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Love from our fans...



Just wanted to take a minute to say thank you for every article you post. Almost all are spot on and mixed with a little fun, and they always spark some thought!

—Shannon Schmoldt Canham

I love this page so much, thank you ♥

—Lynn Mixon Ramsey

I just wanted to say thanks for your posts and advice. I really appreciate it and find it very helpful.

Thank you. —Char Schraibman

Elizabeth gets her first paycheck! As a journalist, for the father/daughter "Perspectives" articles we wrote for *Your Teen* magazine last month. I got one too. Total gender/generational parity. Bravo, *Your Teen*.

—William Lucas Walker

More @ yourteenmag.com



Friendship

When a teen has no close friends, what should parents do?

bit.ly/norealfriends



Family Life

Driving teens everywhere was tiresome for this mom—until she had a realization.

bit.ly/drivingteens



Character

No one wants an entitled kid. Here's how brain science can help parents.

bit.ly/entitledkids

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Each of my five children

can easily recall their worst high-school summer experience. Whether it was a tedious job, a trip that disappointed, or pure boredom, those memories stay with-in easy access. But while my kids may see these summers as failures, I've come to realize that each experience taught them crucial life lessons.

My oldest spent a summer on a program abroad. The trip was one that her peers remember as the best summer of their lives. For a host of reasons, my daughter did not have a good time. When she came home, people would say, "How was your trip? Was it the best summer of your life?" And she would respond, "Not really."

Her response really flustered people. She was not following the script, so no one knew how to respond. The moment was akin to, "Hi. How are you?" "Fine. How are you?" That exchange does not expect a real answer.

She eventually complied and began using the expected answer, "It was an amazing summer," and in so doing learned how to navigate small talk while simultaneously being okay with a less-than-excellent experience.

One son did an unpaid internship with a documentary filmmaker. He was so excited to shadow someone with his dream career. His experience underdelivered. His boss made him arrange post-it notes on her calendar for two days and then redo it all when the colors were wrong. He learned that even his dream job might include less-than-thrilling tasks and that having a job means doing what the boss says, regardless of how you may feel about it.

Another daughter worked as an intern for a person who had nothing for her to do. Every day she complained about the boredom. She would try to plan what she could do at her desk to keep herself entertained while looking busy. She too learned important lessons about the working world.

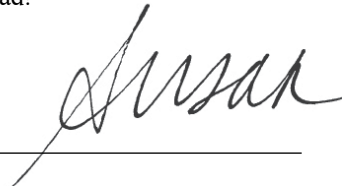
My third daughter worked at the local frozen yogurt shop. When it was busy, it was too busy, and when it was slow, it was too boring. But when she realized her manager was the primary breadwinner in her family, that moment was quite an awakening. The short-term summer job that she found tedious was someone else's livelihood.

My youngest son got a job at a cafeteria-style restaurant this past summer. He cleaned tables, washed dishes, and worked the cash register. He was completely thrilled to get a paycheck and learned about the power and independence that comes with earning money.

Sure, if you ask my kids, these summers were less than stellar. But in my mind, the valuable lessons they took away were worth every moment of tedium.

Even though the year is just beginning, we're looking ahead to summer—read all about the options, including newer developments like summer programs at colleges, starting on page 32. Don't miss anything in this info-packed issue, like how marijuana legalization is affecting teens (I'd been wondering!) on page 40, when tweens are ready for social media (page 52), what to do when your bullied teen becomes the bully (page 58), and much, much more.

Enjoy the Read!



FEATURED CONTRIBUTORS



Diana Nyad is one of the world's foremost endurance swimmers – and a #MeToo survivor. On page 56, read our interview with her, and learn about her latest project, EverWalk.



On page 58, **Phyllis Fagell**, a middle school counselor (and mom of three) draws on both expertise and in-the-trenches experience to offer a new perspective on bullying.



As a mom and pediatrician, **Jen Trachtenburg** worries about teen drinking, too. Check out her advice on teen parties in Perspectives, starting on page 43.



Writer and editor **Rudri Bhatt Patel** has just one child—and, sometimes, that has made for awkward conversations. Read her thoughtful essay about parenting an only tween on page 60.

WE ASKED TEENS...

What's something your parents worry about, but you don't think is a big deal?

I understand their concern about my difficult course load and assortment of extracurricular activities. But my schedule is my own doing and therefore my responsibility, not theirs. I want them to realize that I am aware of the consequences of my overachieving nature and that I am prepared to handle them.

—**Ilana**, Alpharetta, GA

My mom gets very nervous about the idea of me wearing a backpack. She claims that I will get back problems when I am older, due to the insane weight of it, but I disagree. People have been wearing backpacks for ages, and I do not see a problem with anybody's backs.

—**Liliana**, Brooklyn, NY

Whether I'm doing my homework at college.

—**Amanda**, Chicago, IL

My parents think driving late at night is a big deal, even before curfew. My mom always says, "It's not you, it's everyone else." If they trusted me, they would let me drive later at night. After all, I am a cautious driver and know how to keep myself safe.

—**Cassidy**, Irvine, CA

They worry about my sleeping schedule. I admit that my days aren't the easiest and I have a lot to do, but I'm pretty good with scheduling.

—**Lucy**, Edison, NJ

My safety. Yes, I know I should care, but nothing happens here.

—**Rachele**, McHenry, IL

My parents worry that I'm on my phone too much. I think my phone helps me have a better view on things and helps me to stay connected with friends who live farther away and I might not see very often.

—**Samantha**, Fairfield, CT

I think that my parents worry too much about me walking places alone. They always tell me to call them whenever I get to my destination, or when I'm leaving. They even make me call them after school, despite the fact that they know when my school ends and what after-school activities I have.

—**Declan**, Arlington, VA

My parents worry about my grades. Last year, I got all A's but now as a sophomore I've been getting some B's and a C. I have been working hard to get those grades up, but my parents keep bugging me about it every day.

—**Alexa**, Fairfield, CT

My parents think that showing a larger amount of skin is inappropriate, but I think of it as a way of expressing yourself and increasing your confidence.

—**Jaseina**, Grand Forks, ND

My parents worry about my messy room. But even when I take the time to clean it (and it looks nice), they still notice that something is out of place.

—**Erin**, Fairfield, CT

#ParentHack: The Toilet Paper Contest That Everyone Wins (Especially Mom)

I can't explain why it drives me wild. The fact is that it does. Why are my husband and I the only ones in the house with the specialized skill of replacing the toilet paper?

Apparently, this is not a new problem. In the 1940s, my grandma was declaring anyone (male or female) who left an empty toilet paper roll to be "The Meanest Man in the World." If Depression-born and World War II-raised kids weren't changing the TP, is there any hope for my 21st-century teens?

I like to think there is, although that hope is mixed with a healthy

dose of desperation. And in my house, desperation calls for a contest.

Here's the plan: The three kids need to collectively get to 20 points. (20 points = ice cream at the new place near us.) Each time one of them replaces a TP roll, they add a tally mark to our kitchen chalkboard. Each time I find an empty roll, I erase a mark.

Six weeks in, they're at 14 marks.

Is this success? Given that without this contest they would have been at about negative 50 and that they are actually making an ef-

fort, I'm counting it as overwhelming progress.

It's slow, but we are sticking with it, and they are definitely improving. It's kind of like parenting in general, you know? We're getting there. Eventually.

And, hey, as long as we're taking the leisurely route, why not stop for ice cream?

—**Sharon Holbrook**

Want to share your story?
Email your idea to
editor@yourteenmag.com.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls

Under Pressure tackles the difficult job of defining, analyzing, and advising on the stressors and pressures facing girls today. Author Lisa Damour is well-versed in the subject. She holds a degree in clinical psychology from Yale, writes a column on adolescence for *The New York Times*, and is the author of *New York Times* bestseller *Untangled*,

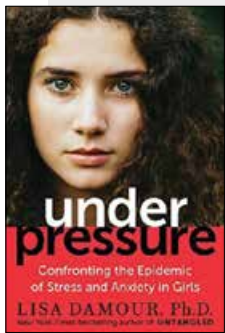
which offers a step-by-step approach to guiding girls through important life transitions.

In her newest book, Damour lays out the stark reality regarding girls and stress, tapping into anecdotal evidence as well as recent research.

Anxiety is on the rise among adolescent girls, while it's remained static among boys. Researchers note that in the five years between 2009 and 2014, the number of girls who reported feeling worried, nervous, or fearful jumped by a whopping 55 percent. Damour has also witnessed this firsthand at the all-girls' school where she consults.

Damour emphasizes that healthy stress and anxiety actually help us achieve our full potential. But while girls can benefit from having their negative feelings reframed in a positive light, parents still need to recognize when stress and anxiety are becoming a toxic, paralyzing force. Damour offers actionable advice for a variety of situations girls face in their lives, as well as an extensive list of resources for parents who want to do additional research.

Parents who found a valuable resource in Damour's *Untangled* will certainly want to add *Under Pressure* to their reading list. And those unfamiliar with her prior work will also appreciate her compassionate, balanced approach to supporting and nurturing girls through the most stressful times of their lives. —Kristina Wright



By the Numbers...



45%

of teens feel stressed "all the time," compared to just **12%** who are "rarely" stressed, and **6%** who are "never" stressed.

Afterschoolapp.com



11%

of all the alcohol in the United States is consumed by underage drinkers.

Dosomething.org

41%

of teens use Snapchat, more than any other app.

Smartsocialmedia.com



21%

of teen social media users report feeling worse about their own lives because of what they see from other friends on social media, and 68% percent of users have experienced drama among their friends on social media.

Journal of Child Development

70%

of teens in 2018 use social media multiple times a day, compared to 34% of teens in 2012.

Smartsocialmedia.com



Start Your Future

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Early College High School student who
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and is the youngest intern at the
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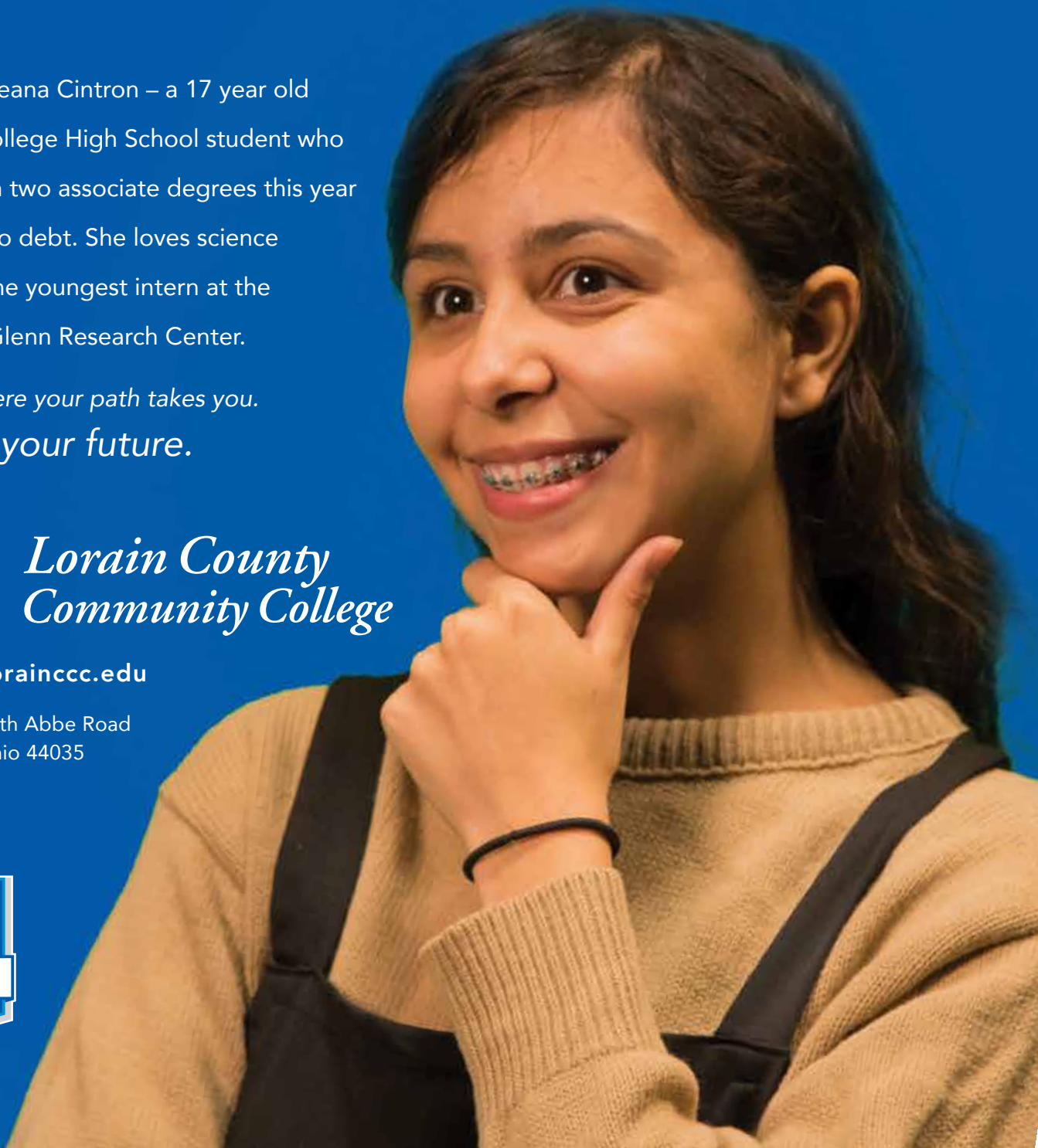
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\$55, store.sunki.com



