

## Back to School Strategies for Success: High School

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Presented By:  
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### Objectives

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- Understand the changes your child experiences during this time
- Recognize the developmental stages for your high school student
- Identify topics/milestones that are important for your child during the high school years
  - Developing Friendships – “Fitting in”
  - Driving
  - Substance Use and Abuse
  - Thinking about the future

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### Erik Erikson – Developmental Stages

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- **Adolescent**  
*Identity vs. Role Confusion*  
Tries integrating many roles (child, sibling, student, athlete, worker) into a self-image.
- **Young Adult**  
*Intimacy vs. Isolation*  
Learns to make personal commitment to another as spouse, parent or partner.

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**Developmental Task**

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- To create a personal identity based upon the integration of values and a sense of self in relation to society, adults, peers, the future, vocations, ideas, and the cosmos. To establish independence from the family.

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**Expect Changes**

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- Physical
  
- Emotional
  
- Cognitive

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**Expect your teen to...**

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- Cope with physical, emotional, and intellectual changes
- Search for their own identity and separate from you, the parent
- Be critical of you, the parent
- Be moody and self-centered
- Be unpredictable and interested in trying out new behaviors
- Be strongly influenced by peer group values and opinions
- Give you moments of great joy and pride

Physical development nears completion in this stage. Physical features are shaped and defined.

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**7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens – Sean Covey**

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- Be Proactive
- Begin With the End in Mind
- Put First Things First
- Think Win-Win
- Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood
- Synergize
- Sharpen the Saw

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**Staying Connected with Your High School Student**

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- Physical Safety
  
- Emotional Safety
  
- Learning Challenges

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**Communication Tips for Parents**

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- Establish & articulate your standards
- Listen
- Avoid criticism
- Use humor
- Praise good performance/behavior
- Don't lecture – except when needed!

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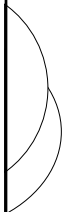
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**Driving**

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- Set an example
- Practice makes perfect
- Be car smart
- Stay in control

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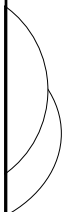
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**Teenage Substance Use/Abuse**

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- Keep lines of communication open
- Be clear about your expectations (i.e. no underage drinking is allowed at home or out with friends)
- Use scenarios that illustrate impulse control and good decision making

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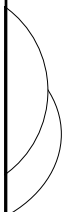
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**SAT Tests** (Source: Princeton Review)

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- **Neatness Counts**
- **More Is More**
- **Paragraphs Are Your Friend**
- **When Shakespeare Comes in Handy**
- **Channel Your Inner Webster**

Make it a family affair. Throw in some big words of your own each night at the dinner table during the weeks leading up to test time. And if your kid asks what they mean, be sure to tell them!

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**Thinking About The Future**

- Help your child think about his/her goals
- Assist your child in finding answers about interests
- Discuss the family goals as they relate to individual goals
- Help you child create an action plan to help them accomplish their goals
- Alleviate anxiety about the future by helping your child gather facts and information

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\* If you are viewing this seminar from the webcast and would like a copy of the participant packet and resources, please contact Tonya Lee at [leet2@nih.mail.gov](mailto:leet2@nih.mail.gov)

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**School –  
What is school like?**

- The structure, expectations, and responsibilities will be different in high school than in middle school

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**School –  
Strategies for Parent Involvement**

- Set up a structure for your child's routine in the very beginning of the school year
- Learn school rules and regulations
- Be aware of curriculum requirements and options
- Know the homework policies and expectations (Edline is a helpful resource)
- Help your child get organized
- Discuss good study habits
- Provide a home environment that encourages learning

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**School –  
Strategies for Parent Involvement**

- Attend school events
- Volunteer in the school and at events
- Know your child's teachers and key personnel (e.g. principal & counselor)
- Discuss your child's academic objectives and make sure the curriculum is designed accordingly
- Observe, monitor, and communicate

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**School –  
Strategies for Communication**

Understand the expectations of the school and be a "respectful advocate" for your child.

