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Dear Family,

Your eighth grader is beginning another important year of transition. In most school systems, this is the last year before high school, with all the responsibilities and challenges that period brings. Your teen's changes in the brain and physical development that began a few years ago may be slowing down—or may still be in play. And it's likely that your teen has had some encounters with peer pressure.

Your role this year, besides being patient and keeping your sense of humor (and remembering what it was like to be a newly minted teen), will be to serve as your teen's coach as much as anything! He or she will need gentle but firm guidance while navigating the increasing demands of school and life outside school. Keeping the lines of communication open continues to be critical so that you can influence your teen's decision-making process.

Take time to learn how your teen's teachers communicate so that you know what is happening in school. Newsletters and postings on a website can help you keep ahead of the game. You have a busy year ahead, and it may include that first dance or major graduation. We hope this parent guide gives you some useful tips for ensuring that it's a successful year!



One last thought...

Remember when you thought your parents didn't know anything? You probably made your share of mistakes, and now, here you are, trying to be a great parent. Good luck...and have some fun, too!

Top 10

Things Your Eighth Grader Needs to Know



1. **Theme or central idea** of a text and how to analyze its development
2. **Meanings of words and phrases** as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings
3. **Informative, explanatory, narrative, and short** research projects
4. Radicals and integer **exponents**
5. **Proportional relationships**, lines, and linear equations
6. **Defining, evaluating, and comparing functions**; using functions to model relationships between quantities
7. **Motion, forces, and structure** of matter
8. Developing their own questions and **performing investigations**
9. Major events preceding the founding of the nation and its significance to the **development of America**
10. **Events from the Constitution up to World War I**, with an emphasis on America's role in the war

Dive into Science

Eighth grade science includes an emphasis on the physical sciences, earth science, and the chemistry of life sciences. Memorization of terms and symbols also becomes increasingly important.

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Use *these ideas* to help foster a greater understanding of science for your adolescent.

Science Classes

Keep your teen interested in science through university weekend classes or summer camps with a science or technology focus.



Science Programs

Check with local museums for science programs, or enlist the aid of a scientist friend who can help your teen learn about a topic of interest.



Online Help

If you aren't close to a university or a museum, check for online classes or check out www.sciencebuddies.org for more information.



One last thought...

There is a tremendous amount of vocabulary acquisition expected in a science class. Reinforce the words by playing some of the standard vocabulary games, such as concentration, word scrambles, and hangman.