



## give your kids a running start



Knowing how to run properly before signing up for soccer or Little League can give a child a leg up. "Running is a basic component of many sports, so kids who know how to do it well are more likely to excel at other activities and avoid injury," says Cliff Sperber, executive director of youth and community services at New York Road Runners. Help teach your kids about correct form and pacing by checking out the videos at [nyrr.org/arunningstart](http://nyrr.org/arunningstart).

## My 12-year-old wants to babysit. Is she old enough?

**MAYBE.** A recent study of 11- to 13-year-old babysitters found that almost all of them know whom they should contact if faced with an intruder or sick child, but 40 percent said they had left children unattended and 20 percent had opened the door to a stranger.

Figuring out whether your daughter is up to the task really comes down to knowing your child. (Note: Some states do set the minimum age for a babysitter at 12.) Does she generally make good decisions? If she has younger siblings, how does she interact with them? If you're confident that she would be reliable, then suggest she take a babysitting class. The American Red Cross offers a one-day course for 11- to 15-year-olds ([redcross.org/babysitting](http://redcross.org/babysitting)).

You can also help your child prepare by rehearsing different scenarios, such as what to do if the doorbell rings or a stranger phones. And it's a good idea to ease her into the role: In the beginning, she should only accept jobs for a few hours at a time, so that she has a chance to get used to the kids she's watching and vice versa. Of course, she should always know how to contact the parents in case of an emergency; having the number of a neighbor is a good idea as well. The more support she has, the better.

Mary L. Pulido, PhD, executive director of The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

only **22** %

of teens with ADHD go to college, and 5 percent of those who do enter drop out, according to the Edge Foundation, a nonprofit group. Increase your child's chances of success by checking out the tips at [edgefoundation.org/parents/adhd-friendly-colleges](http://edgefoundation.org/parents/adhd-friendly-colleges).

## BEWARE the caffeine-alcohol combo

Even though packaged drinks that contain both alcohol and caffeine—like Four Loko and Joose—may have been banned in your state because of their role in many hospitalizations (and a few deaths), it's worth talking to your teens about the dangers of mixing caffeine and alcohol. After all, kids can still spike caffeine-infused energy drinks like Red Bull or Monster Energy on their own. The danger: Caffeine interferes with signals in our brain that tell us we've had enough alcohol, which can lead to drinking too much and all the risks associated with it, including alcohol poisoning and risky behavior like drunk driving, says

Daniel Z. Lieberman, MD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Not sure what to say? Be warm but be firm. Try something like: "There's a lot of new science about teens, drugs and alcohol. It scares me to know how easily you could damage your brain or get addicted. I want your word that you'll steer clear of all that, and keep me in the loop about the kids you hang out with, too."

Find more tips and conversation starters from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America at [timetotalk.org](http://timetotalk.org).

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