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**School –  
Strategies for Communication**

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Write, email or call teachers when:

- Your child becomes unmotivated
- Expectations are not clear
- Grades drop
- The curriculum or assignments seem inappropriate
- Whenever you feel your child isn't being supported
- You want to praise/congratulate school staff

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**School –  
Strategies for Communication**

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- Seek a meeting at the school if writing, emailing or calling does not resolve the issue.
- Involve the school counselor or administration when appropriate.

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**Summary/Questions**

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## Helping You And Your Child Transition Successfully After High School

You've made it! The stress, anxiety and sleepless nights about what your child will do after high school is over. For those whose children are moving on to college and leaving home, this transition can be overwhelming. While we understand that our role as parents is to raise independent children the difficulty is knowing how much to let go and when. Children always need parents, but the relationship may become more adult-like. An important aspect of which is an acknowledgment of your child's respect for privacy. Even though your child may have had some amount of independence while still under your roof, in college you won't have access to them on a day-to-day basis. Your first-hand knowledge of their friends, teachers, and life style becomes less and less. It is no wonder that you may be feeling excited and terrified at the same time. This newsletter is designed to help provide some tips and provide suggestions and resources to help you and child transition to this new phase.

You've made it! The stress, anxiety and sleepless nights about what your child will do after high school is over. For those whose children are moving on to college and leaving home, this transition can be overwhelming. While we understand that our role as parents is to raise independent children the difficulty is knowing how much to let go and when. Children always need parents, but the relationship may become more adult-like. An important aspect of which is an acknowledgment of your child's respect for privacy. Even though your child may have had some amount of independence while still under your roof, in college you won't have access to them on a day-to-day basis. Your first-hand knowledge of their friends, teachers, and life style becomes less and less. It is no wonder that you may be feeling excited and terrified at the same time. This newsletter is designed to help provide some tips and provide suggestions and resources to help you and child transition to this new phase.

Before the move-in day, it is useful to re-discuss certain issues. Be specific about family policies and expectations regarding the frequency of communication, finances, grades and access to information. Communicating educational goals and expectations should be done in a manner respectful of the child's own style and interests. Additionally, bring up topics such as sex, drugs, and alcohol as well as academic and interpersonal issues since college students are usually confronted with these situations. These young adults benefit from hearing their parents' views on these issues especially when presented without moralizing or criticizing. Parents must encourage and accept the student's ability to make independent decisions. Acknowledge out loud that you realize mistakes will be made along the way; this is what we refer to as life experience. Re-affirm that you love them, believe in them and will always accept them.



After the first few weeks or months a phenomenon of “the October slump” occurs. The awe of moving away from home is over and problems emerge. Your child may call home and unload their problems on you. These problems can be about a roommate, room size/cleanliness, classes, distance to classes, food or homesickness. While your first reaction may be to resolve your child’s problem; don’t make knee jerk decisions at the first sign of a problem. Listen, take a deep breath and then ask your child what they think their next step might be. This is the time that your knowledge of the college’s resources will come in handy. All colleges have a counseling center, access to a health clinic, housing staff or dean of student affairs any which of these resources would be a valuable first step in problem-solving for your child. The point is to let them make that problem solving step~ not you. Maintain consistent communication using a variety of means: phone calls, email, text message, care packages, and scheduled family weekend visits.

The whole family is transitioning so give each other time, patience and a sense of humor. Imagine yourself as a relay teammate, you have passed the baton on to your child but remain an important teammate. Cheer them on and continue to keep the lines of communication open. Your child desires your input and advice, especially when they ask for it instead of you offering it to them.

