



Resource 9

Preparing for the Teen Years

Consider using some of these ideas with your adolescent or teenage children who are going through the difficult stages of becoming young adults.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Share your values with your teens. Let them know what's really important to you and help them clarify their own values.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't fight the small stuff. Minimize the number of household rules, but stick to the ones you do set. Save major power plays for issues that compromise health and safety or important values, like drinking, drugs and sex.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep communications honest and open, listening to what's really going on before jumping to conclusions. Be ready for those unexpected in-between times when your teen wants to talk in the car, doing the dishes or at bed time. That's when real closeness develops.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid the "20-questions" approach to conversation, which teens find intrusive. At this stage, privacy is very important to them. Instead engage in open-ended conversations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	As teens try to separate from their childish selves, they sometimes feel that your existence is an embarrassment. Don't take it personally... and do drop them off a block from school or the mall and save your hugs and kisses for private times.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teens sometimes try on behaviors and roles the way we try on clothes. Although it can be scary to watch, these new personas usually don't last long.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Even though it's tempting to be your teen's friend, it's much more important to be the parent, setting reasonable limits and being a force of stability in their lives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tell teens they can use you as the "bad-guy" excuse for declining to participate in activities that make them feel uncomfortable. That way, they know you're cool, but they can pretend you're not.
<input type="checkbox"/>	When offering advice, don't expect a positive response; you're more likely to see irritation or disgust. It's important to know, however, that much of what you say is absorbed anyway, waiting to come out.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage teens to exercise and develop their problem-solving and decision making skills by helping them evaluate potential choices and responses to situations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain perspective, being careful not to over-parent and over-manage on the one hand, or to under-parent and under-support on the other.

Source: Parents Place, www.ParentsPlaceOnline.org