

14 Tips on Teens

1
Let teens know you are willing to just plain listen to their ideas without making judgments. Talking is a way they think things out.

2
Be accessible. Teens often blurt things out or want to talk at strange or inconvenient times. Be ready to listen.

3
Use questions sparingly. Resist the urge to know EVERYTHING your teen is thinking or planning. Show some trust; you would expect the same.

4
Try not to be defensive. When they make generalizations or critical remarks, try not to take them personally. They may be opportunities for discussion.

5
Give straight-forward advice or feedback on important issues such as sex, drinking, and drugs. They need to hear you and they do hear you, even if they pretend indifference.

6
Talk about yourself sometimes. They hate to be the only topic under discussion.

7
Set up and use family meetings to your full advantage. Get input from each person on rules, curfews, etc. as well as the consequences of breaking rules.

8
Show intimacy. Teens are still kids inside; they need the warm feelings of belonging that come from good touches and hugs.

9
Give lots of praise and positive feedback. Teens need to hear the “good stuff” just like the rest of us. They need to know you love them for how they are inside, as well as what they can do.

10
Give them responsibilities with every privilege; that’s real life.

11
Teach them to make decisions and make them accept the consequences of each choice they make.

12
Teach them to deal with information. Teach them to think critically about what they see or hear, as well as how to sort out and prioritize information.

13
Take time to relax and have fun with them. Teens need positive ways to manage stress; enjoying each other will build lifetime relationships.

14
Make them earn what they want, and know the difference between wants and needs. Instant gratification does not teach life skills.

Adapted from, “14 Tips on Teens” by Evelyn Petersen, ParentTalk Newsletter

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