For additional resources, explore these books:

- ◆ “Parents’ Guide to College Life,” by Robin Raskin (Random House, 2006)
- ◆ “Letting Go: A Parents’ Guide to Understanding the College Years,” by Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger (Harper Collins, 2003)
- ◆ “You’re on your own (But I’m Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Year,” by Marjorie Savage (Fireside, 2003)
- ◆ “For Parents Only: Tips for Surviving the Journey from Homeroom to Dorm Room,” by Julia Johnson and Mary Kay Shanley (Barrons, 2000)
- ◆ “Don’t Just Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The essential parenting Guide to the College Years,” by Helen E. Johnson and Christine Schelhas- Miller (St. Martin’s Griffin, 2000)
- ◆ “Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College,” by Andrea Van Steenhouse, Ph.D.
- ◆ Almost Grown: launching your Child from High School to College,” by Patricia Pasick, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Sources:

- ◆ New York Times, “Education Life Supplement”, 7/30/2006
- ◆ American University Counseling Center, “Transitions and Resources as your Son or Daughter begins College”, 2007
- ◆ “Life Isn’t Just Getting Into College. Really.” by Patricia Dalton, The Washington Post, March, 2004
- ◆ University of Pittsburg Counseling Center, Handouts produced by David D. Coleman, Coleman Productions, 2006
- ◆ “Parents Casting a Shadow Over College Applicants: Campuses Try Student-Only Tours,” by Jay Matthews, The Washington Post, 7/12/2004
- “Helicopter Parents: The Emotional Toll of Being Too Involved in Your Kid’s Life”, by Sue Shellenbarger, The Wall Street Journal, 2006
- “Parents Rights (and Wrongs),” by Kate Stone Lombardi, The New York Times, Education Life, 7/30/2006



## Helping Your Older Child Handle Money

Most young people have little knowledge about handling money and accounting for it. Often times, kids will take money out of the bank via an ATM card or the “parent pocketbook” with not a lot of thought about tracking their spending habits. Before your child leaves home, it is helpful to talk about finances, budgeting, and fiscal responsibility. Keep in mind that this may be the first time that they have to exhibit a sense of restraint or self-discipline. Here are some tips:

- A good beginning step is to start with the basics of budgeting: what is a budget and what types of items make up a budget. Use simple terms such as budgeting is basically a plan that lists all of your money coming in and money going out.
- The next step is to help them review the types of items they purchase and organize these into categories. Text books, bills, cafeteria, groceries, school and personal supplies, gas, and the biggest item, pleasure expenses. Going out with friends is an important social part of their lives and they need to budget for it. Also, explain the importance of having an emergency fund. After reviewing these items, have your child write them down. This makes a big impact on the child when they have created their own personalized budget.
- An important component of a budget discussion is the need to be organized. Teach your child to get organized with money; find a space to keep track of receipts, bank statements, etc. On-Line banking is a great tool for tracking purchases/deposits which many young people will feel comfortable utilizing.
- Reinforce the concept that when the money allocated per the budget is used up; it’s gone. Don’t dip into savings. Encourage your child to withdraw a certain amount of cash each week to spend rather than using the ATM machine for each purchase. Leaving the ATM card home when they are out with friends is a good habit to get into.
- As your child gets into the habit of tracking their usage of money via budgeting, consider credit cards. While it is important that
- Young people establish a good credit rating; they have to learn responsibility with their money. We all know the risks of over extending oneself with credit and this is more of a risk with a young person who is still learning how to handle their finances. Many banking institutions offer a variety of credit cards that can limit the purchasing power of the card holder or can anchor the card to the parent’s established credit card. You may want to consult with your local lending institution for more information.

## Positive Communication with Your Teen

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### Phrases that show acceptance

- "I like the way you handled that."
- "I like the way you tackle a problem."
- "I'm glad you enjoy learning."
- "I'm glad you're pleased with...."
- "It looks as if you enjoyed that."
- "How do you feel about it?"

### Phrases that show confidence

- "Knowing you as I do, I'm sure you'll give it your best try."
- "You'll make it!"
- "I have confidence in your judgment."
- "It's a rough one, but I'm sure you can figure it out."
- "You met lots of challenges in the past. I have confidence in your ability to meet this tough one."

