

## **The Dance of Independence—Helping your student take small steps toward graduation & responsible independence**

It takes a steady march to move your student through high school. It's a four-year process. You'll see your student transform almost as much as they did from a toddler to first grade.

Your teen goes from ninth grade when they still depend on family for meals, rides, and structure to a graduating senior that must manage themselves through days away at college or career.

**You must change as well.** We lead our children through their early years, protecting them from a world that's too big for them. Now, we find that our strongest students have adults who steadily coach them to take the lead to tackle challenges. Teens need these years to **gradually grow into the adult world and practice the skills they need.**

We don't abandon even our seniors to navigate on their own. We stand ready, but we position ourselves beside and behind all our students. **We coach.**

Here's how a classroom teacher coaches. You might adapt this for yourself:

- **I do it.** When you make decisions or set boundaries, share all the information that you base that decision on. **Make your thinking visible** to your student so that they can learn from your example.
- **We do it.** Next time there's something to decide, sit down and work through the information together. Ask your student

questions about what information would be relevant and helpful. Let them gather facts that support their choices. **Share** the discussion and the final decision.

- **You do it.** Ultimately, your student will **learn to research the information and weigh the possibilities before they come to you**. Initially, you'll want to ask them to go over their thinking with you, but more and more, you can let them take charge as they demonstrate responsible choices.



# WHAT WENT WELL

To each new challenge, you bring past experiences and skills.  
*Take credit and pride in those.*

1

### Focus on What Went Well.

What competency did you bring and what success did you have?

Name a few strengths until a sense of confidence and calm grows.

Look for them throughout your whole day or focus on one situation.

Acknowledge and celebrate those.

2

### Identify one aspect that you want to tackle first

as you work toward success.

3

### Set out a plan to accomplish that new mini-goal.

Who or what can help?

When and how will I practice?

When will I face this again?



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**Thriving Teens**