

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How should parents handle social networking sites?

Q: My 15-year-old has a page on one of the social networking sites. I checked it out and was surprised and sad to read what he said.

He talked about going to parties where alcohol was served, and described getting “wasted.” We have had a serious talk, and we are taking steps to address this issue. But some of his friends have the same thing on their home pages. Should I tell their parents? The school?



A: Social networking sites are a popular way for teens to communicate. They allow young people to share information about themselves quickly and easily. But, as with any online conversation, what is said may not always be the truth.

There can also be consequences. Employers and colleges regularly check to see what young people say about themselves. And once that information is posted, it can live forever. Even after your teen deletes the page, an older version may be stored on someone else’s computer.

Should you tell parents what you saw on their kids’ home pages? Absolutely. Parents need to work together to keep teens safe. And tell the school, too. Spring is a great time for an alcohol abuse awareness program.

PARENT QUIZ

Could your teen need extra help?

The end of the year is near—but it’s not too late for your teen to get extra help if she needs it. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if your teen may be struggling in her classes:

- ___ **1. Do you know** the warning signs of a struggling student? (A failing grade, several missed classes, etc.)
- ___ **2. Have you worked** with your teen to figure out the cause of the problem? (Not doing homework, not listening in class.)
- ___ **3. Have you talked** with your teen about why it’s a sign of strength and not of weakness to ask for help when she needs it?

- ___ **4. Have you spoken** with your teen’s teacher and counselor about help available at the school?
- ___ **5. Have you looked** for outside help if the school cannot assist your teen? (Self-study materials, a tutor, etc.)

How did you do? Each yes answer means you’re helping your teen get back on the path to success. For each no answer, consider trying that idea from the quiz.

“No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting.”
—Lady M. W. Montague

Ask questions when your teen is hunting for a job

Many teens work while they’re in high school. If your teen wants to work, ask him these questions:

- **“Does** the job match your skills?”
- **“How** will you get there?”
- **“What** are the hours?”
- **“Will** it affect your schoolwork?”
- **“Is** the neighborhood safe?”
- **“Is** the pay fair?”

Source: “Balancing High School and Part-Time Work,” CollegeBoard.com, www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/high-school/45266.html.

WHEN YOU NEED HELP

Know signs of depression

Does your teen seem overwhelmed? She might be depressed. Signs include:

- **A drop** in grades.
- **Extreme** or sudden mood changes (like restlessness, grouchiness, sulkiness, etc.).
- **Hiding** out in her room.
- **Withdrawal** from activities.
- **Changes** in sleep patterns.
- **Significant** weight gain or loss.
- **Unwillingness** to cooperate in family projects.

Depression is not just a “phase.” Get help if you are concerned.

DISCIPLINE

Leave chores to chance

Here’s a way to spice up household chores. Cut out several strips of paper. On each one, write a job. When it’s time to get to work, have family members pick one without looking. They can trade jobs if they don’t like the result.



Source: Caryl Walter Krueger, *1001 Things to Do with Your Kids*, ISBN: 1-5786-6044-0 (Galahad Books, an imprint of Sterling Publishing, 1-800-367-9692, www.sterlingpublishing.com).

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