### Phrases that focus on contributions, assets, and appreciation

- "Thanks! That helped a lot."
- "It was thoughtful of you to..."
- "I really appreciate that you..."
- "I could really use your help with..."
- "Would you do ... for the family?"
- "Your contribution really makes/made a difference."

### Phrases that recognize effort and improvement

- "It looks as if you really worked hard on that."
- "You really thought through that carefully."
- "Look at the progress you're making."
- "You've really come a long way."

### Phrases that show respect

- "I can understand why you'd feel that way."
- "Your opinions show that you've thought this through carefully."
- "I have a different way of looking at it, but I can certainly see why you'd think that way."
- "I hadn't thought of it that way before."
- "That's a very interesting way to look at..."
- "I respect your opinion because I respect you, but I see it differently."
- "I see that it's important for you to feel that way."



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# Parenting assessment

The following questions will be helpful in assessing your parenting skills. Please circle the appropriate number on the scale that best describes you or your interactions with your child(ren).

**Key:** 1 = never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = about half the time; 4 = usually; 5 = always

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I respect my children as people.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I clearly define limits and expectations of acceptable behavior.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am consistent in my actions and words.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have the confidence needed to clearly and firmly communicate my needs and wants to my children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I openly invite my children to participate in the rule-making process.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I look for occasions to "catch my children being good."   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I find time daily to have a friendly talk with my children.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I listen to my children in a non-judgmental and understanding manner.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I recognize that my children's feelings are important and need attention.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I encourage my children to be individuals.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I recognize the need to be involved with my children and share activities with them.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I teach my children the value of working for what they want.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I discuss drugs, sex, AIDS, and other "hot" topics with my children.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel my expectations are realistic for my children's ages and abilities.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I try to be a good role model for my children and "practice what I preach."                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I enjoy my children and show them I think they're special.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**This self-assessment is an opportunity to consider your own parenting skills. Don't worry if you don't feel that you measure up all the time. Even the best of parents can fall short from time to time. This seminar will help you sharpen your understanding and skills and give you tips on how to improve your parenting approach.**

Psychoanalyst **Erik Erikson** describes the physical, emotional and psychological stages of development and relates specific issues, or developmental work or *tasks*, to each stage. For example, if an infant's physical and emotional needs are met sufficiently, the infant completes his/her task -- developing the ability to trust others. However, a person who is stymied in an attempt at task mastery may go on to the next state but carries with him or her the remnants of the unfinished task. For instance, if a toddler is not allowed to learn by doing, the toddler develops a sense of doubt in his or her abilities, which may complicate later attempts at independence. Similarly, a preschooler who is made to feel that the activities he or she initiates are bad may develop a sense of guilt that inhibits the person later in life.

**Infant**

*Trust vs Mistrust*

Needs maximum comfort with minimal uncertainty to trust himself/herself, others, and the environment

**Toddler**

*Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt*

Works to master physical environment while maintaining self-esteem

**Preschooler**

*Initiative vs Guilt*

Begins to initiate, not imitate, activities; develops conscience and sexual identity

**School-Age Child**

*Industry vs Inferiority*

Tries to develop a sense of self-worth by refining skills

**Adolescent**

*Identity vs Role Confusion*

Tries integrating many roles (child, sibling, student, athlete, worker) into a self-image under role model and peer pressure

**Young Adult**

*Intimacy vs Isolation*

Learns to make personal commitment to another as spouse, parent or partner

**Middle-Age Adult**

*Generativity vs Stagnation*

Seeks satisfaction through productivity in career, family, and civic interests

**Older Adult**

*Integrity vs Despair*

Reviews life accomplishments, deals with loss and preparation for death

# Teenage Development

**Source: *Clevelandclinic.org***

Adolescence is the period of developmental transition between childhood and adulthood. It involves changes in personality, as well as in physical, intellectual and social development. During this time of change, teens are faced with many issues and decisions. This handout addresses some of the key issues that can have an impact on a teen's social development.