CRYSTAL Mineral Deodorant Stick

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\$6.99, thecrystal.com

Kaleidoscope Miracle Drops

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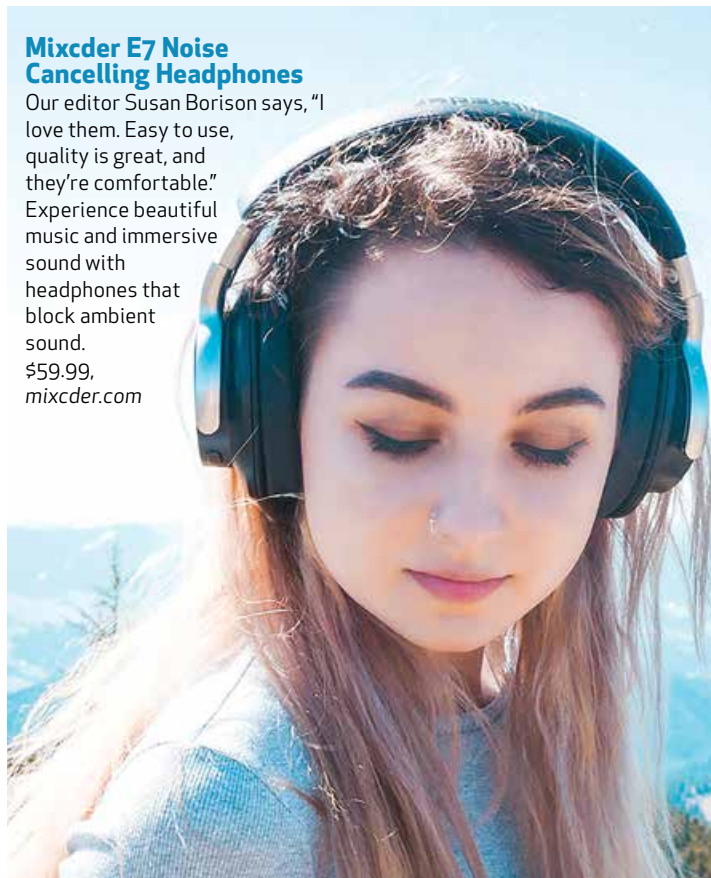
From \$5.95, pennherb.com

Cool Stuff

Check out the latest
and greatest toys we found!

Mixcder E7 Noise Cancelling Headphones

Our editor Susan Borison says, "I love them. Easy to use, quality is great, and they're comfortable." Experience beautiful music and immersive sound with headphones that block ambient sound.
\$59.99,
mixcder.com



Rocketbook Everlast Notebook

How cool is this? Get all the benefits of taking handwritten notes, yet create digital, editable documents you can share or save to your favorite cloud service, including Dropbox, Google Drive, and Evernote.
\$34, getrocketbook.com

UAG iPhone X Phone Case

Are you forever dropping your phone? This is the case for you. Meets military standards for drop and shock; lightweight yet durable.
\$39.95, urbanarmorgear.com



Wicked Audio Shred 2 Wireless Bluetooth Sweat Proof Earbud

These earbuds are your new best workout buddy (unlike your flaky friends who never show up to the gym). These have Wicked Audio's Neck Lock design, multiple fin and loop attachments, and multiple sizes of cushions that will never leave you hanging while you're sweating it up.
\$60, wickedaudio.com



Loctote Industrial Bag Antitheft Sack

Don't worry about your phone or wallet while you're working out. This bag is like a portable safe that locks shut and keeps your stuff safe. It's slash-resistant, too.
\$59, loctote.com



Warm and Fuzzy

Cuddle up with warm thoughts

Rumpl Down Puffy Throw Blanket

Your Teen staffer Eca (who is always cold) uses this outside by the fire pit in her backyard, on the couch watching TV, or in the car. Available as a throw. From \$159, rumpl.com



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Laura Ashley Maddox 7 Piece Comforter Set

Rest and relaxation are sure to follow this elegant 7-piece cotton bedding set. Includes a reversible comforter, sheets, shams, and two accent pillows. \$142.99, wayfair.com

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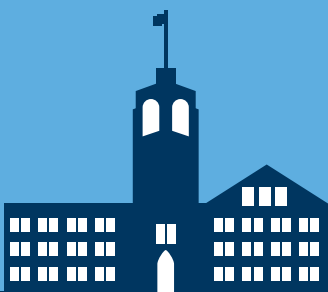
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Only 50% of Teens Foresee Financial Independence

How can parents help prepare their teens?

Seventy-five percent of teens see graduating from college as a priority, according to a recent survey conducted by Junior Achievement USA and the insurance firm AIG. At the same time, of the 1,000 teens surveyed, only 50% viewed achieving financial independence from their parents as a goal.

Have we as parents stressed the need for a solid education at the expense of more “real life” goals like financial stability? And if we have, how can we

do a better job preparing our kids? Financial independence and stability are an important part of being an adult—but, according to this study, our kids may not have gotten the message.

Although experts agree that it is never too early to teach financial literacy, it's never too late to start, either. Teens ages 13 to 15 can learn skills like budgeting and can even experiment with investing in the stock market, says Alexander Lowry, professor of finance at Gordon

College in Wenham, Massachusetts. Financial literacy isn't the same as financial independence, of course, but it can help teens feel more equipped to build towards that independence.

Older teens should be encouraged to get jobs and taught how to bank and manage their earnings. Lowry encourages teens to get credit cards so they can learn about paying their balance off in full and the importance of establishing good credit.

But it's not just about financial expertise: It's about building self-esteem and confidence around these issues, says Leanne Jacobs, author of *Beautiful Money: The 4-Week Total Wealth Makeover*. “Empowering teens to make smart money decisions—like saving half of every paycheck as well as learning simple money management strategies—will build strong and resourceful adults,” she says.

Jacobs also encourages parents to discuss future financial arrangements with their teens, like who will be paying their phone bill after they graduate college, or whether they will be asked to contribute to rent if they choose to move back home.

“Setting clear boundaries and a healthy foundation is key,” Jacobs says. “Having frequent and healthy conversations about money and who will be responsible for what down the road will only enhance and optimize success.”

—Wendy Wisner



Photo: Beth Segal



New Driver's License is No Time to Relax

Crash risk rises after licensing.

My Facebook friends have lots of stories about their newly licensed drivers: A careful student driver got her license and the next thing you know, she shattered a passenger-side window while parallel parking into a tree. Another new driver fiddled with the car radio and didn't notice as he slowly crashed into the car in front of him. A third teen, not fully aware of how wide her vehicle was, scraped all the side mirrors off a street's length of parked cars.

A 2018 study by the National Institutes of Health puts these anecdotes into statistical context:

In the first three months after receiving their license, new drivers are eight times more likely to get into an accident or near-crash than they were in the last three months of driving with a learner's permit.

It's exciting to celebrate a new license. It's the end of chauffeuring for parents and a newfound freedom for both of you. Still, parents might not want to let go just yet.

"I like to remind parents that they are in charge," says Bernadette Lyons of Parkway Driving School in Boston, which offers classes for parents of student drivers. "Make a contract

with your child, and, regardless of the law, set your own driving curfew of 9 or 10 p.m., or tell them they can't be driving with their friends for a year." Lyons also points out that there are devices that can track your car and monitor speed and location to keep an eye on your teen.

Each teenager is different, and there's no definitive answer about when risky driving significantly declines. But this much is clear: For the newly licensed, parents are still their teens' best mentors in safe driving.

—Jack Cheng



How to Ship a Package

By Danyelle Chambers

Remember back to your first trip to the post office ... *alone*? The many impatient glares from people in line behind you? The 500 questions the clerk asked (that you had no clue how to answer)? “Do you need a delivery confirmation and return receipt?” *Huh?*

In a world filled with technology and e-commerce, many teens are comfortable slapping a pre-printed return label on a package and dropping it off at the post office. But does your teen know how to ship a package without the help of Amazon? Share these four easy steps to help your teen have a smooth first solo trip to the post office.

Step 1: Prepare the Package

Make sure you prepare your package in advance. It aids in safe delivery and avoids unnecessary fees. Finding a good cardboard box at home will save you some money. Select a box that is the proper size and provides the correct support for the item(s) you want to ship. When shipping fragile items, make sure you mark the package as “FRAGILE” and wrap the item in foam or plastic bubble wrap to prevent breakage. If you hear items shifting, that is a good indicator that your item needs more cushioning. Once items are carefully packed, seal the box with packaging tape to prevent items from falling out or being tampered with.

Step 2: Label the Package

Make sure you correctly label the package. There are two ways to do this. The first way is to visit the USPS website and click on the print shipping label button. In the return address section, type in your address. Then, type the delivery address. Finally, print the label and attach it to the box with clear packaging tape.

The second option is to write the address you’re sending the package to in the center of the package, using a pen or Sharpie. Put the recipient’s name on the first line, street address on the second line, and city, state, and zip code on the third line. Then in the upper left hand corner, write your address, a.k.a. the return address.

Step 3: Determine Shipping Method

How fast do you want your package to arrive? There are a variety of shipping methods that have different price levels. Priority Mail Express is the most expensive option but guarantees overnight delivery. Priority Mail typically ensures delivery within 1 to 3 days. Standard shipping is the cheapest and delivers within 5 to 7 business days.

Step 4: Ship your package

Take your package to the nearest USPS. If your package weighs 13 ounces or less and has the correct postage affixed, you can drop it in the blue collection box. Packages over 13 ounces must go

to the clerk behind the counter at the post office. Keep your receipt, which has the confirmation number and tracking information, if you need to track delivery.





A Fresh and Light Answer to the Too-Much-Holiday-Food Blues

January weather might say comfort food, but who says healthy can't be comforting? The turn of the page to a new calendar year is an ideal time to try something new and to add a few more delicious vegetables to the family table.

Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook offer this simple Turkish salad recipe—and many more exotic eats—in their new cookbook, *Israeli Soul: Easy, Essential, Delicious*. So easy, your teenager can make it for the whole family.

TURKISH SALAD

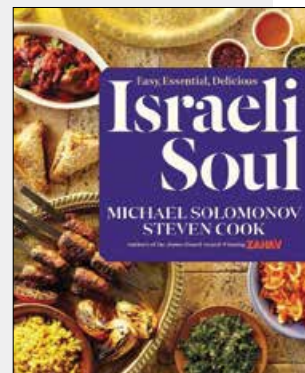
Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 red bell peppers
- 2 onions
- 4 garlic cloves
- Scallions
- Salt
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- Lemon juice
- Olive oil

DIRECTIONS:

1. Core, seed, and chop 3 red bell peppers. Chop 2 onions. Thinly slice 4 garlic cloves. Slice a bunch of scallions on the bias.
2. Sauté the peppers with 1 tablespoon kosher salt and ¼ cup canola oil in a large skillet until soft, about 4 minutes.
3. Add the onions and garlic. Cook until the onions are translucent, about 10 minutes.
4. Fold in 1 pint of halved cherry tomatoes. Add 2 teaspoons smoked paprika and 2 teaspoons ground coriander. Toast the spices for about 2 minutes.
5. Transfer to a bowl, add the sliced scallions, taste. Add a pinch of salt, a squeeze of lemon juice, and a drizzle of olive oil.



Turkish Salad is excerpted from *Israeli Soul*, copyright 2018 by Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook. Photography copyright 2018 by Michael Persico. Reproduced by permission of Rux Martin Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.

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Do Young People Have the Power to Stop Hate?

Teenagers have more of a voice than they realize in making positive change.

By Nancy Schatz Alton

In 2017, hate crimes rose in the United States by more than 17%, according to a recent report by the FBI. It is the biggest annual increase in reported hate crimes since 2001 (in the weeks after 9/11) and the third straight year that hate crimes have gone up. It seems that not a week goes by without a story of hate in the news.

In the face of such sobering statistics and news stories, young people may feel powerless to make a difference, given that most of them cannot yet vote. However, parents and other caring adults can help teens change the world around them by using their most powerful weapon: their voice.

When teenager Hannah Shuffer overheard students at her school making fun of special education students, she resolved to put a stop to it. Her first step was to put her thoughts and feelings into words as part of a classroom essay assignment.

"Writing my essay helped shape my plan," says Shuffer, a senior at Orange High School in Pepper Pike, Ohio. "Ideas are just ideas until you write them down. When you're writing an essay, you're really thinking."

Enlisting the help of friends, she designed a campaign to teach her classmates that people with disabilities are just like everyone else. Her goal: to help them understand that people like her brother, who has cerebral palsy, are worth getting to know one-on-one.

Shuffer entered her essay in last year's *Stop the Hate: Youth Speak Out* essay contest sponsored by the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage in Beachwood, Ohio. Her essay was awarded grand finalist, earning her a college scholarship and money for her

school to use for anti-bias training.

"Since I won the essay contest, I haven't heard people making fun of special education kids," says Shuffer. "My essay was only 400 words. It doesn't have to be long to have an impact."

The Teenage Brain: Wired for Positive Change

The fact is that adolescents are at the perfect age to create positive change, says Lina Acosta Sandaal, a psychotherapist and parent coach in Miami.

"The beauty of adolescence is that the brain area that focuses on the negative slows down and gets a little quieter," says Sandaal. "That's why they're risk-takers. Teen brains are primed to only see the pros in the pro and con list."

Still, teenagers need parents to guide them toward more positive risk-taking experiences, adds Sandaal. "If we want our kids to be agents of positive change in our communities, we need to find out what they are interested in and lead them."

To unearth the issues your teenager cares about, talk about stories in the news. Then research local organizations that match those interests and make it a non-negotiable family task to volunteer at the organization of their choosing, suggests Sandaal. Or, if they want to start their own campaign, offer your organizational and leadership skills in support of their endeavor.

