

# Adults can help teens adjust to school

Starting back at high school can be a time of excitement and anxiety for both students and parents — new friends, new teachers and new challenges.

As an adult, parent or caregiver, you can make a positive difference for teens by using the following tips.

## Balancing homework, sports, extracurricular activities and jobs

Parents can introduce teens to a variety of activities and people and create a balance of commitments and interests. Be sure they have down-time.

- Teach time management skills.
- Work together to define responsibilities and consistent consequences.
- Limit part-time work to 15 hours a week.
- Monitor activities and well-being.

## Making friends and keeping friends

Youth with strong interpersonal skills work well in groups, resolve interpersonal conflicts peacefully and are comfortable sharing ideas and feelings.

Share your personal struggles with relationship conflicts and be sensitive to teen frustrations.

- Treat your teens like you treat your friends.
- Welcome their friends into your home.
- Address conflicts directly and negotiate solutions.
- Seek support from the parents of their friends.

## Surviving in a larger school, getting lost and competing for sports teams

Teens are particularly anxious about being embarrassed and not fitting in. Parents can help plan for these changes and solve problems with teens.

- Include familiar routines and people in the transition to high school.
- Encourage teens to ask for help.
- Stay in touch with the school.
- Recommend involvement in school social activities.

## Dealing with bullying, teasing, intimidation and violence

Friendships and good interpersonal skills are the best defence against intimidation. Watch for signs of trouble, invite discussion and problem-solve together.

- Encourage supportive friendships.
- Use discipline that is firm, not coercive.
- Make sure they have a plan if anyone tries to hurt them.
- Work with the school.

## Managing longer classes, exams, projects and course choices

Teens who are committed to learning recognize the value of completing school. Parents can consult with school staff and set time and space aside for homework.

- Expect them to do their best.
- Help set achievable goals.
- Offer to quiz them or listen to their assignments.
- Monitor their activities and school attendance.

## Keep talking with your teens

Parenting a teen can be tough as well as rewarding. Staying involved is the key to success and the easiest way to stay involved is to keep talking. Communicating effectively with your teen takes practice.

- Ask a lot of questions — avoid statements or lectures.
- Help them solve their own problems.
- Use music or TV to get them talking — "What do you think about that?"
- Give daily encouragement.

Back to school time is an opportunity to consider everything we do to keep teens

## Health Notes

happy, healthy and safe. Contributing to the interests, skills, experiences and relationships of all teens will have a lasting

positive effect on their lives.

For more information, call the Halton Region Health Department at (905) 825-6000, TTY (905) 827-9833.

Visit our Web site at [www.region.halton.on.ca/health](http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health).

Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department.

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