## Self-esteem

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. The development of a positive self-image and a healthy self-esteem is very important for making a successful transition from child to adult. Here are some suggestions for helping to encourage positive self-esteem in your teen:

- Give your child words of encouragement each day.
- Remember to point out the things your child does right, not just the mistakes.
- Be generous with praise.
- Give constructive criticism, and avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame.
- Teach your child about decision-making and make it a point to recognize when he or she has made a good decision.
- Help your child learn to focus on his or her strengths by pointing out all of his or her talents and abilities.
- Allow your teen to make mistakes. Overprotection or making decisions for teens can be perceived as a lack of faith in their abilities. This can make them feel less confident.
- When disciplining your child, replace shame and punishment with positive reinforcement for good behavior. Shame and punishment can make an adolescent feel worthless and inadequate.

## Peer pressure

As children grow, they begin to spend more time with their friends and less time with their parents. As a result, friends can influence a child's thinking and behavior. This is the essence of peer pressure. Peer pressure can be a positive influence--for example, when it motivates your child to do well in school, or to become involved in sports or other activities. On the other hand, peer pressure can be a negative influence — for example, when it prompts your child to try smoking, drinking, using drugs, or to practice unsafe sex or other risky behaviors. Here are some tips to help minimize the negative influences of peer pressure and to maximize the positive:

- Develop a close relationship with your child, and encourage open and honest communication. Children who have good relationships with their parents are more likely to seek a parent's advice about decisions or problems.

- Help your child understand what peer pressure is. The child will be better able to resist negative influences if he or she understands what's happening and why.
- Reinforce the values that are important to you and your family.
- Nurture your teen's own abilities and self-esteem so that he or she is not as susceptible to the influences of others.
- Teach your child how to be assertive, and praise assertive behavior.
- Give your teen breathing room. Don't expect him or her to do exactly as you say all of the time.
- Try to avoid telling your child what to do; instead, listen closely and you may discover more about the issues influencing your child's behavior.
- Provide discipline. Your child needs to understand that there are consequences to negative behaviors.

## Tobacco, drugs and alcohol

Drug abuse is a serious problem that can lead to serious, even fatal, consequences. Research suggests that nearly 25 percent of adolescents (ages 12 to 17) have used drugs, with 16 to 18 as the peak age for drinking and drug abuse.

Teens whose parents regularly communicate with them about the dangers of drugs have a decreased risk of using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. Following are some tips for addressing drugs, alcohol and tobacco use with your teen:

- Set a good example. If you smoke, drink heavily or use drugs, you are teaching your child that these behaviors are acceptable.
- Teach your child that drugs, tobacco and alcohol can harm their bodies, and that it's OK to say "no."
- Teach your child how to avoid situations where others may be drinking, smoking or using drugs, and to choose friends who do not use these substances.
- Know who your child's friends are, and don't allow your child to attend parties where there is no adult supervision.
- Encourage your child to become involved in extra-curricular activities at school, a church youth group, or other programs that provide opportunities for teens to gather and socialize in a fun and safe environment.

## Teens and sex

Talking with your teenager is important to help him or her develop healthy attitudes toward sex and to learn responsible sexual behavior. Openly discussing sex with your teen also enables you to provide accurate information. After all, teens will learn about sex somewhere. But what they learn might not be true, and might not reflect the personal and moral values and principles you want your children to follow. In addition, teens need to understand the possible consequences of being sexually active--including pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as being emotionally hurt.

