

# Positive Discipline for Teens 13-18 years

## Developmental Awareness

- Teenagers may:**
- Spend less time with parents and family
  - Begin to establish their identity
  - Discover and understand sexuality
  - Have an increased awareness of their body and their appearance
  - Be strongly influenced by media, trends, and peers
  - Be self-absorbed and live “in the moment”
  - Make decisions that adults do not always understand

The only thing more difficult than being a teenager may be parenting one!  
The teenage years are about establishing personal identity and independence.  
This is a time for parents to gradually help teenagers take responsibility for themselves.



### What You Might Expect

### What Your Teenager May Be Trying To Tell You

Defiance

“I don't want you to tell me what to do, I want to make my own decisions.”  
“I want to feel in control of the situation.”

Opinionated

“I am learning to think on my own and I want to have my say.”  
“I need to be heard so I feel that my opinions and ideas count.”

Independent

“I want to spend time with my friends and do what everyone else is doing.”  
“I want to have freedom and I want to be trusted.”

Rebellious

“I don't care what anyone thinks, I will do what I want.”  
“I am challenging the rules because I am trying out new ideas and possibilities.”

Insecurity

“As a teenager, I may act the way I do because I am feeling unsure of myself.”  
“I want to do what everyone else is doing, but I am not sure I am ready.”  
“I am self-conscious, I feel like everyone is looking at me.”  
“I am trying to fit in and I want to be accepted by my friends.”

## Planning for Positive Discipline

### Build a Positive Relationship

Take an interest in your teen's activities and spend time together doing something they enjoy. Daily activities such as mealtimes, shopping, walks, and watching tv together are opportunities to connect with your teen.

### Encourage Independence and Responsibility

Create opportunities for your teen to demonstrate responsibility and for you to acknowledge their effort.

### Communicate

Listen and respect your teen.

Avoid being judgmental and imposing your values.

Listen to their ideas, beliefs and values.

How you react to your teen may influence if they come to you the next time.

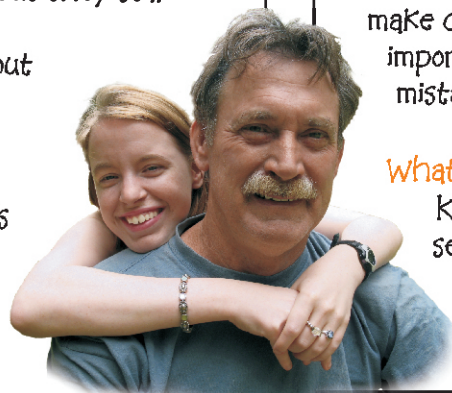
### Establish Rules Together

Negotiate expectations and rules together to make your teen feel part of the process. Teens need independence and want to feel trusted but they still need you to teach and guide them.

If helpful, put the rules in writing; make a contract that lays out rules, expectations and consequences.

### Be Aware of Your Teenager's Whereabouts

Even though teens want to spend time with their friends, it is important that you know where they are, what they are doing, and who they are with.



## What to do when...

Your teen is doing something that you don't want them to do

Problem solve together by:

- Staying calm
- Listening before jumping in and reacting
- Allowing time for your teen and yourself to both state your feelings
- Discussing what can be done differently the next time
- Negotiating when you can, to make your teen a part of the process

### The rules are broken

As difficult as it is, try not to lose your cool. If you do, your teen will certainly lose his. When rules are broken there needs to be some consequence but this has to be carefully thought out. Listen first to what your teen has to say. Make consequences that fit the rules that were broken. For example, if a teen breaks curfew, he will have to come home earlier the next time. Only make consequences that you can follow through with. It is important to give your teen a chance to try again after a mistake.

### What to do when your teen makes decisions that are unsafe

Keep the lines of communication open when talking about sexuality, drugs, alcohol, etc. There are many topics that can be emotionally charged and can stop parents from listening. Make a conscious effort to control your feelings and listen.

**Remember...** Discipline is still an important part of parenting a teen. They still need positive discipline to feel secure and safe while learning how to get along with others and to live in society. Positive discipline leads to young people learning self-discipline.