Sandaal's teenage daughter came with her to write postcards before the recent election. "She surprised me with what she wrote on those cards: 'I can't



vote, so vote for me!" says Sandaal. The parent's role is to plant the seed, provide support, and then get out of the way.

An Opportunity for Healing

Giving your teenager an outlet to express their concern and caring is not only incredibly empowering, but it can also be very healing.

"Hate knows no boundaries. Through reading these essays every year, we understand students experience deep pain as they face serious, difficult challenges," says Dahlia Fisher, director of external relations at the Maltz Museum.

"Their experiences and their ability to stand up and say, 'This happened to me' is powerful. Just like hate is a disease, love is a multiplier. When you share your voice and speak up, others will raise their voices, too," says Fisher. ■



From Your Teen for **Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage**, sponsor of *Stop the Hate: Youth Speak Out* essay contest. Open to students in grades 6-12 from Northeast Ohio. Deadlines in January. Learn more at maltzmuseum.org/STH

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Choosing the Right Therapist

When your teenager needs counseling, finding a good fit really matters.

By Shannon Shelton Miller

After her 13-year-old son ran into some behavioral and social troubles at school, Terri, an Oklahoma mom, went to see the school therapist. “She essentially told us that he was crazy and sent us to the emergency room for an immediate evaluation,” Terri recalls. “Which was a giant waste of time for the ER staff and us.”

The school therapist is often a starting point for help—even if, as in this case, they are not the best long-term fit for a particular child and family. So, where to go next? Choosing a therapist isn’t like choosing an orthodontist. It’s intensely personal, and teens and parents are both likely to have strong feelings about whether a therapist is the right fit for the family.

It’s imperative that parents make teenagers active participants in the process.

“I tell parents that by the time their child turns 12, they become their own independent person,” says Theresa Nguyen, vice president of policy and programs for Mental Health America (MHA), a national nonprofit that promotes community-based mental health solutions. “It’s not going to be effective if parents just bring kids to therapy; they’re going to be blindsided by that.”

Starting the Conversation

Stigmas around mental health have lessened, and today’s teens may be willing to talk about their struggles with anxiety, depression, and other mental illnesses. Nguyen, who is a licensed clinical social worker, notes that teens under 18 make up more than 40 percent of us-



ers of the online screening tools on the MHA website.

But while teenagers might know they need help, there can still be a disconnect between acknowledging the issue and seeking assistance.

“Help start the conversation and ask them if they’d like to talk to someone,” Nguyen says. “As parents, we have to be brave because our children often don’t know how to tell us when they need help.”

Other times, a teen might be defensive when a parent comments on changes in behavior, mood, or overall demeanor, but the parent should find ways to introduce the idea of counseling in a supportive, collaborative manner.

“Talk with your teen about your concerns and how therapy or counseling can help,” says De’Asia Thompson, a licensed independent social worker in Dayton, Ohio, who specializes in adolescent mental health. “It may take some negotiation, but if you can get them to buy in, it usually will be easier” to begin the counseling process.

Finding the Right Fit

When it’s time to make an appointment,

parents can ask for recommendations from trusted friends and colleagues or search online for providers. Nguyen says teens should be encouraged to think about what they want in a therapist and see if the profiles and websites match those needs.

“If a teen doesn’t know what they’re looking for in a therapist, sometimes just seeing the profiles helps to clarify if the person sounds like someone they can trust and get along with,” she says. Since teens will be sharing intimate details of their lives with a therapist, their comfort level is crucial.

Parents and teens can also request a brief phone consultation before the first appointment to ask questions and see if there’s a connection, says Thompson. To make the most of this, it’s helpful to think ahead about the goal of therapy, says Nguyen, such as “I want to figure out how to talk to my parents about these issues” or “I want to feel less anxious.”

What to expect

Teens will spend the first few appointments building a relationship and working

Insurance Problems?

Maybe you don't have health insurance at all, or you're running into difficulties with your mental health coverage. Lack of nearby providers, few covered providers, caps on the number of covered sessions, and high copays and deductibles can all present barriers.

There are options, however—from sliding scale fees (based on financial need) offered by some practitioners to clinics offered by universities.

For more information on no- to low-cost mental health treatment options, check out mentalhealthamerica.net/finding-therapy

one-on-one with a therapist. At some point, the therapist should ask the teen how they want their parents involved, if at all, Nguyen says.

Family therapy could be another option that emerges as a teen grows more comfortable with the therapist.

"When dealing with teens, it's important to do some family work because teens don't exist in a vacuum," Thompson says. "What happens to them impacts the whole family."

Time for a Change?

Teens should give a new therapist at least three sessions before they determine that the relationship isn't working, Nguyen says.

If teens are willing to talk about the therapy, parents can try to determine whether their teenager is balking simply because the topics are uncomfortable. If that's the case, they should encourage their teen to ask the therapist to slow down the pace of the sessions. That way, the teen can still address the issues being unearthed, but in a way that makes them feel secure.

If it's an issue of fit, however, it's worth seeking out a better connection. At the same time, says Nguyen, parents might want their own therapeutic support to help with communicating and supporting their teen during recovery. ■

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For years, KJ Dell'Antonia was the editor of the popular *New York Times* parenting blog, Motherlode. In her professional life, and in her personal life as a mother of four kids ages 12 to 17, she kept returning to the same question: Why aren't we parents happier? That question, and the answers she found, are at the center of her new book, *How to Be a Happier Parent*, where she covers parenting pain points like chores, mornings, screen time, and more.

I want to start by saying *How to Be a Happier Parent* is a brilliant book. What was the impetus for the book?

It was this funny combination of writing about the world of family and reading essays by people who felt very frantic and anxious. I have four kids. When I started at Motherlode [at the *New York Times*], the oldest was 10. The most recent addition to the family had only been around for a couple of years—we adopted our second-youngest child when she was four. We were really in the thick of that sort of run-

ning and trying to figure out how we're going to make dinner, and how they can all play one sport—forget it if they wanted to play more than one sport, which some did.

I wanted to write about it. I thought about the things I could do to make parenting more fun. But I was looking at lists, and I'm like, "I don't want to do fun things. I hate fun things. I don't want to do anything else; I just want the things I'm doing to suck less."

It was the book that I wanted to read and also the book that I wanted to write.

What are some of the things that you tried that worked and didn't work?

At our house, we really keep coming back to the chore thing. The first is that you want them to clear their dishes. The second is that it would be nice if you didn't have to nag them and remind them every single time.

You're going to have to toss the second goal. Just let it go. Stop feeling bad about it: "Oh my goodness, I cannot even raise a child who can pick socks up off the floor in the kitchen." You've got to go, "That's every kid. That's every

family. My job is to get the kid to pick the socks up, even if I have to do that every day for 12 years.” That’s how it is.

What other systems did you try?

We messed around with mornings a lot. I realized what I really wanted was for everyone, including me, to have a relatively pleasant start to the day even though we have to get up earlier than anyone wants to. I can’t control that piece of it, and I can’t control what they do in the morning.

They can be testy. I get it. I hate getting up in the morning. But I can let the things that are making them testy be their problem. One moment it dawned on me that if they’re late for school, it means nothing to me. I go home and work.

That whole screaming fit I was having when we screeched up to the drop-off and they opened the door and I screamed after them, “I told you that you were going to be late,” and drove off in a fury—that was completely unnecessary. I could just be like, “Man, I’m sorry you can’t find your sneakers. Have a Pop-Tart.” I

didn’t have to join them in that chaos. If they’re late, they’re late. Somebody else even punishes them for me. It’s really the best thing.

How is homework at your house?

It is totally their problem. My husband and I do next to nothing, including for the child that has learning needs. We really stay out of, “I know you have something due tomorrow, is it done?”

Sometimes things end badly. My senior’s college application story is, “I got a lot better,” not, “I have been great the whole time.”

Sometimes I think, “Maybe I should have done more.” But the other thing I keep telling people, and telling myself, is that we want them to learn this while they’re under our roof, not their freshman year of college.

How does our kids’ happiness affect our happiness as parents?

It’s okay to get happier when they’re happy. But the thing that I mostly talk about is taking on their burdens. They

are often just bringing them to you to dump them. When they bring home something that went wrong, if we also take it on, then we join them in this huge emotional reaction.

Instead, we should be there to show them that not making the 5th grade soccer team is not a life-ending catastrophe. When your friend makes you miserable, you make cookies and you go on the next day. It’s going to be okay. We’re there to put these events and these tragedies that are large for a kid or a teenager into an adult perspective that says there’s another test, another girlfriend, another college.

Of course, we will ache for them, but it’s okay to be able to look at your own life and go, “I am solid here. I am a refuge for them, if it comes to that, but I’m also okay.” I’m not trying to propose that if your kid is going through a divorce, you’re not supposed to be unhappy for them. We need to just own that it’s their thing. ■

Interview by Susan Borison

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- Cori Fidler, biomedical engineering

Scythe

For this mother and son, Neal Shusterman's near-future dystopian novel proved to be an engaging road-trip audiobook—and, over the miles, provided plenty of fodder for thoughtful discussion.

PARENT REVIEW

Yes, yes, I know. Another dark, dystopian YA series. Another world in which kids are forced to kill and fight and sacrifice their humanity for survival. These stories have become, at least for me, less entertaining than disheartening. However, I'm glad I gave Neal Shusterman's *Scythe* and its 2018 sequel, *Thunderhead*, a chance.

Scythe is set in a near-future world in which immortality (as well as resurrection of the dead, accelerated healing, and perfect pain control) has been achieved. In order to prevent overpopulation, human "gleaning" must occur, ideally in a random and unbiased process of selection, by government-sanctioned executioners, or Scythes.

The main characters in the novel, Citra and Rowan, have been chosen to apprentice under Scythe Faraday, a respected senior Scythe. They are reluctant participants in their training, but as time passes and power struggles emerge, their investment in the Scythedom deepens. Citra and Rowan must compete against each other, and the darker elements at work in the Scythedom, in order to find their way through their training. How will they approach the work of gleaning perfectly healthy humans, doling out death in an otherwise immortal world?

All Scythes, including apprentices, must keep a journal. It is through these writings that the reader gets a deeper understanding of the ethics, emotional toll, and reasoning at work in the minds of those who must, as a duty to humankind, kill other human beings. "We must, by law, keep a record of the innocents we kill. And as I see it, they're all innocents. Even the guilty," writes H.S. [Honorable Scythe] Curie, Citra's mentor, and one of the most respected of the Scythes.

Admittedly, the plot is dark, but it offers valuable opportunities for the reader to consider questions about ethics, morality, and duty. My son, Finn, and I debated many of these topics as we listened to the book during a long car trip.

We landed in an uncomfortable yet mutually satisfying place, in which we admitted to the need for a Scythe-like entity in a population defined by immortality, but found great solace in an entry from Scythe Faraday's Gleaning Journal:

"My greatest wish for humanity is not for peace, or comfort, or joy. It is that we all still die a little inside every time we witness the death of another. For only the pain of empathy will keep us human."

Jessica Lahey is an educator and author of *The Gift of Failure*.



TEEN REVIEW

Scythe is an incredible book—a fictional story that is grounded in reality. Unlike books that feel like a journey into some fantasy world, *Scythe* feels like it could be telling the future. The story may be dark at times, but it provides some fascinating, thought-provoking questions. I love how it takes the way we think about life, reality, and the future and turns it on its head. The storyline is never predictable or hard to follow. While reading the book, I felt engaged, and didn't feel like I had to think too hard to understand the plot. I would highly suggest this book to anyone who wants an interesting read—and isn't too afraid of a dark future.

Rather than sticking to the overused format of many teen fiction books, *Scythe* is completely original.

Unlike other teen books, *Scythe* actually raises questions about life and moral philosophy, presenting them in an interesting manner. It doesn't feel like a textbook—far from it—but still has lessons to teach. I never read a chapter and thought that it was shallow or plain; I always left with a sense of awe or a desire for introspection.

Scythe is a fascinating human story, highlighting our problems and failures. It does not give you a low opinion of humanity, but instead lets you consider your own conceptions of right and wrong, good and evil.

I would rarely suggest a book to my friends, but I did find that this one was worth discussion. It is what teen fiction should be—an interesting story that isn't too complex or too simple. It never feels patronizing. It doesn't try to appeal to a particular audience; instead, it tries to be an honest piece of writing. Because of this, I would certainly suggest *Scythe* to anyone who wants to read an interesting and profound book that highlights the best and worst of people, while being a purely human story.

Finn Lahey is a ninth grader in Vermont.

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"But Can You Make Money Doing That?"

Helping guide teens toward a college major or career path that pays off.

By Sarah Lindenfeld Hall



Celia Huddart is in her happy place when she's weightlifting, but the competitive athlete and college junior knew that making a career of the sport would be tough. That was partly thanks to frank discussions with her mom.

"We own a gym, so we were always really clear with her about the financial reality of both gym ownership and coaching," says mom Alyssa Royse of Seattle. "Although we didn't dissuade her, we were pretty open that it's not a safe bet."

After considering an exercise science major, Huddart landed on nursing as her major because she loves working with people. The moment she made her decision, says Royse, "her whole posture changed, and she said, 'Wow, Mom, I can feel it in my belly.'" That gut check was an important step in the decision process.

As teens contemplate possible careers, parents—eyeing the college price tag—want to be sure their child's path will lead to a paycheck.

However, teens need their parents' guidance, not their vetoes, says Eric Evans, director of student career development and experiential learning at Ohio's Lake Erie College.

It may sound early, but middle school is a good time for parents to start having conversations with students about their future. Here's how to spark some ideas.

Expose Them to Real-Life Scenarios

Thanks, in part, to pop culture, teens often have fantastical images of careers. When he worked at University College London a decade ago, Evans said investment banking was a top choice among students, who figured the job came with wealth and power. But they got a different view of the industry during a career event.

