

Parenting Teens

Normal Yet Frustrating Behavior

- Criticize parents and realize parents aren't perfect
- Less affection towards parents
- Complain that parents interfere too much
- May act rude and mouthy
- Shutting parents out
- Don't want to cooperate
- Become secretive or lie

Insecurities Surface

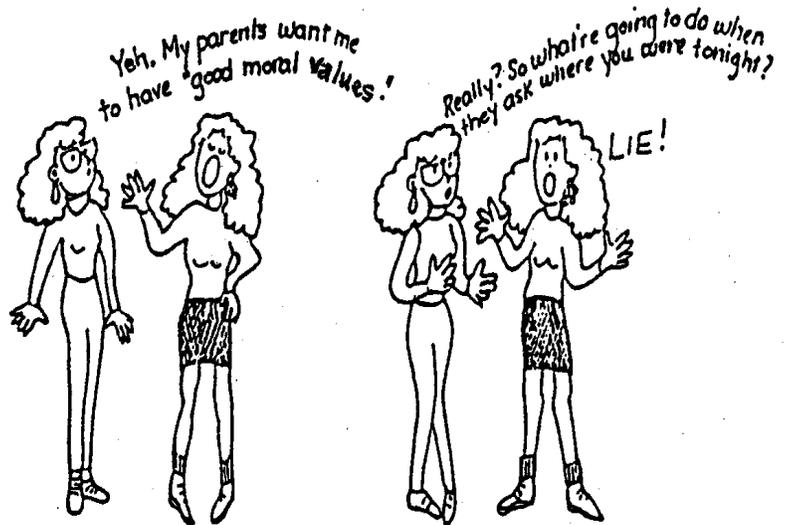
- May need lots of reassurance
- May be self-critical
- Moodiness
- Will think things aren't fair
- Will feel hurt or left out of family
- Struggle with their identity
- May return to childish behaviours

Naughty Parental Behaviors

- Over-coercion – Nagging
- Over-protection
- Too much control
- Perfectionism
- Over-indulgence
- Permissive

Helpful Strategies

- Stay calm and ignore verbal flak.
- Try not to take their behavior to heart, increase your self-care and find your happy place.
- Listen without lecturing, advice giving, moralizing, judging – just imagine how they feel and try to put that and what their saying into words
- Use non-judgmental language (I Statements)
- Get clear with kid issues and family issues
- Give positive and specific praise whenever you can, "I appreciate you coming home when you said you would." or "Thanks for hearing my concerns."
- Negotiate and help your kids be honest by not over-reacting.
- Avoid harsh punishment
- Try to find interesting things to do with your teen – time together counts.



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Use this checklist of listening do's and don'ts to help develop your awareness of ineffective patterns that might creep into exchanges with your child.

Listening Don'ts		Listening Do's	
	I took over while my child was speaking?		I paid attention with body language and honest interest?
	I asked questions other than to clarify?		I focused on understanding the content of the message being expressed?
	I gave advice, made suggestions, and passed on my infinite knowledge?		I paid attention to body language and the tone of voice to enhance my capacity to be empathetic?
	I minimized my child's feelings?		I reflected back content and feelings by being active as a listener?
	I evaluated my child by blaming or praising?		I addressed the needs that were being expressed without taking over?

Step 1:

Make an Observation: Describe only what you can see or hear. An observation is something that could be recorded with a video camera. Keep it brief and leave judgment, exaggerations, opinions and blame out of it!
(example: It is 6:00, I expected you home at 5:00)

Step 2:

State how you felt about it. Not what you think!
(example: I felt worried and scared and now I feel kind of angry!)

Step 3:

What you need based on that feeling. Be careful that you don't make a request here of the other person.

(example: It is important to me that I know where you are to keep you safe.)

Step 4:

Make a request of the other person. A request means that you are prepared to hear a "no" a demand means that you aren't. If you hear a "no" it may be time to move onto conflict resolution.

(example: Please call me if you are going to be late.)

Teens, Money and Chores

Teens feel they need money and lots of it! Parents need to have a bottom line in place to eliminate arguments about money. Every child from 4 to 12 should receive a basic allowance. As they move up into the teen years they want more independence and more money.

This is the time to give your teen a larger allowance, but insist that she use it to pay for some things that you have previously paid for, such as clothing. You will no longer buy her clothing; it has to come out of the allowance. Decide what financial responsibilities you can slowly turn over to your teen. She may need an entertainment budget, a clothing budget, and a bit of a cushion for CD's and stuff. Sit down with your teen and find out what is reasonable. You will find that you spend less if you come up with a budget because you aren't bailing kids out if they blow their money on dumb things.

The chart below shows an example of how one family divides up the financial responsibility. The left-hand column contains items the parent pays for. The right-hand column contains items the teen pays for out of her allowance. Missing are items the teen may need to earn extra money for by doing extra chores. This is just an example, and every family is different.

Parents' Responsibility:

Food
School clothes in September
School material
Internet access
Friends' birthday gifts

Teen's Responsibility:

Eating out
Clothes through the year.
Makeup, bike accessories
Some entertainment
Family gifts

What do you want your teen to take responsibility for?

Parent's Responsibility:

Teen's Responsibility:

Childhood is a time when children are protected to some extent by their parents from the harsh realities of adult life. One of these realities is that money has to be earned. As children move towards adulthood, they need to learn about this reality. The allowance should cover only basics, and the young teen should have

opportunities, both at home and outside the home (baby-sitting, paper route) to earn money for extras such as video games or CDs.

If a teen is working hard in school, contributes chores to the family, and spends a considerable time on his schoolwork, it is reasonable not to require him to earn his money for basic necessities either inside or outside the home. However, if he is over 16, not in school, and is living at home, it is reasonable to expect him to earn more of his living allowance through a job outside the home. This teaches him the reality that life does not pamper you forever, and you have to earn what you live on. This lesson, although hard for some parents to give, does him a favour for his adult future.

Does your teen need to learn that money has to be earned?

If your teen needs to learn that money has to be earned, what do you need to do to teach her this lesson?

