

# Helping Your Teen Transition to High School

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The transition from middle school/junior high to ninth grade can be difficult for many teens. You – the parent – should not be a sideline observer during this critical time! You can be very helpful by becoming aware of your teen’s daily challenges and by taking several steps to ensure that your teen has a successful ninth grade year.

## **What challenges face your teen during the transition to ninth grade?**

According to the National High School Center, ninth graders perceive less support and monitoring from teachers and principals and tend to dislike school more than they did in middle school/junior high. On average, ninth graders report being less involved in school activities and perceive the need for more school organization.

*What are some indicators that your teen is struggling with the transition to ninth grade?*

- *Your teen has less than five full course credits*
- *Your teen has low attendance during the first 30 days of school*
- *Your teen exhibits lower self-esteem or depression*

Expert Joan Lampert notes that the four main areas of difficulty at the beginning of freshmen year are achievement, attachment, awareness, and attendance. If adolescents learn strategies from teachers and parents that enhance their feelings of competence, they will be more likely to attend school, be aware of due dates and assignments, and, ultimately, succeed.

## **You CAN create a successful transition!**

- Talk to your teen about schoolwork and due dates and show him/her how to organize school materials. On-track students are 3.5 times more likely to graduate in four years than off-track students.
- Talk to your teen’s teachers and read information sent home. Researchers Mizelle & Irvin state that communication, time, and involvement are essential components of a successful transition.
- Encourage your teen to participate in school activities! Successful transitions are ones that boast competent, confident teens, and being part of a sports team or club will build self-efficacy. Help your child select at least one extracurricular activity.
- Be a supporter! Students who adjust to life changes benefit from social supports, both in and out of the classroom. Show your teen how to use coping methods for daily stressors.