"We were meant to visit Lehman Brothers, but Lehman fell as part of the global financial crisis," Evans says, and the visit was canceled. "While this was a truly frightening time, it was a useful moment of learning for the students—to look at careers with clear eyes."

As part of his work with Lake Erie's Pathway to Empowerment program, Evans sees firsthand how crucial it is for students to have exposure to real-world job scenarios—even when it doesn't take place during a financial crisis.

Teens, with the help of parents, can find those opportunities through volunteering, internships, job shadows, and even informational interviews with professionals who are willing to share what they do on a daily basis. They should seek out those connections through school guidance counselors, friends, family members, neighbors, and professional organizations in industries that they are contemplating.

Some parts of a job's day-to-day work may be more appealing to teens than others. Wendy Briley, owner of Briley College Consulting, reminds students that every job includes some drudgery. However, "If most of the job is not appealing to them," she says, "they might need to think about something else."

Research the Options

Once teens narrow down their list of majors and careers, it's time to research next steps. Look at college websites to learn the requirements for different majors, Briley says. If a preferred major includes 15 physics credits and the student hates physics, they might want to reconsider.

What types of jobs do graduates of a particular school get? Evans suggests that teens search LinkedIn for the college's alumni to explore that question. "That gives you a specific narrative," he

says, "about what's possible from that starting point."

Talk About Money

Not only should parents talk to teens about the cost of college, says Briley, but they also should talk about what it costs to maintain their current lifestyle, compared to the likely earnings for a particular career or major.

"It's not saying that you have to major in something that's going to make lots of money if that's not what you're passionate about," she says. "It's understanding that if you're making that decision, then your lifestyle is going to change."

To find the starting salaries for jobs they're considering, teens can check out sites like Salary.com, Glassdoor.com, and Payscale.com.

Some students, of course, will have to make a tough decision when they realize that their passions won't turn into money-making careers. (Sorry, Fortnite fanatics. You can't count on being that one gamer who rakes in a fortune live streaming to millions of followers.) That's why helping them determine multiple paths to future happiness is critical.

"The trick is to make them agile," says Evans, "so they can make a transition and not miss a step when they have to adjust based on what the market is saying." ■



From Your Teen for **Lake Erie College**, empowering students to deal with the diversity, complexity and change necessary to excel in the 21st-century. Learn more at lec.edu.



How Nonstop Social Media Affects Vulnerable Teens

Social media isn't all bad, but it can be worse for struggling teens

By Amy Paturel

For Aija Mayrock, the bullying started when she was in third grade and continued for years, even after she moved. The harassment came to a head when she was a freshman and a girl from her former hometown mockingly dressed up as her for Halloween and posted a picture on Facebook. Within minutes, Mayrock received hundreds, then thousands, of spiteful messages. “I felt like the most hated person on the planet,” she says.

Now 23, Mayrock speaks to students, parents, and teachers around the country about responsible social media use—and has turned her high school cyberbullying experience into a bestseller, *The Survival Guide to Bullying*.

Troubling stories about online bullying have become commonplace. But it’s not just that social media can turn nasty. It’s that constant connectedness makes it hard for teenagers to escape, and that can have negative mental health effects, especially for teens who are already struggling.

What’s the Problem?

According to a recent Common Sense Media study that interviewed teens about social media use, 70 percent of teens use social media more than once a day (compared to 34 percent in 2012). Twenty-two percent use it several times in one hour and another 16 percent use it “almost constantly.”

“Kids are constantly checking their social media page to see how many ‘likes’

they have,” says Michel Mennesson, M.D., psychiatrist at Newport Academy. “They literally can’t be away from their devices—they have it on when they’re doing homework, hanging out with their friends, even in bed. It becomes so absorbing and entertaining they start to go online to relieve stress.”

Some Kids Are More Vulnerable

For many kids, social media actually increases stress levels. According to the Common Sense Media study, teens who score lowest on measures of social health and emotional well-being are more likely to report that social media has negative effects on their psyche.

To determine well-being, the re-

searchers asked kids how much certain statements applied to them, such as, “I’m happy with my life,” “There are lots of things I can do well,” “I’m lonely,” and “I often feel sad or depressed.” Then researchers compiled teens’ answers to determine their general social and emotional health.

When Common Sense Media asked specific questions about social media, most kids said it had no effect on their feelings of popularity, anxiety, depression, or confidence. But when social and emotional health was factored in, dramatic differences became apparent.

For example, 70 percent of teens with low social-emotional health say they feel left out or excluded when they see pictures of their friends together on social media, compared to only 29 percent of kids who scored high on the health and wellness scale. And, 43 percent of teens with

low social-emotional health have deleted social media posts because they got too few likes, compared to 13 percent of healthy kids.

Social Media Smarts

The bottom line is that when it comes to social media, parents might want to keep a particular eye on kids who feel bullied or harassed online or who may not feel emotionally and socially grounded.

That doesn’t necessarily mean banning social media. “For most kids,

removing social media isn’t the silver-bullet solution parents think it is,” says Michael Robb, Senior Director of Research at Common Sense Media. Like it or not, social media is part of the teen ecosystem.

Instead, parents of vulnerable teens should continue to take sensible steps like keeping phones out of bedrooms overnight and modeling their own healthy relationship with screens and social media. Just as important, parents should consider seeking out additional support for the teen’s underlying social and emotional struggles.

Know, too, that even for struggling teens, social media can sometimes be helpful—39 percent said it made them feel less lonely, while only 13 percent said it made them feel more lonely.

Social media isn’t inherently good or bad—it’s all in how it’s used. ■

What to Watch For

Watch how your kids behave after they’ve been connected to social media—and talk about it. Do they seem a little more irritable after scanning Instagram for 20 minutes? Do they seem upbeat about a Snapchat conversation? Call their attention to what you see in their mood and behavior, and then you can determine together whether they need to make a change in their social media activities.

YUXI ZHENG

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Class of 2020

- Medical School Peer Advisor, 2018-present
- Ophthalmology Clinical Director, Free Clinic, 2017-present

Case Western Reserve University, BS, Biochemistry, 2016

- Educational Services Tutor, 2012-2016
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Downstairs on the Dot

Who decides a teen's morning schedule?



The school bus arrives at 6:40 a.m. So I expect my daughter to be downstairs, eating breakfast, by 6:25 a.m. If she is even a minute late, the consequence is to turn over her phone and any electronic devices for the evening.

She needs 15 minutes to eat breakfast, gather her things, and walk to the bus, which is why I gave her that timeline. If she misses the bus, then I will have to drive her, which will inconvenience me and possibly cause her to be late for school.

I believe in the importance of punctuality, and I want to instill this behavior in my children. Being on time for school, work, or a date shows the person waiting for you that you are responsible, trustworthy, and dependable. It also demonstrates respect for other people's time.

It may seem extreme to give an exact time, but I've found that if I don't, then she is late for the bus—and she has missed it before. Also, the line needs to be drawn at some point. If I start to allow an extra minute, then before you know it, it will turn into five minutes.

Ultimately punctuality will foster self-confidence and success for my daughter. And isn't that what all parents want for their children?

Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling degree in psychology. She is married and the mother of three children, including twins. Her writing has also been published in Parents Magazine, Upworthy, and Chicken Soup for the Soul: Count Your Blessings. You can find her on Twitter @CherylMaguire05.



Every morning, Monday through Friday, my mom wakes us up to get ready for school. We get dressed, eat breakfast, and then get on the bus.

I don't mind doing these things, but she gives us time limits to get

downstairs. If we are not downstairs by 6:25 a.m., we will suffer consequences, such as no electronics (phones, computers, etc.) for the rest of the day. This rule would be fine, but my mom has taken it to an extreme. If we are even just a minute late to come downstairs, we get in trouble.

One time, I even yelled from upstairs, "I can't find my jacket, I'm going to be a minute late," and I still received consequences. She didn't even give me a warning while I was upstairs that I was not going to be given an exception.

I just think this rule should be relaxed. So far, we haven't missed the bus this year—even when my brother and I were late coming downstairs, implying that this rule is very unnecessary.

She takes away our phones because she thinks this is the cause of our tardiness and that we lose sleep because of them, but she knows we don't stay up late playing on our phones because we plug them in every night at our charging station.

This rule has been taken to unnecessary and uncalled-for extremes, and neither my brother nor I appreciate it in the slightest.

Lindsay Maguire is in 8th grade. She enjoys art, piano, and playing tennis.



PRO

I sympathize with Cheryl's desire to keep the morning train on the tracks and teach her children the value of punctuality. I also understand Lindsay's perspective; expectations that feel unnecessarily rigid are frustrating and unhelpful.

Fortunately, there is a middle ground, and it's about how we understand discipline. At its best, discipline teaches children the skills and strategies they need to be successful while also

strengthening the parent-child relationship.

Unfortunately, the current plan isn't striking this balance. Lindsay isn't learning how to manage her time; she's only learning to meet her mother's needs. Cheryl's expectation that Lindsay is ready on time is completely reasonable and should be maintained. Rather than enforcing it with strict rules and unrelated consequences, Cheryl can create opportunities for Lindsay to experience the natural outcomes of her choices.

Here's what this would look like: Lindsay knows when the bus comes, and it's her job to be on it. If she doesn't leave time for breakfast, she can grab a banana or be hungry for a few hours. If she misses the bus, it's her job to figure out how to

get to school. Can she walk or text a friend? Lindsay's not old enough for Uber, but if Cheryl is available to drive, Lindsay pays her mother the equivalent cost of the ride. And if she's late to school, Lindsay takes the hit on her grades.

Hopefully, such a plan will teach Lindsay the value of punctuality and the necessary time management skills while also supporting Cheryl and Lindsay's relationship.

*Carla Naumburg, Ph.D., is a parent coach and the author of three books, including the forthcoming *How to Stop Losing Your Sh*t with Your Kids* (Workman, 2019). You can learn more about Carla at carlanaumburg.com.*

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Summer Is Coming!

What's the Plan?

Too old for day camp, too young for a job? Summer pre-college programs are one way to beat the summertime blues.

By Gail O'Connor

Not long ago, teens had only a handful of ways to spend their summers. They might work at the local mall, watch a little too much TV, and chill with neighborhood friends. Now, though, teens have more options for making the most of summertime, from academic enrichment to specialty camps or volunteer opportunities. These experiences can build up some academic prowess, develop leadership skills, and even provide content for an eventual college application. They're also a great antidote to summer boredom.

"Summer is important for kids to recharge their batteries, spend time with friends or alone, pursue their hobbies, be with family, and decompress," says Susana MacLean, an independent education consultant in Westfield, New Jersey. "But summer is also an opportunity to explore what interests them more deeply."

Looking for just the right kind of activity to occupy your teen this summer? Here's one avenue you may not have considered: a summer pre-college program at your local college or university. These can be an ideal way to develop a favorite area of study or to test-drive a subject that may not be offered at your teenager's school.

"A summer pre-college program can help a teen figure out, in a low-pressure environment, what they might really like to pursue in college or even later as a career," says Kari Jo Storm, program coordinator for summer and youth programs at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

At BGSU, for example, teens can participate in day or residential summer programs covering a variety of subjects, like forensic science, marine biology, pre-medicine, veterinary medicine, the arts, and more.

The logo for Bowling Green State University (BGSU) features the letters "BGSU" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "BG" is orange, and the "SU" is black. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the right of the "U".

From Your Teen for **Bowling Green State University**, offering a wide variety of summer experiences for teens. Learn more at bgsu.edu/summercamps.



These types of programs can be anywhere from a three-day stay to a week or more, with some even designed for daily commuters. A good place to start is to check the websites for colleges and universities in your area.

Getting a Taste of College Life

In addition to immersing teens in a particular interest, a summer college program—especially a residential program—helps expose them to what college life is like. “Students can get a good taste of the college experience: They stay in dorms, eat in the campus cafeteria, tour the facilities, and meet with faculty from other departments on campus,” says Storm. “For many students, a summer pre-college program may be their first time away from home.”

Whether academic or arts-related, a pre-college program can also be a great time for students to think about finding their place in the larger community beyond high school.

“Oftentimes, a student may be

the best player in their school’s music program. But when they attend a summer camp like ours, they are suddenly surrounded by students and faculty who challenge them in ways that they never thought possible,” says Lindsay Gross, director of Bowling Green State University’s Summer Music Institute. “The great thing is that these students will bring what they learned in the summer back to their school’s music program, to strengthen it.”

Summer programs are also an opportunity to connect with faculty and learn more about the school’s different departments, says Storm. It’s good intel if the college ends up on their short list someday.

Give Them Some Credit (Or Not)

At some multi-week summer programs, students are eligible for college credit. These programs tend to be more expensive and rigorous than those that don’t offer credit, and they may have prerequisites, including minimum standardized test scores.

You can Google programs and look for universities that offer scholarships for credited summer programs.

But don’t overlook the tremendous confidence-boosting value of non-credit programs. “One of the unique opportunities of participating in a non-credit but academic-related program is it takes the pressure off a right or wrong answer,” says Storm. “Students have an opportunity to ask questions without fear of asking the ‘wrong’ question.”

Do Summer Programs Help with Admission?

If you’re considering a university’s summer program, check who is actually running it: Some university-based summer programs have no connection to the school at all and merely rent the space from the university. “There’s nothing wrong with that, but the university doesn’t care that you attended on their campus,” says MacLean.

Even if the university is running the pre-college program, attending a



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summer course is not a pipeline to acceptance there. Typically, a university's admissions office operates independently from the summer programming department.

Ultimately, encourage your teen to take a class because there's something they are hoping to get out of it, not because they want to impress the college with their devotion to the school.

