

Parental Involvement During The High School Years: Just What Is It And Why Is It So Important?

by Linda Hinkle It seems that when our children are in the elementary grades, parental involvement in their day to day school activities is easy. Attending PTA meetings and school plays, serving as homeroom mom, and even helping with homework assignments keep us connected to school life and help us keep a close watch on our children's progress. But for most parents, as their students progress through school the monitoring of their schoolwork and activities gets a bit more complicated. When the kids reach junior high and high school, they have several different teachers and the academic demands become more advanced. There are also fewer activities that draw parents into school life at this level. Teens become seemingly more independent, translated they don't need (or want) us as much, they become mobile, and all of a sudden it becomes more and more difficult to keep up with what is going on in their lives, both academically and socially. In my 29 years of teaching high school mathematics I, like most educators do, witnessed varying degrees of successful parenting of high school students. Of course, there are many variables involved in each individual case. Teens are very unique creatures; what works for one may not work for another. One teen may be a very successful student despite having little, if any, parental guidance. Another might have parents doing "all the right things" and still venture into areas that are detrimental to their success. But the one common characteristic that I observed among most successful high school students was that of continued parental involvement during the high school years. In doing some extensive research on the subject, I discovered study after study that overwhelmingly indicates that parental involvement in teen education is directly related to increased achievement. So, what exactly do we mean by parental involvement? What form does it take during the high school years? Actually, it can take many forms. Attending school functions, frequent communication with teachers, monitoring of schoolwork, responding to requests from the school for interaction, and taking an active part in your teen's preparation for the transition to life after high school are integral components of what parental involvement should include at the high school level. The structure of most education systems seems to be constantly changing, sometimes with good results and sometimes not so good. This instability deems it almost necessary that parents take charge of their children's education. Even the best of schools may have overloaded teachers and too few resources. Parents must take a pro-active role if they want their child to be a successful student. Not surprisingly, this is just as important during the high school years as it is at the elementary level.

About the Author

Linda Hinkle is an educator and advocate for parents of high school students. Her free teleseminar will show parents how they can help their teen be a successful high school student. View all the details and sign up at <http://www.parentsguidetohighschool.com> or <http://www.highschoolstuff.com>.

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