

Recovery is POSSIBLE, IMPORTANT, and a NEW BEGINNING



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Healthy Teen Development: 10 Principles for Parenting Your Teen

Many parents of teens today are feeling frustrated, stressed out, and hopeless when it comes to dealing with everyday “teen issues”. While you might feel like you’re alone in this fight, know that other parents are going through the same trials as you are. Parental involvement does not stop once children become teens; it is just as important during this stage of development. Research indicates that not only does parenting continue to be important for teens, but also that teens report the importance of positive relationships and interactions with their parents. The challenge is to adjust your relationship with your child, not withdraw from having one altogether. Having a good balance of privacy (but not too much privacy), space (but not too much space), limits (but not too many limits), and other factors can aid you in parenting your teen and give you peace of mind that you are leading them in the right direction toward their adult life.

10 Principles for Parenting Your Teen

1. *Remember, parents matter.* Make a difference in the life of your teen by providing guidance and support. At times, it may seem like your teen does not want you around. However, your child really does need you and needs to know you care.
2. *Stay warm and close.* It’s impossible to love your teen too much. Spoil your teen with love and support every day. Spend time together at meals, and remember to say, “I love you.”
3. *Stay involved with your teen’s life.* Ask questions about schoolwork and friends, and attend your teen’s extracurricular activities. Teens need to know you are interested in them just as much now as you were when they were younger.
4. *Set limits and provide structure.* Clearly communicate your expectations to your teen. Rules and expectations should change throughout your child’s life, but children of all ages need clear rules.
5. *Enforce rules and consequences.* Let your teen know what the consequences of breaking rules will be ahead of time. Follow through on enforcing punishments.
6. *Be consistent.* Parents should discuss and agree on basic parenting principles for guiding their children. Then, be consistent each day and in every situation. Mixed messages from parents can lead to frustration for both parents and children. Children need consistency to help them structure their lives.
7. *Explain yourself and engage your teen in decisions and conversations.* Discuss the reasons for rules and consequences with your teen. This does not mean that the rules or consequences will change, but it will help your teen understand your reasons and respect you. Teens don’t respect authority when it seems arbitrary.
8. *Don’t use harsh discipline.* Harsh discipline, like yelling or slapping, is not an affective long-term approach to discipline. Do not discipline your teen when you are angry. Instead, make arrangements to talk to your teen at a later time when wisdom and good judgment, not anger, will guide your discipline choices.

9. *Treat your teen with respect.* Your teen is growing up. Acknowledge your teen's increasing independence and ability to make decisions. Guide your teen in making positive choices, but realize that he or she will make mistakes.

10. *Understand adolescence is a period of change - for parents and children.* As a parent, you are changing as you develop new information and skills to help guide your teen. Your teen is changing physically, emotionally, and cognitively. Look for resources to help you understand the changes your teen is going through. Such resources include your Cooperative Extension office (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/>) other parents of teens, and books from your local library.

Remember, your relationship with your teen is changing, not ending.

Sources: "10 Principles for Parenting Your Teen" [<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SP213.pdf>] fact sheet: Iowa State University Extension.