"Don't push your teen to take a course on a prestigious university campus because you think the college will look more favorably on their application," says MacLean. "You still have to bring the goods."

Your teen may learn something else incredibly valuable from a summer college program experience: what they don't want to study. "A

lot of kids are good at math and science and decide they should probably be engineers. However, you can be good at both, but find you don't have that engineering itch," says MacLean. "You can take a one- or two-week introduction to engineering course and come away from it saying, 'I don't want to be an engineer.' That is still a good outcome."

What About Those Summer Jobs?

Today, just 35 percent of teens have a summer job, compared with roughly half of teens as recently as the year 2000, according to Pew Research Center. What happened to the humble summer job?

While some of the jobs you remember from your youth have indeed disappeared—the biggest decline is in retail—teens are still able to earn cash in food service, hotels, and other classic summer jobs. And of course, for many kids, work is not a choice: Their jobs earn important income for themselves and their families—and toward their future college tuition.

When my rising junior's long-planned two-week camping trip was canceled last summer because of wildfires in the region, he suddenly had a lot of extra downtime—too much downtime. I suggested he explore getting his lifeguard certification. We were both pleasantly surprised to learn that some health clubs are in such dire need of lifeguards that



they will cover the cost of certification, in addition to offering perks like a free membership.

As my son racked up hours at our local town pool, he worked alongside other college-oriented peers and developed a good work ethic, tending to first-year-guard tasks like emptying the garbage cans and cleaning bathrooms.

Why Colleges Care About Work

There's a reason the college Common Application has a section in the activity category to list paid work. That work ethic says something about prospective students.

"I like to see that students have done something with their summer, because I

think that leads to a better, more well-rounded student both in and outside the classroom," says Cecilia Castellano, vice provost for strategic enrollment planning at Bowling Green State University. "There's nothing wrong with working at the local ice cream shop. Having the experience of being responsible and showing up are valuable life lessons."

MacLean agrees. "Summer jobs matter in that they show that a student is hardworking and is learning how to work with others, take initiative, learn new processes, and handle customers," she says. "And it's not either/or. Students can work for pay while also pursuing interests and passions over the summer. And of course they should have time to see friends, vacation, and have downtime to recharge before a new school year."

However your teen is thinking about spending their summer, it's not too early to start planning. "Many families start thinking about summer plans around spring break, but even by then, some programs have filled up," says Storm. "So, have those conversations early about their interests and what they'd like to learn, to have the best chance of matching them to those summer opportunities to grow."



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There are many ways to spend a summer—and many ways to make that time valuable, whether it's study, work or, yes, resting and recharging. Here's what teens had to say about some of their summer experiences.



I spent six weeks at New England Music Camp as a camper. I was challenged musically while meeting friends from all over the world. It wasn't serious all day—we did sports and social stuff after lunch. It's a magical place.
—**Logan, 16**



This summer I did SPA, or summer performing arts. You can be in a musical and practice all summer and then perform. Performing is my favorite thing to do. I can't wait for next summer, so I can do SPA again!
—**Jaseina, 15**

that was waiting for me at home. It made me realize how important it is to stop and recharge every once in a while. I came home from my vacation feeling so much more alive and ready, even excited to take on my busy life once again.
—**Jeanne-Marie, 18**



This past summer, I spent my time as a nanny for three young girls, and it was an experience I will forever be grateful for. Even though I had to arrive at 6 a.m. (which was difficult, because I wouldn't usually be awake before 10:30 a.m. while I was on vacation), I looked forward to my day. At the end of the summer, the littlest one clung to my legs and begged me not to leave, but I knew we would see each other before next summer. Those little girls are now a part of my family, as I am part of theirs, and they will always have a special place in my heart.
—**Lydia, 20**



During my junior year I hosted a sit-in to stand up against the discrimination that happens at my school. The experience made me want to be involved in politics and the court system to stand up against injustice. This past summer I was accepted into a program called the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Summer Legal Academy which allowed me to get a better understanding the life of a lawyer.
—**Kye, 17**

Over the past summer, I participated in an environmental journalism program with Inside Climate News in Brooklyn, NY. There were about two dozen students from around the world who came to participate in this program. It was pretty difficult to get in, so I am grateful to have been surrounded by such wonderful and intelligent individuals.
—**Liliana, 15**



Last summer was amazing, but it also became so nonstop with my job, writing, and socializing that I started to feel really exhausted and drained. I nearly forgot that I had a vacation coming up, but it was a welcome relief. The trip gave me a chance to relax and not even think about my crazy schedule



One very valuable experience I had this summer was spending time with my family on Cape Cod. This was super important to me because it is a yearly retreat we take to spend precious family time together on the beach or simply at the rental house. We don't get a lot of this bonding time year-round, but that one week of the summer is super valued in my family's eyes.
—**Harry, 13**

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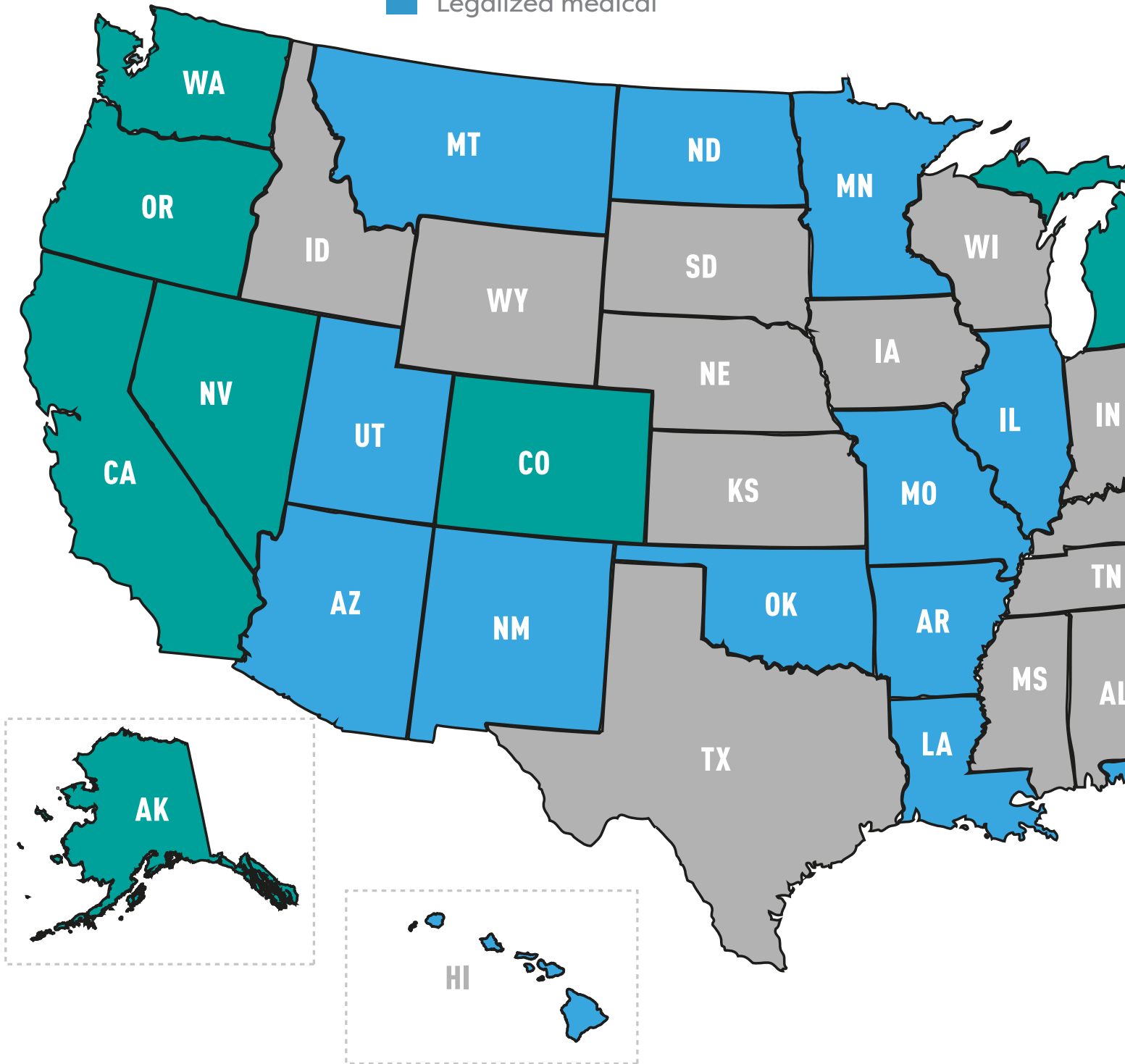


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STATES WHERE MARIJUANA IS LEGAL

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Lessons from States where Weed Is Legal

What Parents Need to Know

By Nancy Schatz Alton

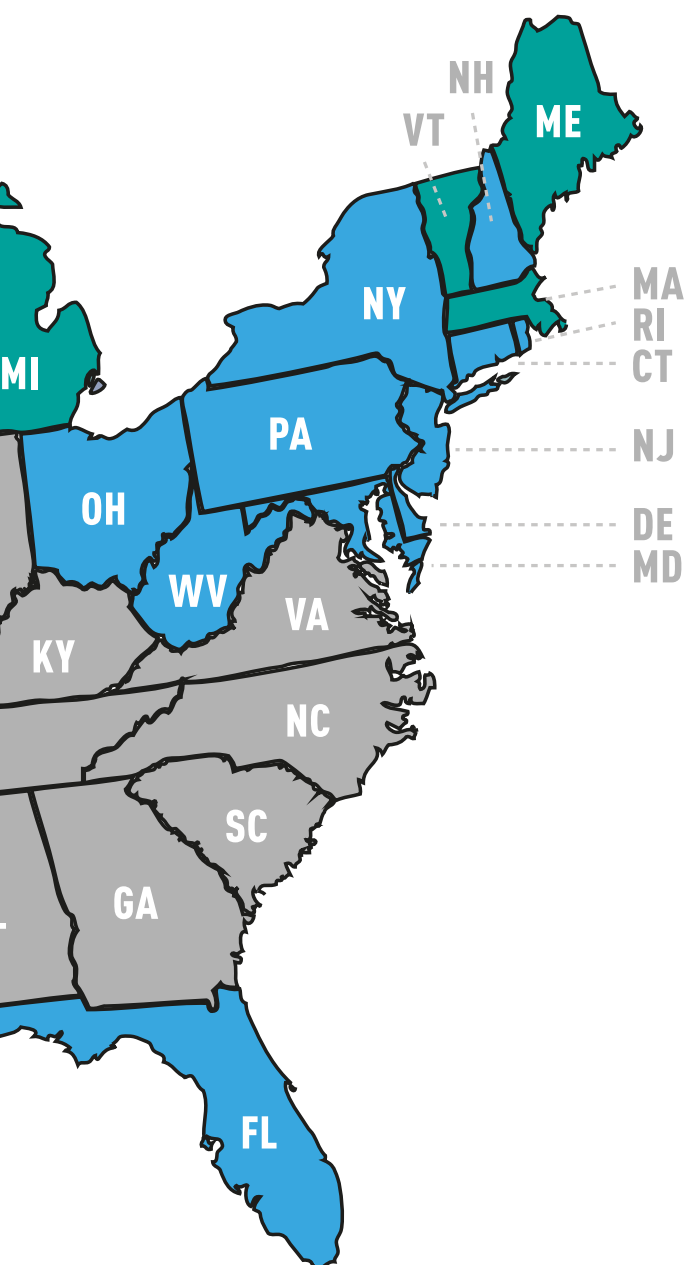
As I drive with my daughter in the passenger seat, the pungent skunky-sweet scent of pot fills our car interior. I joke with her, asking if the scent is left over from her driving our car. She's quick to say she hates this smell. My words overlap with hers as I note that I know it's actually from someone nearby who is smoking weed.

For my family, conversations like this have been commonplace since Washington State legalized the sale of recreational marijuana in 2014. Two recreational pot shops sell their wares within two blocks of my house. The scent of pot often pervades our spaces. As a parent, I wonder if I have more to worry about because recreational pot usage for people age 21 and over is legal in our state. And I also know parents everywhere are concerned that the legalization trend can make teens think pot use is less risky, even in states where it's still illegal.

"The first thing I'd say to parents is that the sky isn't falling ... yet," says Kevin Haggerty, a professor in social work and prevention at University of Washington in Seattle. Initial use for 8th and 10th grade students in Washington has gone down slightly, and usage for 12th graders has stayed flat since 2014, according to the state's 2016 Healthy Youth Survey (the most recent data available). After parents learn the facts regarding marijuana, Haggerty believes parents should set up clear guidelines and consequences for their teens.

A Cultural Shift

Just eight years ago, it was illegal to use marijuana recreationally across the United States. Since 2012, though, ten states and the District of Columbia have legalized the use of recreational pot, and in late 2018, Canada joined these U.S. states. As the law evolves, attitudes are changing, too. Teenagers perceive less risk in regular marijuana usage, according to the Healthy Youth



A recent study shows that teenagers who start using marijuana on a regular basis may suffer lasting repercussions in their thinking ability.

Survey data from Washington state. It's not just teens, either: A 2017 Gallup poll showed that 64% of Americans favor legalization, the highest percentage ever recorded.

"Fewer students in our schools perceive that regular marijuana usage is risky, and fewer students think their families and communities see pot usage as unfavorable," says Lisa Davidson, the manager of prevention and intervention at Seattle Public Schools.

This shift in perception hasn't yet translated into more kids using marijuana, but Davidson worries that future studies will show this correlation.

Why Worry?

