

Taking the Best First Steps to Learning What's Important to Your High School Student

Ask what they're concerned about. Or, what their friends are concerned about (sometimes that's easier.)

- Conversation starters
 - What's it like to be in a freshman, sophomore, etc class?
 - How is this different from last year?
 - Who's been your most annoying teacher?
 - Are you spending more or less time with anyone surprising?
 - What do people freak out about?
- Share a "parent" confidence
 - I'm not complaining but I feel a bit left out. How can I be useful?
 - All the other parents are doing (..). Do you think that's important for you?

Write about what happened when you used one of these to have a conversation with your child.



Try to just listen, take mental notes in case you have an idea but don't solve any problems. Don't solve your child's problems, collaborate with them as they find a solution to what they consider problems.

Describe a problem your child feels they need to solve.

(For example, they leave school work at school and then don't have time to finish it before it's due, or their friend group is changing.)

Remember, learning to deal with discomfort when they're young is very valuable. They'll be able to solve most problems if they have the support to try. Let's face it--it's probably going to take longer. However, the fact is you're very important in your high school child's life. Your guidance and support will build their confidence as they learn to solve their own daily problems.

Ask your child what they've done about solving the problem.

Just listen. Write what you learned here:

Then tell them what about their solution is good, and why. If nothing is good then tell them this is an excellent start, and if they add (a general suggestion by you) it will work even better.



If they ask you to talk about what won't work, focus *on the positive*. This is how you'll help them move ahead in the areas of their strengths. If they ask you to take care of it, tell them *you can help them figure out their strategy and are confident they can figure it out*. and you're happy to listen to their ideas.

Write what happened during the conversation, here.