



Surviving year 12

Fact sheet for parents

Supporting your Year 12 student

Year 12 is considered by some to be the most important year of schooling. There is an enormous amount of pressure on Year 12 students and it comes from parents, teachers, schools and the students themselves. There are a number of ways parents can support their children as they work through their final year of schooling.

Balance

It's important that you make sure your teenager has lots of opportunities to play sport or pursue an artistic activity like drama or music. Also, try to make sure that they spend time with their family, and friends.

Routine

Parents can do lots of things to help teenagers develop smart study habits. These skills do not develop automatically and parents will need to be patient while these new habits develop and the old, unhelpful ones are discarded.

A study-friendly home

Environment

It is important to make your home a place where it is easy for your teenager to think.

Help eliminate distractions such as television, radio, MP3 player, talking, noisy younger children, or cluttered work areas. It is impossible to watch TV and study. Show how important schoolwork is by keeping the TV off during study time.

- Keep your conversation to a minimum and encourage younger children to use this time as their study time or quiet time, too.
- Provide physical conditions that help concentration, such as good lighting, cool temperatures and a table or desk with a supportive chair.
- The work area should be neat, have enough space for writing and reading, and should be kept clear of any clutter.
- Remind them to sit with good posture in a comfortable chair. Lying down may be so relaxing that it interferes with concentration.

Making time to study

You can support your teenager by helping him or her focus on their study.

- **Schedule study time.** Study times should be scheduled for whenever there are the fewest distractions or interruptions. If your teenager needs help to establish a routine, have a chat about which times could be best used for studying. Set that time aside on at least five days a week. Use the afternoon or early evening as study time, as this leaves time later in the evening for relaxing activities.

- **Plan study in two 50 minute blocks with a 15 minute break.** One 50 minute slab of study is better than several hours full of distractions and interruptions. Use a kitchen timer or an alarm clock to signal breaks and to indicate the end of study time.

At exam time

The exam results do not represent your teenager's future. The end of secondary school is the start of the next and usually more exciting time in your teenager's life. The moment the exams are over, celebrate. Such a celebration is crucial, as the message you will be reinforcing is that the final score is incidental. Getting through high school is a wonderful achievement in itself.

When the exam results arrive

This period can be even more uncomfortable than the exams because everyone feels so helpless. There is always the potential that your teenager might fall short of his or her predicted scores, and the goal of achieving a place at his or her chosen university, TAFE or apprenticeship might seem unreachable. This can result in weeks of anxious waiting. Everyone in the family is treading on eggshells, and when the results do finally arrive, quite often the family can be too emotionally drained to celebrate or regroup.

You need to recognise that feeling on-edge or uneasy is a natural response. Talk to your teenager about the way he or she is feeling and the choices and options available. Let him or her know that both you and their school are supportive.