Haggerty is concerned that daily usage is going up for teens who already use marijuana and also for 18- to 24-year-olds. Parents also need to know that this is not the pot they grew up with in their childhood. In the 1970s, marijuana contained 4 to 7 percent THC, which is the primary intoxicant compound in marijuana. Pot that is inhaled, smoked, and

vaped today usually contains 18 to 24 percent THC. Edibles can contain up to 82 percent THC.

"We simply don't know what the full impact of using high levels of THC is on young brains and bodies," says Haggerty. A recent study shows that teenagers who start using marijuana on a regular basis may suffer lasting repercussions in their thinking ability. This study, which followed more than 3,800 adolescents from Montreal-area schools for four years, concluded that marijuana use damaged teenagers' long-term cognitive abilities more than alcohol usage.

How to Talk About Marijuana

While parents might wish to begin by reciting these statistics to their kids, scare tactic lectures don't work with teens, says Davidson. She encourages parents to start asking questions instead, creating a comfortable situation where talking about pot becomes routine.

"Casually ask them, 'What's the deal with vaping marijuana?' Have they seen people do that? Don't let the implication be that you want to know so you can tell their friend's mom," says Davidson. "Just show your child that you are open to talking, that you are interested and care about them. Be curious and follow their lead. Maybe when you hear a song or watch a TV show or movie together that glamorizes pot, ask what they think."

And keep it quick, she says. "Have simple, shorter conversations in the car rather than hour-long lectures at the table."

Share Knowledge and Set Boundaries

Once you've opened the lines of communication, then it's time to share knowledge and your opinion.

As part of an ongoing conversation, Davidson suggests parents educate their kids about the short-term implications of using pot. After kids get high, they immediately suffer a loss of short-term memory and problem-solving skills.

"Tell your kids that if they are high at school, they will remember how to get home, but they won't remember what they learned in math class that day," says Davidson. "Let them know that using marijuana can distract them from the positive aspects of their lives, like being in theater or playing soccer. It might impact their friendships, and they'll be short of breath on the soccer field or unable to project onstage during theater or choir."

Many parents used to be comfortable just saying, "It's illegal. Don't do it." But with legalization growing and the stigma fading, the minimum goal of all these conversations is to delay initial use of marijuana. Right now, 78 percent of first-time use happens between the age of 12 and 20.

The longer that age of initial use is delayed, the better, says Davidson, who notes that brains are under development until age 25 or 26. "It's okay to say, 'Please wait to try pot until you are 26 even though the legal age is 21. This is your brain; let's not mess it up.'" ■



Should Teens Be Allowed to Attend Parties with Alcohol?

Daughter doesn't drink; Mom worries that she's still not safe.

DAUGHTER



By Makeda Clements

I'm a sophomore in high school, and parties are popular among my friends. When I hear about a party, I am not

drawn to the possible drinking or drug use that might occur—I'm excited about the idea of getting to spend time with my friends. I don't drink or take drugs, nor do I feel pressure to. I find my own ways to have fun. My friends and I enjoy going to parties to socialize, meet new people, make friends, dance, and have a good time.

However, my parents are very worried about me attending parties where al-

cohol or drugs might be present. I want them to trust me to do the right thing.

Teenagers will find a way to attend a party whether they're allowed to go or not. I know kids who've lied and used elaborate plans to keep the party a secret instead of listening to their parents. It becomes a battle between the parent and the child over who can get their way.

This kind of conflict may slowly cause a subconscious rift in the family's relationships. Although it may seem like just a small fight now, the teen will probably get more and more invitations to parties that they will have to turn down and feel mad about. I've had disagreements with my parents like this. I don't

want to lie to my parents. I want to have open communication with them in order to go.

I've told my mom and dad that this continuous struggle can be prevented if they give me permission to attend parties with set rules around the activity. If they're reasonable, I'm more likely to obey the rules. If they feel their rules aren't being followed, then I think that's when my parents can say no and even give punishment. But I've told them I will follow their guidelines.

It's a blessing to be allowed to go to a party and not have to lie about it. Receiving permission from my parents to join my friends at a fun event shows that they trust me and believe that I have

good judgment. In a way, it makes me more likely to behave because I want to prove my integrity. Having strict but fair rules about the behavior expected at these kinds of parties is a way to satisfy both parent and child.

Some people I know who've attended parties against their parents' wishes or without their parents' knowledge have ended up in uncomfortable and unsafe situations. These friends felt like they could not reach out to their parents for help in the moment because they would get in trouble. It's as if the fear of getting in trouble and facing consequences and shame at home is worse than the threat of an unsettling or dangerous situation at the party.

Parents who communicate expectations but allow their child to go to a party give their teenager the freedom and opportunity to prove they are responsible. Most importantly, it allows the teen to reach out to the parent for help if needed and keeps the relationship strong. This is what I want my parents and I to agree on.

Makeda Clements is a 10th grader in Seattle who loves soccer and socializing.

“Some people I know who’ve attended parties against their parents’ wishes or without their parents’ knowledge have ended up in uncomfortable and unsafe situations.”

MOTHER



By Sharon Van Epps

As a teenager in Scottsdale, Arizona, in the 1980s, I was part of a smart, funny group of friends.

These were honor roll, student leader types who regularly got into trouble for cutting class, pulling pranks, trespassing poolside at local resorts, and drinking almost every weekend. I don't recall any of my friends having a curfew or other real restrictions in that pre-cellphone era. Our parents just expected us to meet our responsibilities and didn't ask a lot of questions.

Today, as a mom, I understand how I would have benefited from greater supervision in adolescence. Honestly, the fact that I never got myself into lasting trouble feels like luck. My three teenagers work harder at their academics, athletics, and activities than I ever did, managing schedules that don't allow much time for sleep, let alone mischief. They're good kids and I trust them, but my husband and I still don't want them going to parties where alcohol and drugs are likely to be present. That stance has created conflict, especially with our gregarious youngest daughter.

Research tells us that alcohol use is down among teenagers compared to a decade ago. Plenty of teens attend parties without imbibing, and my kids swear that that they're among those who feel comfortable saying no. I believe them, but alcohol and drug use is still illegal for minors. I don't want my kids spending time in settings where illegal substance use is normalized, or where temptation or peer pressure might overrule their common sense. I don't want to send the message that teen drinking is okay.

Early substance use is linked to higher rates of addiction later in life.

The longer teens wait to try alcohol and drugs, the better it is for their developing brains. I know that I can't shelter my kids forever. Soon they'll be off to college, free to experiment as they wish, but they'll also be more mature at that point. By discouraging substance use now and not condoning the party scene, I feel I'm modeling good decision-making, even if my kids find it frustrating.

Some parents take a more pragmatic approach, believing their kids will find a way to attend these parties no matter what. I know parents who drive their young teens to these events or give their kids unlimited access to Uber so they can "safely" indulge in fun. That's their choice, but it's one that makes my job as a mom harder, especially when they transport my kids to parties without my knowledge or consent, which has happened multiple times.

Perhaps the hardest thing for my kids to grasp is that attending a big party where others are impaired puts them at risk, regardless of their own choices. Here in Seattle, teens use social media to plan what they call "spodies." Kids from high schools all over the city meet in unlit public parks, hidden from adult scrutiny. Although I trust my children, I don't trust teens I don't know. Substance use can fuel unplanned or risky sexual activity, sexual harassment and assault, violence, and accidents. Also, a one-time mistake made at a party today can end up documented on social media, leading to lasting embarrassment or more serious ramifications for things like college admissions.

I tell my kids the safest thing to do is find alternate social activities. My husband and I have tried to counter the party scene by making our house an attractive place to hang out, with plenty of games, movies, and snacks available.

Sharon Van Epps is a writer whose work has appeared in The New York Times, the Washington Post, The Week, and many more publications.

EXPERT



By Jen Trachtenberg

I can understand how eager Makeda is to spend time with her friends and that it can be socially difficult

to opt out of gatherings. But as a pediatrician and mom of three, I have seen firsthand the tragic consequences of unsupervised teen parties.

It's important to know the facts about underage drinking. Teens (like Makeda) whose parents talk to them about drugs and alcohol are 42 percent less likely to use substances than those whose parents don't. Parents should remind teens that underage drinking is illegal and that they expect them not to use alcohol or drugs. Mention (as Sharon has) that your concern includes the actions of other teens that can have a negative impact or consequence at an unsupervised party. Teens are more likely to have sex, sustain an accidental injury or overdose, or be involved in violence when alcohol and drugs are involved.

I support Sharon's reluctance to let Makeda partake in these parties, even if Makeda is not drinking. During this stage of development, it's crucial to take seriously the role of parent and not one of friend. I know this can be difficult for parents but, hopefully, your child will thank you later on.

This is not the case here, but it should go without saying that parents should not get sucked into going along with, or even hosting, underage drinking because of the misguided belief that no matter what you say, teens will find a way to drink. Instead, let your teen know you are all about them having fun and hanging out with their friends but in a responsible and safe environment. (Sharon's goal of making their house the

“Parents should not get sucked into going along with, or even hosting, underage drinking because of the misguided belief that no matter what you say, teens will find a way to drink.”

hangout house is a great one.)

When it comes to parties outside the home, here are six important tips to consider:

1. Find out where the party is located.

It's amazing how quickly party locations seem to change. Make sure your teen knows that before moving locations, they need to be in contact with you.

2. Ask if there is a guest list.

Parties can get out of hand quickly when it's an open party instead of invite-only.

3. Call the parent ahead of time.

Ensure there is supervision and that no alcohol is being served and that other drugs/smoking are not allowed. Check that your teen's phone is charged. You want to make sure they can reach you and you can reach them if necessary.

4. Talk with your teen ahead of time.

Discuss how to handle any situation they may not feel comfortable with. Make sure they understand that if something unexpected arises they should call you, and you will come get them. While there should be a later discussion of any risky behavior, the teen should know that they will not be penalized for reaching out for help.

5. Before the party, make sure your child has a safe ride home.

Always remind them never to get in a car with a teen who has been drinking alcohol or has taken any illegal drugs.

6. Be awake when your teen gets home.

Wait up for them and have a conversation about the event, making sure they followed the designated rules and curfew.

Jen Trachtenberg M.D., is a board-certified pediatrician, parenting expert, author, spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics, and an assistant clinical professor of pediatrics at The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She has been in private practice in New York City for over 22 years. Find her at Dr-Jen.com.





New Developments in Acne Care

Acne is a skin care problem for most teenagers—but the good news is that there are lots of treatment options available. *Your Teen* spoke to Dr. Barbara Reichert, a dermatologist with Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, to learn about effective teen skin care.

Are there any new developments in acne treatment?

There are several new combination products which are very popular. Not too long ago, treatment involved doing several different things a few times per day, using a combination of pill, cream, and face wash. That can be a lot to remember. Now we have a number of very effective combination products available that combine two active ingredients, such as a retinoid and an antibiotic, into a topical cream. Retinoids prevent dead cells from clogging pores and are considered the backbone of acne treatment regimens. Some common retinoids are adapalene or tretinoin. These work well with antibiotics such as clindamycin or benzoyl peroxide, which decrease inflammation caused by bacteria associated with acne.

What about over-the-counter treatments?

There are also vitamins and supplements being marketed specifically for acne. Some of these include zinc and nicotinamide, a form of vitamin B3. More research is needed to know just how effective these are for acne.

What causes the onset of acne?

Usually acne begins to develop either right before the onset of puberty or right as hormonal changes start to happen. The hormone testosterone (which is present in both boys and girls in different levels) activates the oil glands in the face, which produce the oils that clog pores. Certain bacteria on the skin thrive in an oily environment. These bacteria can cause inflammation in the skin, and that's when we see those big, angry, red, inflamed spots.

Can you explain how the milder types of acne are formed?

The earliest lesions of acne are called comedones. These come in two types:

Closed comedones—which is what we call the whiteheads or bumps that pop up on the face, neck, chest, and back when dead skin cells and oil form a plug. The plug blocks the follicles that enclose the roots of your hair.

Open comedones—which are the blackheads that typically form on the sides and bridge of the nose, the chin, and, occasionally, on the shoulders and back. The tips of the blocked follicles remain open to the air, causing the sebum (the oil produced by glands in your skin) to turn black.

What is the best way for teens to treat mild or occasional acne?

The starting point for this type of acne is washing with water and a gentle facial cleanser. Washcloths can contain bacteria if you reuse them, so make sure to use a new, clean washcloth with every wash, or just use your hands. You can also use a mild, over-the-counter acne wash that contains either benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid. Exfoliating scrubs and rotating brushes are popular right now, but these products can sometimes be irritating to acne and even make it worse. Make sure every product you use on your face is non-comedogenic, meaning it won't block your pores. This includes your makeup, facial moisturizers, sunscreens, and anything else that you apply to the face. Body lotions, for instance, should not be used on the face because they can clog the pores and make acne worse. If over-the-counter products don't work, then it's time to consult a doctor for stronger treatment.

Can teenagers overtreat their acne?

In a way, yes. If you are using too many

products, washing with harsh soaps, exfoliating, or scrubbing your acne, you can actually make it worse. You can make your skin so dry or so irritated that you can't even use the medicines that will actually help treat the acne. You should focus on using the product that is going to be most effective in actually treating the acne. Since many acne treatments can be drying to the skin, you may need to use very mild cleansers for washing the face and apply facial non-comedogenic moisturizers to treat any dryness or irritation.

Are there natural treatments for acne?

Absolutely. First, eat a healthy diet. There have been many studies over the years to see if there is a link between acne and diet—specifically high-glycemic-index foods (that make blood sugar spike) and dairy. Some people's acne may be very dependent on their diet, while others may not see much difference based on what they eat. It depends on the individual person. Second, drinking lots of water is very important for healthy skin. Third,

stress management seems to help control acne flare-ups for some people. Fourth—and this last one is easy—don't sit around in sweaty clothing. If you have exercise or sports after school, shower and rinse that sweat off your face and body using a mild soap. Sweaty hair contains some of the same oils as skin, so keeping hair off your face can also help prevent acne.

