

Five Steps for Parenting Teens

1. Create a safe and interesting environment

Trying to motivate your teen maybe easier said than done. When they do find something they like to do - perhaps baking or mechanics - make sure they understand safety and are well versed on the tools they will be using.

It's also good to encourage teenagers to be involved in organized activities away from home. Go the first time to make sure the activity is well supervised. There is nothing wrong with knowing where your teenager is, who they are with and what they are doing.

2. Have a positive learning environment

Let your teen know that their opinions and ideas are being heard and valued. Teach them the skills to make well informed decisions. Start with something small like activities during your vacation and gradually move to decisions that will have more of an impact on their lives. Your teen still wants your approval. Don't forget to praise them when they do something you like - that will go a long way.

3. Use assertive discipline

When it comes to rules, you and your teenager need to decide together which rules and responsibilities you consider important to your family. Also discuss the rewards too – the privileges that they can enjoy in return.

Expect to compromise - on both sides - and go back to make some adjustments if need be. Being clear on the expectations and consequences will lessen the chance of conflict when the rules are broken.

4. Have realistic expectations

With your child growing up right before your eyes, you may want to talk with other parents to find out what is happening in their homes. Helping your teen learn how to deal with temptations will provide you with ease of mind when you give them more freedom. And don't forget that nobody's perfect. You and your teen will both make mistakes so don't get too frustrated or upset. You will both learn from it.

5. Take care of yourself as a parent

Raising teenagers is not easy so it is important to look after your own needs. Make sure you are getting some support, companionship, intimacy, and exercise if possible. You will find parenting is so much easier when you make time for yourself. It's all about balance!

