

It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

As a parent, you want to invest your time in things that matter. Like having the right conversation with your child at the right time, with the right things to say at your fingertips. These conversation guides will help you navigate the critical issues you face at each phase, as you imagine the end for your child. They are based on research from **The Phase Project**, a collaborative, ongoing effort assembling classic and innovative research with practical application.



High School

TRANSITION

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

... for intentional conversations with kids

Change is hard. It's hard on adults, and it can be especially hard on kids—maybe even more so as they transition from middle school to high school and are still learning the vocabulary necessary to verbalize what about the change is so challenging. For most kids, they're moving from a smaller school to a larger one. Encouraging their participation in clubs, sports, or any kind of extra-curricular activities will help your kids feel less alone and help them find their "tribe" more easily. As parents, you have the job of learning how to ease your kids into what comes next with as much guidance, encouragement, and belief as possible. Remember your role in this phase is to:

MOBILIZE their potential



WHAT TO SAY:

"I know there's a lot of change happening, and I want to do the best I can to help you through it. I'm here to listen as you process all of it."

"As you adjust to all the new experiences coming up, this house is a safe place to talk about whatever you need to."

"What are some activities you'd like to get involved in or try out this coming year?"

"Would it be helpful if we found a time to go to the high school and practiced going through your schedule to get a lay of the building before school starts up again?"

"Finding new friends to hang out with is hard. And it's tempting to stick with the people you meet first. But keep in mind the things that matter most to you, and look for friends who have similar interests and values."

"Every change takes some getting used to. It's okay if it takes some time for you to feel comfortable in a new routine and place."

"What can I do to help you feel the most prepared heading into high school?"

"I want to help you win in this new stage. Let's come up with a couple of ideas together about how I can help you."

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

"This is not that big of deal. People do this every year, and it's okay."

"It's going to be fine."
(It's okay to say this. But preface it with a lot of empathetic words. Our kids don't feel like they need a fixer right away. They need a feeler first—a parent who is compassionate and makes the effort to walk in their shoes before trying to pump them up.)

"If I find out you did something stupid, you're going to be in so much trouble."

After any misstep: "I told you so," "You should have listened to me," "I know what I'm talking about."

"This is your last chance to get it right."



JUST REMEMBER

Every PHASE is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The high school years are a time when you'll want to continue to ask them questions to help them form and voice their opinions. They are motivated by freedom and you coach their moral abilities when you give them choices. Remember to affirm them when they make good ones. Pay attention. Ask questions. This is a significant year.