Are birth control pills effective for treating acne?

Oral contraceptives can definitely help stabilize hormones and improve acne. But different formulations will have different types and levels of estrogen, which is the component of birth control pills that is thought to be effective against acne. Each person may respond differently to different forms of oral contraception, so finding the one that works for you is important. And some kinds of hormonal contraception—such as implants or IUDs—do not necessarily help with acne. Even with the pill, it's still important to have a good skincare routine and healthy diet. ■

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When Virtual Goodies Cost Real Money

The hidden costs of “free” video gaming

By Allison Slater Tate

One morning, my 11-year-old son was up uncharacteristically early and standing at my bedside, a wad of cash in his hands. “Mom, I need to spend \$25 on the new season of Fortnite,” he said in the urgent tone of a bona fide addict. “There are animals in this one!”

He and my high school freshman often ask to spend money—theirs or, worse, mine—on Fortnite skins or dance moves or some other virtual doodad I cannot fathom. Apparently I’m not the only parent receiving such frantic requests. According to a recent survey of 144 American parents by gaming research firm Value Gamers, parents have spent an average of \$122.17 on the “free” Fortnite, and 38 percent of children playing Fortnite ask their parents to spend money on the game every week.

“It’s my birthday money,” he asserted. “Don’t I get to use it to buy whatever I want?”

It’s a good question—one I wasn’t prepared to answer. It’s his money, but I have a responsibility to teach my son how to be a good steward of his money.

Parenting and child development expert Dr. Deborah Gilboa understands my hesitation when it comes to a virtual purchase.

“We in our generation have trouble with the fact that you can’t touch it, hold it, or step on it in the middle of the night,” she says, “but it is just as valid a toy as the Hot Wheels track starter line or the Barbie pet set.”

However, just as our parents didn’t let us buy every toy we saw on a Saturday morning commercial, Gilboa says parents can set limits—and the first step is to control kids’ access to our credit cards and passwords.

“You wouldn’t drop them off at Target with your REDcard and say, ‘Just hang out but don’t buy anything,’” she says. Before you give your child the instant ability to access your accounts, you have to make sure they developmentally understand that the money they spend is real—and even children in middle school can struggle with that concept, says Gilboa.

Tod and Nicole Ellington learned this the hard way. Their 9-year-old son spent \$7,000 in just one month on in-app purchases for an online card game using their shared iTunes account. They only discovered the charges when their credit card statement arrived.

After a “long month,” says Nicole, her credit card company reversed the charges, but she and her husband made

some big changes. They set a control to make all future app and in-app purchases require parental approval. The control is still in place two years later.

“In-app purchases are the devil. It’s so easy to get sucked in,” says Nicole. “I even feel the urge when I play Candy Crush. I can see how it would rope in a kid.”

But before you ban in-app purchases altogether, consider this dip into online spending an important teaching opportunity, says Gilboa.

“This is how our kids are going to pay for their pizza, their schoolbooks, their rent, their Zip Car,” she says. “They need practice with this. It is something that is going to bankrupt our kids in their 20s if they don’t understand it.”

Gilboa suggests making a critical distinction for kids: Not all of their money is spending money. Direct them to divide their funds into money to save, money to spend, and money to donate. Then, accept that anything in their “spend” category is money they can choose to spend however they wish—within reason.

“If you don’t allow your kids to play video games at all, you don’t allow it,” says Gilboa. “But if you do, you have to consider letting them use their allocated spending money on video games.” ■

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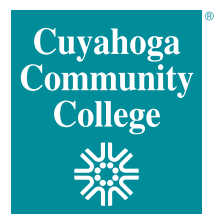
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Teens and Drama Go Together. That's Not Always Bad.

Nurturing your teen's artistic expression has lifelong benefits.

By Wendy Wisner



When I joined the drama club in high school, I finally felt like I had found my people. Doing plays with the same kids each season gave me a sense of purpose, helped me find my voice, and provided me with deep and lasting friendships. I even ended up marrying the boy who acted alongside me in *Twelfth Night* all those years ago!

In many ways, being a drama nerd—as a well as a literary magazine geek—shaped the trajectory of my life and career. So this fall, when my middle schooler chose drama as his elective and auditioned for the school play, I couldn't help smiling from ear to ear.

It's not that I needed him to follow in my footsteps. It's that I know firsthand the tangible benefits of artistic expression—benefits that will last him well beyond the teen years.

Finding Their Voice, Learning Self-Discipline

"Teens are at the age where they are trying to find their voices," says Emanuela Friscioni, director of the Creative Arts Academy at Cuyahoga Community College in Ohio, which offers arts classes geared toward tweens and teens. They can explore music, visual design, studio art, photography, dance, film, theatre, and other modes of artistic expression.

While some participants in the program go on to pursue degrees in the arts, from Friscioni's perspec-

tive, it's about much more than future career plans. She sees the arts as an opportunity for teens to express themselves and gain self-confidence. Along the way, they also learn invaluable life skills like discipline and the meaning of hard work.

"We want them not only to explore their voice, but also to better themselves," says Friscioni. "Work hard, push harder, achieve. Students learn to balance exploration with working toward goals."

For example, in taking dance classes, students not only learn highly skilled, intricate dance moves, but also how to function as a unit with the other dancers.

"You have to be part of a team," says Friscioni. "If you mess up, you have an impact on everyone else."

The Arts as a Stress Buster

Azizi Marshall, a certified creative arts therapist and founder of the Center for Creative Arts Therapy in Chicago, offers another perspective: Teens who are battling anxiety and depression can particularly benefit from arts involvement.

"Self-expression allows adolescents to connect with others, while enhancing their own sense of self, which is developmentally crucial for teens," Marshall says. "When a teen is able to harness their own ability to solve a conflict and make positive choices for themselves, they become more confident and struggle less with symptoms of anxiety and stress."

Boost Their College Success

In addition to increasing teens' self-discipline and reducing stress, having some arts education under their belt can even give kids a leg up when it comes time to apply to college.

"Colleges are always looking to build a diverse class of students, and an interest or talent in arts and music can really help to distinguish applicants from other students who are solely focused on academics and sports," says Deena A. Maerowitz, a college advisor with The Bertram Group, an educational consulting firm.

In Friscioni's experience, though, it's not just about getting into a good college. While 98 percent of Creative Arts Academy participants continue on to college—many of them even gaining college credit while taking these courses—what they have gained through their participation in the arts is something you can't quantify.

"It doesn't matter if they end up becoming lawyers or musicians. When you achieve something in the arts, you gain confidence." And that lasts a lifetime. ■



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Is 13 the Magic Number?

Determining your kid's readiness for social media

By Whitney Fleming

When my daughter was in fourth grade, she came home from school one day and asked me if she could open an Instagram account.

"Um, no way," I responded. "You're too young."

"But all my friends have one," she claimed. "When can I get one?"

If you have a tween, they've probably asked you at least once—if not a million times—when they could set up a social media account.

Nothing Magic about 13

While social media networks must legally require users to be at least 13, determining the right time for your child is much more complex. The federal law is meant to prohibit websites from collecting information from a child without parental

consent—in other words, the law's purpose is child online privacy protection.

"The rest of us adopted this as a guideline assuming it was based on the psychological needs of children," which is not the case, says Michele Kambolis, clinical therapist in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Instead, the decision about when to allow social media is in the hands of parents, and other factors are more important than chronological age, even for kids over 13.

What to Consider

Kambolis says that your teen's ability to self-regulate and their susceptibility to peer pressure are two factors to consider. "If a child is mature enough to manage the social pitfalls, safety dangers, and distraction of social media, parents can certainly break the rules on age limits," she says.

Look at how your children manage real-life social situations for readiness clues. "The research tells us that if a tween can manage their behavior without your external control and can stand their ground with their friends, that bodes well for their ability to manage social media sensibly," she says.

In addition to maturity, Elizabeth Milovidov, founder of DigitalParentingCoach.com, urges parents to consider their children's privacy, too. Giving permission to use social media is also giving those companies permission "to collect information and market to your child."

While she agrees that it's up to parents, she always advises parents to err on the side of caution when considering allowing younger kids to have social media.

"In today's day and age of privacy

and data protection challenges and mix-ups, parents need to think long and hard about letting their child on social media before 13,” says Milovidov.

When They Sneak It

You’ve decided your child is not ready. But holding kids off from the allure of social media can be difficult, and sometimes eager tweens take matters into their own hands. Using any email address and a fake birth date gets a kid a social media account, and many do so with or without their parent’s consent. What should you do when your tween goes rogue and sets up an account behind your back?

“I know of so many parents who have learned that their child has a social media account, and I always pull out my first rule for digital age parenting: *Don’t Panic. Parent*,” says Milovidov. “This is a good way to get a conversation started on your expectations regarding how your child will use the internet, technology, and social media.”

While it may be tempting to simply

punish for a forbidden account, remember that social media isn’t going away. This is a time to lean into mentoring your kid about online life, even as you continue to set the limits that are best for your family. Communicating exactly what you’re concerned about and talking about your standards for healthy online behavior can help to lay the groundwork for the time when you *are* ready to let your teen hit social media.

When You’re Ready to Say Yes

So your child appears to have solid decision-making skills. They have the ability to problem solve and understand cause and effect and have proven to be emotionally and socially mature. You’ve had several conversations about the dangers of social media and your expectations for them when they are on it.

Does the platform—the “big five” are Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp—matter? Not really, but many experts recommend parents get an account on each network

your child uses—and before your child if possible. “I do not think the platform matters as much as the parental oversight and guidance,” says Milovidov.

“As an engaged digital mentor, you can guide your child on how to use the platform confidently, how to come to you if something creepy happens, and how to be responsible when posting and sharing,” Milovidov says.

And when it comes down to whether your child will have a healthy relationship with social media, that can largely be affected by how they see you as the parent interacting on social media. “Model healthy habits,” says Kambolis. “If you interrupt conversations when you get a message on Instagram or spend hours every night in front of your laptop scrolling through social media accounts, your kids will have a hard time accepting your expectation that they hold off on social media.” ■

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Having Some Skin in the Game

Talk with your teen about who is paying for college—and how.

By Diana Simeon



Throughout the middle and high school years, it's only natural for parents to be focused on making sure their teenagers are prepared for the academic rigors of college. But there are also important life skills teens should possess when they arrive on campus. Key among these is financial literacy: the ability to manage their money, live within a budget, and handle their share of college tuition or expenses, depending on their family's financial situation.

To help get the ball rolling on developing good financial skills, here's what experts recommend:

1. Give your teenager experience with money in middle school and, especially, high school.

Whether it's with an allowance or income from a part-time job, make sure your teenager learns to stick to a budget before leaving home. Experts recommend parents set up a bank account for their teen and make them responsible for some personal expenses like, say, entertainment. It's a low-risk way to get teenagers accustomed to living within their means. This is a skill that will certainly serve teenagers well at college.

Keep in mind that the real-life consequences of blowing a budget can be powerful, so resist the urge to save your teenager from mistakes, says Philip Schuman, director of financial literacy for Indiana University. "Don't bail them out," he recommends. "Let them learn to be resourceful and figure it out."

2. Talk about money, including the cost of college.

Many of us feel uncomfortable talking about money, but we're not doing our teenagers any favors by skipping this top-

ic. Be upfront about what things cost and what you can afford—especially when it's time to start thinking about college.

"It's important to talk to your student about how college is being paid for," explains Schuman. "In a lot of cases, students may not understand where the money is coming from."

It's also important to have these conversations well before your teenager applies to college, says Tim Gorrell, executive director of the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority, which manages Ohio's 529 Plan, CollegeAdvantage.

"If you've started that conversation in middle school and into high school, it's much easier," he notes. "The last thing you want is for your student to get into a school that you really can't afford because you've never talked about it."

3. Be upfront about what your teenager will pay for.

As you move into high school, the conversation about college costs should include what you will pay for and what you expect your teenager to handle. This is especially true if your teenager will be required to take out loans. According to the College Board, that includes about 70 percent of students attending college. "Students should understand their personal responsibility for those loans," stresses Schuman.

Parents should also talk about whether they'll expect their teenager to cover lesser costs, which can nonetheless add up. This includes things like travel to and from campus; books and other supplies; fees for fraternities, sororities, and other clubs; toiletries; clothes; and entertainment costs, which in some parts of the country—think New York City—can be steep.

"It's important to consider how

they're going to fund their lifestyle when they are in college," says Schuman, who advocates that students work part-time in college to help pay for these kinds of expenses. He points to research that shows that students who work 10 to 15 hours a week are better off academically than those who work more or less than that. High school students who work over the summer—and/or part-time during the school year—can also tuck away a decent sum before arriving on campus.

4. Save early and often.

One of the best ways for families to plan ahead for the cost of college is to consider setting up a 529 college savings account for their child and to contribute a regular amount each month.

"This is a tax-advantaged way to save for college," explains Gorrell. "Money in these accounts grows tax-free, and withdrawals are also tax-free when used to pay for qualified expenses, which include tuition, room and board, fees, books and supplies, and computers. Families can even continue to save while their student is in college, to pay out of pocket expenses and maximize tax benefits."

That's advice you can take to the bank. ■



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Interview with

Diana Nyad

Swimmer Diana Nyad is known for her staggering feats of endurance, including becoming the first person to swim from Cuba to Florida without the aid of a shark cage—which she accomplished at the age of 64. Recently, she revealed her painful #MeToo experience, sharing that her swim coach had abused her as a teen. *Your Teen* talked with her about all this, plus her latest inspiring work with EverWalk, an initiative that encourages people of all ages to commit to walking at least three times a week.

