

KEEPING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ON A PATH TO GRADUATION



High School experiences play an important role in a young person's success after graduation. High school represents the culmination of educational experiences that prepare students for further education or career training, equipping them to succeed as adults. Parents and other family members can help keep high school students on a path that will lead to a diploma and a successful adulthood. Focus on establishing practices and patterns for building independence as your child moves towards graduation.

What can parents do to help their high schoolers stay on the path towards graduation?

- **Make graduation a priority.** Make sure your child understands graduation requirements and alternate pathways to graduation.
- **Be aware of your children's attendance** and support them to be on time and in school every day.
- **Know who they are hanging out with** (in person and online) as they are most likely to mimic the behavior of their friends.
- **Keep an eye on grades** and make sure they stay on track for graduation.
- **Attend parent-teacher meetings** and talk about goals and expectations for your child.
- **Help your child explore careers** and understand the necessary education and/or training required to pursue them.
 - Ask about enrolling your child in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) and Pathways.
 - **Teach your child to advocate for themselves** and allow them to make choices and decisions.
- **Attend and volunteer at school activities** as a way to stay informed and connected with your child's school community.
- **Encourage your children to join clubs and/or play sports** — students who are involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to stay engaged and committed to school.
- **Seek tutoring and additional academic support if your child is struggling in their classes.**
- **Look for signs of bullying, learning challenges, mental health, or medical concerns** that may be reasons for your child's academic difficulties or dissatisfaction with school.
- Explore online and community-based resources outside of school to help address specific concerns or questions.
- **Look for online resources** to address specific concerns and questions.
- **If your child has an individualized education program (IEP),** make sure they participate in their IEP meetings as a member of the IEP team and are prepared to contribute to their transition planning.
- **Make sure your child's IEP goals align with their diploma path (High School Diploma or Alternate Diploma).** Goals should match the skills your child needs to reach your child's achieve their post-secondary plans and should include the necessary supports and accommodations needed to participate in and successfully complete the required coursework.
- **Ensure your child has access to and is using the** accommodations and assistive technology written in their Section 504 plan or IEP to support their success in school.
- **Encourage and support your child in volunteering or working part-time.** These experiences help build independence and provide valuable real-world skills.
- **Monitor and model** safe, healthy, and responsible use of social media to help your child develop positive online habits.
- **Remember, students with IEPs can remain in high school through their 22nd birthday or until they graduate with a regular high school diploma. This provides them with more time to receive additional support** and complete the coursework. Participation in dual enrollment, internships, and Career Pathways can help them prepare for life after graduation.



Examples of Practical Ways to Support Your Child in Developing Independence

What can you do?	How can you do it?
Practice Supported Decision Making	• Support choice-making: discuss choice of classes, vocational experiences, volunteer opportunities. • Help your child make a daily schedule that includes work, play, and rest. • Encourage safe failing and dignity of risk. Failure is part of growth and not a reason to give up. • Discuss with your child what supports they may need as they enter adulthood (financial, medical, academic).
Talk through the potential results of choices (positive and negative)	• When your child makes a choice, discuss the result of that choice and whether they should have done anything differently.
Help your child understand what they need to keep their body safe.	• Model and discuss social media safety. • Model and discuss safe practices surrounding the use of medications and alcohol. • Model and discuss appropriate romantic and personal relationships. • Encourage them to speak up if something makes them uncomfortable or if they feel unsafe.
Allow your child to attend and encourage their participation in IEP meetings and parent-teacher conferences.	• Review your child's IEP with them. Discuss the goals and the effectiveness of the supports and accommodations written in the IEP. • Help your child create a presentation to share with the team about needs, preferences, strengths, interests, and postsecondary goals. • Get familiar with the process of requesting accommodations in higher education and work settings. Encourage your child to practice making these requests.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia 770-451-5484 or 800-229-2038 or www.p2pga.org

Georgia Department of Education, Division for Exceptional Children: <https://gadoe.org/special-education/>

Special Education Help Desk: 404-656-3963 or SPEDHelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us

Graduation Requirements: Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education

<http://www.gadoe.org/curriculum-instruction-and-assessment/ctae/pages/default.aspx>

Additional resources: Contact the Special Education Director for your school system.

Credits:

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)

PACER Center

US Department of Education (Ed.gov)

