



THRIVING IN HIGH SCHOOL – AND PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD

Do you have a teen beginning the exciting move to high school? This checklist will help you get a jump start on planning for this new chapter of your teen's life!

BE PROACTIVE

As your teen is approaching a transition into high school, you will want to learn about what transition supports are available to you. Be proactive and start thinking and learning about options as early as grade 6 or 7.

Steps For Learning About Transition Options

- Become familiar with the Ontario Ministry of Education's mandates on transition planning.
- Research your school board's transition policies and procedures.
- Speak with school staff and administrators about transition planning support available at your school.
- Attend all grade 8 and grade 9 orientation events, parent-teacher meetings, and information sessions with your teen.
- Find out who is a student ambassador at the high school and introduce your teen to them. Student ambassadors can not only be a friendly face in the hallway but also a natural support to help your teen learn the in's and out's of a new school.
- Connect with other families who have been through the process to get their feedback.
- Start capturing stories, strategies and tools that led to success in elementary school so you can share those with new educators in high school.
- Understand the difference between earning a high school diploma and a certificate of achievement.

If creating a vision is a new idea, check out P4P's [Taking Charge of Your Life](#) resource.

FOCUS ON CREATING A TYPICAL TEENAGE LIFE

Getting involved and trying a variety of new experiences can lead to some surprising new opportunities.

Ask Yourself

What are the typical milestones that young people aged 14-21 accomplish? What activities do they take part in on an average day? What kinds of responsibilities and freedoms are they given?

Make an average, typical teenage life your goal. Focus your efforts on growing the skills, expanding the interests, and creating the opportunities that will help your teen take steps towards this goal.

Strategies for Getting Involved

- Research clubs, community programs and spaces as well as leisure activities that your teen can get involved in.
- Search the web, go to the community center or library to find volunteer opportunities.
- Think about valued roles your teen can hold and get to know people who could support that role.
- Connect with families in your neighbourhood to learn about where their teens are finding opportunities.

Some Helpful Resources

- [Community Living Ontario's Student Links Program](#)
- [Volunteer Canada](#)
- [Ontario Center Volunteer Network](#)

PROMOTE AUTONOMY

In high school, students are expected to grow their independence and learn to exercise more choice.

What is important to your teen?

Is there a youth advisory committee, or community group where your teen can have a say about things that are important to them? Learning to speak up and have an opinion can grow their ability to advocate for themselves. Speaking to people that spend time with your child and care about them are great people to help you get to know what is important to your teen.

How can you grow your child's independence?

IN ALL THINGS:

- Allow your teen to fail sometimes and take risks. It is the way we all learn!
- Have high, age-appropriate expectations of your teen.

AT HOME

- From an early age, give your teen responsibilities at home and hold them accountable.
- Prioritize good self-care and hygiene to develop positive body image and self-esteem.
- Add more choices to your teen's daily routine.

AT SCHOOL

- Advocate for your teen to participate in mainstream classes and activities with their peers.
- Support educators by clearly communicating your vision and expectations and by sharing successful strategies and practices with them.
- Set the expectation that your teen will take part in school community events, clubs, and opportunities alongside the rest of the student body.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Access community spaces and services that facilitate community connections rather than services that focus on activities only.
 - For example, employment agency and job coaches, faith groups, community centers, activist clubs, recreation spaces (like movie theatres) or sports venues (like mini putt or golf courses).
- Try to be in those community spaces regularly. Being in spaces where young people spend their time can initiate friendships.
- Help your teen find a part-time job.