Starting high school is an important milestone in your teen’s life. There are things that both you and your teen can do to make this big step as smooth as possible.

**Learn about high school**

Discuss your teen’s individual preparedness with his middle school classroom teacher or guidance counsellor. Try to make early and positive contact with the high school. Every high school has an information night for grade 8 parents. We encourage you to attend this session or visit the school.

Review the *Chart Your Course* book with your teen. Discuss the compulsory and optional courses with him and have him make choices based on his interests and educational needs. When considering grade 9 courses, think about what type of courses your teen will have the most success in. If you have questions, contact the guidance office at the school.

Many schools have their own websites. If your teen’s high school has a site, review it with her. And, check out our virtual guidance and career education centre at [www.makingmyway.ca](http://www.makingmyway.ca) (the site is only available in English) and encourage your teen to explore it, too.

**Find out how your child feels**

Start a conversation about how your teen feels about leaving his current school and entering high school. What has she heard about high school? How can he get ready?

If you have a friend, neighbour, sibling or other family member who is already a high school student, encourage your teen to speak with him about what it is like, ask advice, find out the names of some of the teachers. This helps your teen prepare and provides her with a familiar face if the individual attends the same school.

**Continue to encourage “personal best”**

Encourage your teen to do her best in school and at home. Remember, “personal best” does not mean “perfect,” and “learning” is not the same as “high grades.” Children, like adults, need the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.
Get involved

Attend school activities such as open houses, parent/teacher interviews and school council meetings. When your teen sees you involved, he will also see education as a high priority. Interpreters are available for parent interviews, and other meetings at the school. Let the school know if you need this service.

Stay connected with your child

Although high school is an important time in your teen’s life, a healthy balance between school and other interests will help him adjust to a new school experience. Here are some examples:

- Find interests you share and activities you can do together.
- Keep up-to-date and involved with your teen’s activities. Show your interest by asking her about the clubs or activities she’s involved in.
- Show an interest in your teen’s music. Find out about who his favourite artists and songs are and what he likes about them.
- Get to know your teen’s friends and encourage them to get together at your house.
- Encourage your teen to discuss new ideas and opinions.
- Show appreciation for good efforts.

www.makingmyway.ca