What inspired you to do this huge swim?

Cuba is a magical place of architecture, and I had this in my imagination. [When I was younger] I said to my mom, *Where is it, I know it's right out there somewhere, I can't see it*, and she said, *It's right there, as a matter of fact, it's so close, you little swimmer, you could almost swim there*. Kids get these things in their brains, and that was bubbling in my brain for 20 years

until I became a real, bona fide ocean swimmer.

What about the sharks?

We had divers who put my life ahead of theirs to dive under me in the pitch-black all night, and if they saw those fluorescent eyes and something coming up toward them—which they do occasionally—they just punch them in their sensitive snouts, to trap them.

How do you overcome moments when you want to quit?

We all know that there are a lot of obstacles out there; that's why no one has ever done this. The best swimmers in the world have tried. You just don't say, I don't feel like it, I'm just not up to it. You do it. You do it to the nth degree.

Can you tell me about how the #MeToo movement has impacted you?

What's so gratifying is that since the breaking of the Harvey Weinstein story, there are women who are now believed. They're not silenced and shut up and put back in the corner. I'm clearly one of millions, but I'm here to stand up, I'm here to tell the story, and to try to create platforms for other people to feel their power, tell their story, and get their justice if they can. There was no support before.

Are elite athletes more vulnerable to sexual assault because of the close, trusting relationship with a coach?

You could say the same about a relationship with a priest. Every young person has a special relationship, usually, with somebody older, and some of those people are creeps and have no sense of morals or ethics.

How do we tell our kids to defy authority—especially in situations where they know what's at stake, and they know what they risk losing?

They've been told to run from strangers. You don't engage with them, you don't allow them to take you by the hand. That wasn't true when I grew up. Our whole society is changing in terms of the coaches, preachers, teachers, stepfathers. If there's a sideways move, and it's not normal, you recognize it.

Shifting gears a bit, can you tell us about EverWalk?

My Cuba Swim expedition leader Bonnie Stoll and I sat around thinking: How can we lead people on some kind of quest that would give them the same feeling of empowerment? We call it EverWalk—everybody, every day, all the time. EverWalk is about more everyday walking, but it also hosts longer events.

How many miles are those walks?

Our first was 134 miles over seven days.

The people that we walk with have to train—they treat it like a sport, but it's doable.

Would you recommend EverWalk for teenagers?

In your teenage years, you don't want to make eye contact at the dinner table. Many parents tell us that once they went walking with their teenager, they had real talks about what's going on. The conversation was better than when they sat down to talk eye-to-eye.

Is there any final message you'd like to leave our readers with?

I am not out to proselytize and tell people that they could live a better life if they live it the way I do. Instead, I go around with this moment of opportunity to speak to people. My whole point is that you leave filled with your life and who you are and what you want to do with the time you have. ■

Interview by Susan Borison



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When a Bullied Teen Becomes the Bully

It's more common than you might think.

By Phyllis Fagell

A worried parent reached out to me, the school counselor, about her 14-year-old son, Adam. “After years of getting bullied, this year has been a gift,” Shauna said. “He’s made a bunch of new friends and turned everything around.”

But then, Shauna told me, another mother called her. Adam had been mistreating her son, Nathan. In PE, Adam would make fun of the way Nathan ran. In social studies, Adam would roll his eyes whenever Nathan proposed an idea. He’d post altered photos of Nathan on social media, replacing his nose with images of penises and nipples. Then he’d tag him to ensure he saw all the mean comments.

Shauna was shocked and horrified. “How could a nice, normal kid who knows how bad that hurts do the same thing to someone else?” she asked.

When she spoke to Adam, he was defensive but didn’t deny anything. “Relax, Mom. Everyone is doing stuff like that,” he said. Shauna found his justification unacceptable but had no idea what to do next.

Understanding Bullying

Adam’s situation isn’t unique. “You have the bully, the victim, and the bully-victim,” who alternates between being the target and the aggressor, explains Dena Simmons, assistant director at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and a researcher on bullying. “I’d argue that most kids who bully have experienced some form of bullying or abuse,” she notes.

In these cases, parents need to intervene immediately, Simmons advises. “You need to sweat the small stuff,

whether it’s the first or the 20th time.”

I told Shauna she shouldn’t let her son off the hook. She also needed to shed her assumptions about bullying. While some kids may have psychological difficulties or come from troubled home environments, plenty of kids are selectively aggressive. “On the surface, they’re often well-adjusted and popular,” says Robert Faris, an associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Davis, whose expertise is in social relationships.

Most likely, I told Shauna, Adam was trying to secure his place in the social hierarchy to avoid getting targeted himself. While she could validate his understandable feelings of insecurity, she also needed to tackle his meanness.

Don’t Ignore It

Michele Borba, author of *UnSelfie: Why*

Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World, agrees that we can't afford to overlook a child who resorts to bullying. "It's learned behavior and can be unlearned," she explains. "A big mistake is thinking it's a phase. It's not, and each time it's repeated, it starts to wreak havoc with a child's moral compass—he depersonalizes the other child and his empathy levels go down."

You may assume your aggressive child is fine because they have friends, but that's short-sighted. "We know the most successful, happiest kids are children who give, not take, and who have healthy relationships," Borba says. "They're less depressed, less stressed, more employable, and live longer."

They also won't become hardened to the consequences of their actions. As Faris notes, kids who bully "learn techniques to rationalize pathological behavior, and that will not serve them well in the adult world." But the greatest reason aggressors should stop, he points out, is the damage they're doing to others.

What Parents Can Do

While there's no cookie-cutter approach, parents should gather as much information as possible and develop a plan. Solicit feedback from anyone who has observed your child. Then ask your kid questions to help them and you understand what's driving them: *What exactly did you do? Who was hurt? What was your end goal? Is there a less aggressive way to accomplish that objective? How can you make it right? Has anyone ever treated you this way? How did it feel?*

The "why" is going to vary. Your child may want social power, or they may have learned the behavior from observing it in classmates or adults. Their friends might be egging them on. They might need help with conscience-building, social skills, or anger management, or they might need to cast a wider social net.

As you collect as many details as possible, emphasize your family's values and the importance of being a kind person. Help your child replace the bullying with service-oriented actions, such

as befriending a new student, tutoring a younger child, or volunteering for a non-profit. Heighten their capacity for empathy by watching movies about bullying and reading stories about teens making a positive difference.

Be clear that you'll be monitoring them, checking in with the adults in their lives, and holding them accountable. As Borba says, it's not enough to deliver a lecture, particularly if they've had a while to practice the behavior. And make sure you're modeling prosocial behavior in your own life.

Ultimately, your most powerful tool might be your child's desire to please you. They want to be viewed as a good person. "There's tremendous power in the disappointment of a parent," Faris says, especially when you're reacting to a character deficit as opposed to an offense like breaking curfew. Hold them to a high standard, and underscore that engaging in behavior for status is ephemeral, while the scars from bullying will last forever." ■



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A Mother Like Any Other

By Rudri Bhatt Patel



“Is she your only daughter?” The mother at the art camp is inquisitive. It is a simple question, a kind of water-cooler conversation between parents meeting for the first time.

“Yes, she is my only,” I respond.

I spot my 12-year-old with her friends, witnessing her laugh as she paints a beach scene on her white canvas. Within seconds, I shift my gaze to the questioning mom. The look on her face is predictable.

She nods her head, and I sense her pensiveness. Her hands move toward her cellphone, and I know this is a feeble attempt to push past our awkward silence.

My choice to have just one child has stirred an unease in her demeanor, and she offers a half-smile. She’s navigating the pendulum of feeling sorry for me versus wanting to know whether having an only signifies a purposeful decision. The angst in her face isn’t surprising—I’ve encountered similar consternation with family members, friends, and strangers in new social settings.

In my early 30s, I questioned whether having an only reflected a selfishness or a deficiency I was too biased to admit.

I asked the typical questions and mulled over answers about the complicated and mundane: *Will I regret this decision? If I choose not to give her a sister or brother, will she feel lonely in life?*

Is she going to be spoiled and entitled? Will she learn to share with others? With these inquiries, I’d push myself, and sink into the feeling of parenting an only and the long-term implications of this decision.

When my daughter was younger, I felt like less of a mother when this question arose in random moments in different settings. But as I parent my pre-teen daughter now, I observe other moms managing multiple children, and I see that our similarities are more pronounced than our differences.

We want our children to eat healthy, show interest in various subjects at school, and enjoy the wonder of a new discovery. We are equally concerned when our children spike a fever or face a challenge with friendships. These experiences serve as an epiphany: Most of us, mothers of one and mothers of multiple children, are working toward the same goal—to raise well-adjusted children who ultimately are happy and kind human beings.

With this perspective in mind, parenting my almost-13-year-old daughter does not stir feelings of inadequacy, but of empowerment. As she slides next to me on the sofa, we talk about how she navigates a difficult situation with a friend or some of her concerns about a pending homework assignment. I also help her with strategies for her tennis

game, and we share our thoughts as we enjoy a good movie. I suspect mothers of multiple children are doing the same. They, too, are guiding and charting the best path for their kids.

As I sit next to my daughter at the dinner table, my focus is not on what is missing, but how fulfilling it is to listen to her stories and have the privilege of counseling her on the ups and downs of middle school life. She expresses how comfortable she feels confiding in me and how much she depends on me. It isn’t always this way—there are evenings of tears and unnecessary heartache, too.

These moments serve as reminders that I am in the trenches, mothering, along with all of the other moms, listening, guiding, and loving our children. Mothering an only is like any other parent’s journey—we all navigate our children through sorrow and joy.

At the end of art class, I follow the other mother to our respective children’s projects, and, completely unrehearsed, we utter the same words. “What a great job, honey.” ■

Rudri Bhatt Patel is a lawyer turned writer and editor. She is the co-founder and co-editor for the literary journal The Sunlight Press and is on staff at Literary Mama. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications, and she is currently working on a memoir on the Hindu culture.

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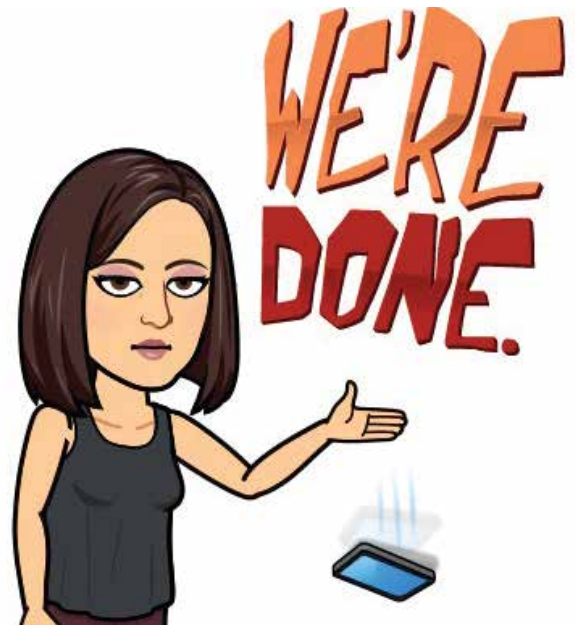
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Who's with Me?

The Facebook quizzes
I need to figure out who my
real friends are.

By Stephanie Schaeffer Silverman



As I write this, 'tis the season. The time of the year when judgment is abundant. The hottest gifts, the best décor, the cutest family photo. Which brings me to a conversation in my living room last Friday.

I was sitting with a group of my close friends at the end of a long week, and we decided to treat ourselves to the hour of happy.

A friend of mine shared a story from the Thanksgiving holiday. Her sister-in-law had asked whether her Facebook feed was also filled with pictures of elaborate, beautifully set holiday tables. My friend looked at her and said, "Umm, no, actually mine is filled with beach pictures and comments about escaping the holiday."

I couldn't help but wonder: What is the trending question that divides your Facebook feed? I realize that, for me, the so-called divide changes from year to year. If Facebook had been around when I was coming of age, here's what I would want to know at each phase to sort my Facebook friends into one camp or the other:

Toddler Me:
Do people call you bossy, too?

Elementary School Me:
Do you keep a diary?

Middle School Me:
Do you have a poster of Rick Springfield?

High School Me:
Do you have the Jordache Jeans with the zippers on the bottom?

College Me:
Can you understand me? (I grew up on the East Coast, but went to school in Ohio. Sneakers, soda—no one knew what the heck I was talking about.)

Young-Professional Me:
Do you also want to go back to college, like right now?

New-Mom Me:
Is your house a Barney-free zone?

Rec-League-Watching Me:
Do you know the score? ('cause I don't)

Three-Small-Kids Me:
Will you not-so-silently judge me if I'm not really sure where all three are at one time?

Three-Slightly-Older-Kids Me:
Do you unapologetically long for some alone time? You know, like All. The. Time.

Teaching-Kids-to-Drive Me:
Have you mastered the effortlessly calm look on the outside, while dying on the inside?

Competitive Me:
Do you play your killer ping-pong spin shot on your kids too, regardless of their age or ability to see over the table?

Raising-Three-Teens Me:
Do you think you are losing your mind?

College-Application-Season Me:
No, really, do you?

Mother, Entrepreneur, Volunteer Me:
Am I the only one running late?

One-Kid-in-College Me:
Are you sort of okay with him leaving?

Two-Kids-in-College Me:
Are you sort of not okay that two are gone now?

The-"Baby"-is-16 Me:
Do you have something in your eye, too? Sniff sniff.

Writing-This-Essay Me:
Are you judging me? (Oh puh-lease, I know you've been judging me since you read about the hour of happy in the second paragraph.) ■

Stephanie Silverman is the publisher of *Your Teen*.

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