

Teen Parenting Tips

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The teen years are a time to ensure your child is going to be ready for life after high school. You will likely notice your teen can be quite independent in many ways. However, it is also a time when you will notice areas that need some improvement.

When you notice your teen is struggling in certain areas, teach her new life skills. In addition, give her plenty of opportunities to practice being responsible and independent. Focusing on healthy habits now can equip your teen to care for herself in the future.

Daily Life

Even though there will be times when your teen insists he knows everything or that he has all the skills he needs to function in the adult world, there is a good chance his skills could use some fine-tuning.

Of course, the teen years come with many new opportunities too. Getting a driver's license and getting a part-time job are just a few of the milestones that will give your teen opportunities to practice being responsible.

In the meantime, it is important to teach your teen how to take care of himself and how to perform everyday activities that will prepare him for the future.

Physical Activity

It is recommended that teens get 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Aerobic exercise should be the main form of activity.

However, muscle-building exercises, like strength training, and bone-building exercises, like jumping, are also important for good health.

If your teen is not interested in joining a sports team, do not force it. Help her find something she really wants to do. Going for a daily walk or a bike ride, kayaking, or swimming could be activities she enjoys more than being on a team sport.

Even if your teen is not into sports, there are many activities can get him moving. You can also make physical activity a family activity. Go for an evening walk after dinner or go hiking on the weekends.

Limit your teen's screen time and encourage him to spend time outside. Talk about the importance of keeping his body healthy and make it a priority to be a good role model.

Around the House

The teen years are a critical time for young people to practice making decisions on their own and to be given more responsibility. The more responsibility they can take on now, the less they will struggle during their transition to adulthood.

Responsibilities that teenagers learned include:

- Complete tasks efficiently and correctly at home, school, and work.
- To care for their own personal hygiene and possessions.
- Show compassion for other people.
- To be socially responsible in their day-to-day lives and online.
- Control their emotions and interact appropriately with people.
- Understand that sexual activity can lead to consequences.
- How to handle peer pressure situations, like smoking.
- Hold a job and work well with others in a team.
- The ability to earn and spend money wisely.

Make sure your teen knows how to do important household tasks, like laundry and cooking basic meals. You may want to rotate chores sometimes to ensure that they have an opportunity to practice doing the household activities you do to maintain the home.

Give your teen privileges based on their responsibility level. If they are able to show you that they can be trusted with household tasks, you will have more confidence that he can handle the responsibility of being out with his friends unsupervised.

While your teen will want to spend the majority of their time with their friends, it is important to insist on spending some time together as a family. A monthly family fun night or weekly pizza night might be traditions you decide to keep.

Eat meals together as a family whenever you can. This can be an important way to connect with your teen on an everyday basis.

Sleep

Pediatrics recommend teens receive between 8 and 10 hours of sleep each night. Early school start times can make it difficult for teens to get the recommended amount of sleep.

Their biological clocks cause them to stay up later and sleep in longer. This makes waking early very difficult.

There are several things you can do to help your teen get enough sleep:

- **Talk to your teen about her nightly routine.** Discuss the importance of giving herself time to unwind before she goes to bed. Reading or taking a bath can be good ways to unwind.
- **Turn off electronic devices early.** Shut off smartphones, laptops, and TVs at least 30 minutes before bedtime. **Don't allow her to sleep with a smartphone** in her bedroom.
- **Discourage long daytime naps.** Falling asleep after school can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- **Keep your teen's sleep schedule consistent.** Sleeping in on the weekends or staying up too late on vacations will interrupt your teen's biological clock. Establish a wake-up time on non-school days that is no more than one hour later than school wake up times.

Technology

Technology plays a huge role in the everyday lives of teenagers. It is changed how they date, socialise, and communicate.

Stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media sites, and digital devices teens are using. Your teen will not listen to your warnings if you are not educated about the risks and dangers.

Cyberbullies and sexual predators pose credible risks. However, those are not the only threats your teen faces online.

People may attempt to steal their identity too. Alternatively, they may be invited to participate in scams or fraudulent activity, without even realizing it. Therefore, it is important to educate your teen about these dangers.

It is also important to talk about the importance of managing their online reputation. The pictures they post, memes they share, and content they like will create a permanent record of their activity.

Create clear rules for your teen's smartphone and other electronic devices. Establish consequences for breaking the rules.

While you do not need to read every message your teen sends, monitor their online activity. Know what they are doing online and make sure they are making healthy choices.

Your Teen's World

It is normal for your teen to think the world revolves around him sometimes. In fact, they might even think they have an "imaginary audience."

The "imaginary audience" is a label for teens' belief that a group of followers exists who constantly watch and judge their every move. The belief arises from the larger concept of adolescent egocentrism, that teens think the world revolves around them and that everyone is paying attention to how they look and what they do. This is a normal phase of social development in teens.

It can be exasperating for a parent to see their teen change his shirt five times before heading to school, with most of the choices appearing almost identical. However, this is normal teen behavior.

In addition to becoming more invested in social relationships, your teen will also grow more aware of social issues. They may grow invested in helping a charity or fighting for a political cause they believe in.

As your teen matures, they will spend more time thinking about their values. They may question their faith or claim they are going to live a different lifestyle than you. That is all part of the separation process as your teen becomes their own person.

It is normal for all teens to feel like they do not fit in sometimes. Their confidence is also likely to waiver. However, for teens who are bullied and ostracized, adolescence is likely to be an especially rough time.

If your teen is struggling to fit in socially, consider getting professional help. Loneliness and isolation could lead to mental health problems.

It is also important to keep a close eye on your teen's stress level. Academic issues, social problems, sports-related pressure, and preparing for the future can be overwhelming at times.

Make sure your teen is not over-scheduled. Down time is important.

Teens need healthy stress reduction activities and relaxation skills. Proactively teach your teen how to recognize when her stress level is high and show her how to cope with stress in a healthy way.

Quick Tips

Whether your teen loves music or he is into sports, support your teen's efforts to be an individual. That may mean taking a step back and realizing that your teen's job is not to fulfill your dreams for them—their job is to reach their own dreams.

As a parent, it is normal to feel a sense of grief as your child grows up. Gone are the days when they depended on you and soon, they will be out on their own.

Make sure you deal with your emotions in a healthy way. Do not allow your feelings to hold your child back

Finally, keep in mind that you and your teen do not have to agree on everything. Let them become their own person and establish themselves as an individual, as long as they do it in a safe way.