don't have to spend a lot of money to give gifts he or she will remember always.

Here are a few ideas. You'll think of many more!



"This is Your Life" Bulletin board

– Pull out all those school photos you've had made every year since kindergarten. On a bulletin board or wall, display your child's growth in school pictures. Looking at the pictures will bring back memories that will give you both some happy moments.

A High School Yearbook – Some seniors neglect to get the yearbook from their senior year, and then regret it ever after. Give your child his or her senior yearbook as a holiday or birthday gift. You'll be giving a treasure trove of future reminiscing!

A "Going To College" Chest – If your child will leave for college or career, start months ahead to fill a foot locker with needed supplies. Your teen will enjoy all the attention. And you'll spread costs throughout the year. A few suggestions:

- ♥ Alarm clock
- ♥ Desk lamp
- ♥ Camera
- ♥ Flashlight
- ♥ Hot pot to make coffee or tea
- ♥ Computer, word processor or typewriter
- ♥ Umbrella

Home Memory Book – Give your senior a disposable camera. Suggest using it to take pictures at home: his or her bedroom, the family room, beloved pets, and familiar settings in the neighborhood and at high school. Get the film developed and put the pictures in a small special photo album. Include a picture and message from each member of the family. It'll be a dose of "instant home" to take when the mood strikes!

Other ideas? Write a letter to your teen with special memories you have of him or her. And at some time before the flurry of graduation parties, have a family dinner to honor your senior – at a restaurant or at home with his or her favorite "festive" foods.

Nurturing Yourself

Living Through A Midlife Crisis

The teen years can be hard on parents, for reasons apart from dealing with a child's adolescence. Parents in their late thirties, forties and early fifties may be going through a difficult time on their own. Lawrence Steinberg, Ph.D., an expert on family relations during adolescence, explores this in his book, **Crossing Paths: How Your Child's Adolescence Triggers Your Own Crisis**, 1994, published by Simon and Schuster, New York.

In a major study of more than 200 families, Dr. Steinberg discovered a variety of feelings in parents entering middle age just as their child becomes physically mature and starts life plans. Parents may find themselves feeling jealousy, regret about their own unrealized dreams, or powerlessness to improve their lives. Parents may find dealing with a teenager puts new strains on a marriage. A mother or dad may suddenly resent the reality of a career that's going nowhere. A parent may have medical problems caused by stress: ulcers, headaches, insomnia, gastric problems and heart troubles, to name a few.

Four factors were found to increase the likelihood of a parent's own problems during a child's adolescence.

- ♥ Being the parent of the same sex as the teen.
- ♥ Being divorced or remarried, especially for women.
- ♥ Having few satisfying outlets in life.
- ♥ Feeling constantly "negative" about adolescence.
- ♥ What can you do if you find yourself headed for emotional problems of your own during your child's late adolescence?
- ♥ **See your physician.** He or she may offer treatment strategies to help strengthen you emotionally, or may recommend professional counseling.
- ♥ **Take pride in your achievements.** Parents who had a satisfying work life were less likely to experience turmoil as a child matured.
- ♥ **Meet your own needs.** Others who thrived during adolescent parenting had strong interests, from community volunteering to writing stories to playing a musical instrument.
- ♥ **Pay attention to your marriage.** A good marriage gives both parents a harbor from stormy adolescence and a sense that "I am loved."
- ♥ **Stay involved with your child.** Don't let emotional turmoil create distance between you and your teen.
- ♥ **Have a positive outlook.** Dr. Steinberg wants parents to stop thinking of adolescence as "a family nightmare." He insists, "It isn't. But if you approach your child's adolescence as if it is, you may well turn it into one, not only for your child but for yourself as well."