When you talk to your teen about sex, focus on the facts. Consider using the following list of topics as an outline:

- Explanation of anatomy and reproduction in males and females
- Sexual intercourse and pregnancy
- Fertility and birth control



- Other forms of sexual behavior, including oral sex, masturbation and petting
- Sexual orientation, including heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality
- The physical and emotional aspects of sex, including the differences between males and females
- Self-image and peer pressure
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Rape and date rape, including how being intoxicated (drunk or high), or accepting rides/going to private places with strangers or acquaintances puts you at risk
- How choice of clothing and the way you present yourself sends messages to others about your interest in sexual behavior (for example, tongue piercing, wearing low-cut clothing)

## Tattoos and piercing

Teens of every generation have their fads. Most teenage fads are harmless and eventually fade away without permanent damage. Unfortunately, some of today's most popular fads — particularly tattoos and body piercing — can be permanent and can affect your teen's health. Here are some ideas on how to discuss these fads with your teen:

- Don't wait until your child reaches the teen years to talk about tattoos and piercing. Many younger children look up to teens as role models.
- Explain the possible dangers of tattoos and piercings, such as infection or allergic reactions. The risk of infection increases if a tattoo or piercing is done under non-sterile conditions.
- Ask your teen to imagine how multiple piercings or tattoos might affect his or her future career or relationships.
- Explain that a tattoo may not turn out the way you want, and you can't take it back if you don't like it. Further, tattoo removal is very expensive and can be quite painful. In some cases, tattoo removal may cause permanent discoloration of the skin.

## Depression and suicide

It is common for teens to occasionally feel unhappy. However, when the unhappiness lasts for more than two weeks and the teen experiences other symptoms (see below), then he or she may be suffering from depression.

There are many reasons why teenagers become unhappy. High-stress environments can lead to depression. Teens can develop feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy over school performance, social interaction, sexual orientation or family life. If friends, family or things that the teen usually enjoys don't help to improve his or her sadness or sense of isolation, there's a good chance that he or she is depressed. Often, depressed teens will display a striking change in their thinking and behavior, lose their motivation or become withdrawn. The following are the major signs of depression in adolescents:

- Sadness, anxiety or a feeling of hopelessness
- Loss of interest in food or compulsive overeating that results in rapid weight loss or gain
- Staying awake at night and sleeping during the day n Withdrawal from friends
- Rebellious behavior, a sudden drop in grades or skipping school

- Complaints of pain including headaches, stomachaches, low back pain or fatigue
- Use of alcohol or drugs and promiscuous sexual activity (These are common ways teens cope with depression.)
- A preoccupation with death and dying (This often is a cry for help and usually indicates a serious case of depression.)

Depression is a serious problem, but it also is treatable. If you suspect your teen is depressed, tell your child's health care professional and seek help right away.

Suicide is a serious problem within the teen population. Adolescent suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults in the United States. It is estimated that 500,000 teens attempt suicide, every year with 5,000 succeeding.

### **Warning signs of suicide include:**

- Threatening to kill oneself
- Preparing for death, giving away favorite possessions, writing goodbye letters or making a will
- Expressing a hopelessness for the future
- Giving up on oneself, talking as if no one else cares

If your teenager displays any of these behaviors, you should seek help from a mental health professional immediately.

# Fred S. Evans

## Biography

Fred S. Evans retired from the Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools on June 30, 2000 after a 30-year career. He held a variety of positions during that time including middle and high school principal, assistant principal, central office administrator, human relations training specialist and social studies teacher. He developed partnership programs with Lockheed Martin, Hewlett Packard, various local and state governmental agencies and a variety of community groups, while principal of Gaithersburg High School and Parkland Middle School. After his career in Montgomery County, Fred coached and mentored new principals in the Baltimore City Schools. From July 2002 through June 2004, Fred was the Director of Secondary Education for the Loudoun County (Va.) Public Schools. Currently, he is an education consultant and adjunct professor at the George Mason University Graduate School of Education.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Fred earned his bachelor's degree from Ohio Wesleyan University, his master's degree from Western Maryland College and is in the doctoral program at Virginia Tech. He resides in Rockville, Maryland with his wife, Trish, and daughters, Olivia and Grace. His eldest daughter, Dyan Gomez, is a high school assistant principal in the Montgomery County Public Schools.