

Senior Year – Prepare Your Teen to Graduate

Your student's senior year is more about beginnings than endings. In less than a year, your teen will pursue work, college or a trade school. Take the next few months to plan and prepare.

Discuss Senioritis

Many teens “slack-off” during their senior year. Too many parties and too much freedom can lead to risky behavior, poor choices and bad grades.

College admission counselors look for “slackers.” They have a right to withdraw your teen's acceptance if grades decline. To stay on track, encourage your teen to:

- Keep regular study times.
- Make a list of deadlines for tests and projects. Review the list weekly.
- Become involved in school activities. Consider sports, music, arts and theater. Find leadership roles in clubs. Do community service.
- Avoid senior pranks.

Plan for College

Colleges have applications deadlines. The summer before or early in the senior year, your teen should:

- Select and visit colleges.
- Request applications. Fill them out online. Start a separate file for each school.
- Write personal statements and answer essay questions for each school.
- Take the ACT or SAT.
- Talk to her counselor or teachers about letters of recommendation.
- Learn about the FAFSA (Federal Application for Federal Student Aid) if your teen needs a loan or grant. Your school counselor can help you fill out the form and answer questions. You must attach your income tax forms from the previous year, so start your taxes early.

Prepare for Independence

Your teen must learn to manage daily life without you.

- Encourage her to make and track appointments.
- Teach him to do laundry.
- Take her to the bank to start an account. Discuss the use and risk of debit cards.
- Consider getting him a credit card with a low limit.
- Relax rules and curfew. See how she handles more freedom. Be ready to take action if problems arise.

Discuss life pressures

Your teen may encounter stress and challenges as he starts college. Discuss how to handle possible problems such as:

- Underage drinking.
- Skipping work or classes.
- Handling criticism.
- Making new friends of different cultures, races and religions.
- Staying true to his core beliefs.
- Living with a room-mate.

Encourage your senior to spend time with family and friends this year. Plan outings. Eat meals together. Teens say they enjoy family time.



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