

Reducing Emotion

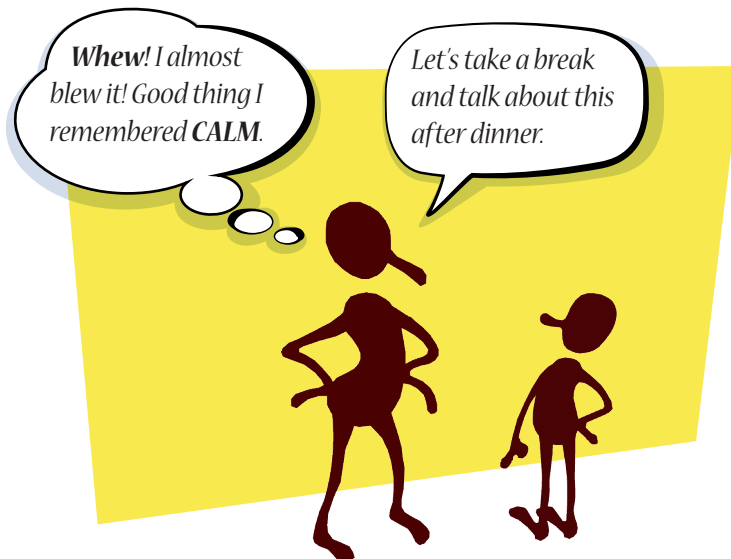
Sometimes talking with teens brings up strong feelings that interfere with clear thinking. Following the **CALM** steps can help a parent keep the conversation moving in the right direction.

Control your thoughts and your actions.

Assess and decide if you are too upset to continue.

Leave the situation if you are feeling too angry or upset.

Make a plan to deal with the situation within 24 hours.



Before you begin...



- Have a plan
- Gather your thoughts before you approach your student
- Be calm and patient
- Limit distractions

Extra Tips

- Be present and tuned in.
- Show understanding.
- Listen with respect.
- Act interested.
- Avoid negative emotions.
- Give encouragement.

Communication

Helps Parents

Catch Problems Early

Support Positive Behavior

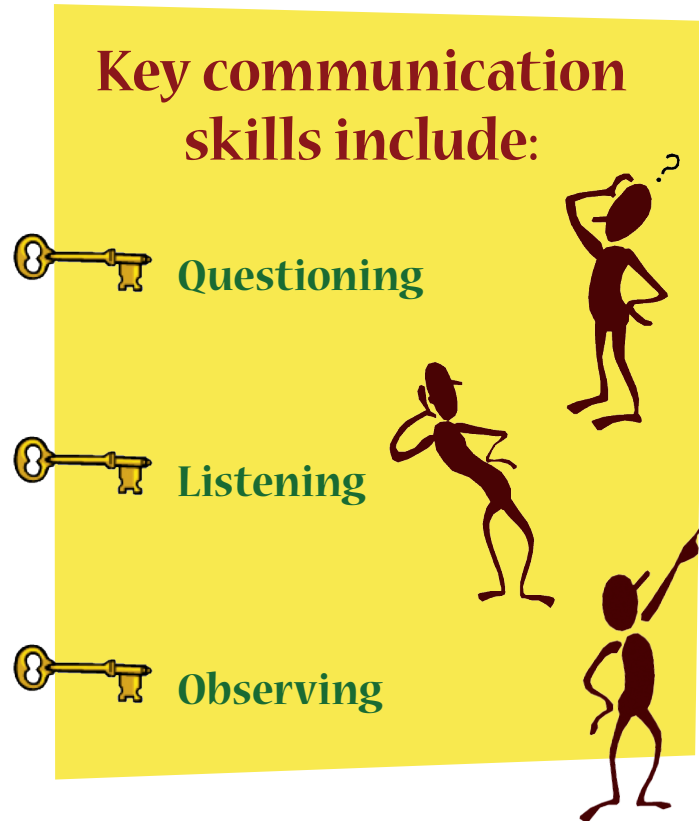
Stay Informed



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Communication Skills

Good communication between parents and teens is the foundation of strong family relationships. Developing good communication skills helps parents stay aware of what is happening in their teens' lives.



But first...

Be sure that it's a good time to talk and you can focus 100% on communicating with your student.

Questioning

Parents can get good information from their teens by asking questions. Be aware that the kind of information you receive depends a lot on how you ask!



- Questions that:**
- Show interest /concern
 - Use a pleasant tone of voice
 - Come at a good time
 - Encourage problem solving/ thinking
- **Encourage Communication!**



- Questions that:**
- Blame/accuse
 - Use a negative tone of voice
 - Come at a bad time
- **Stop Communication!**

Listening & Observing

Listening with patience and understanding strengthens trust and respect between students and parents. It also helps parents stay involved by keeping informed. It helps spot problems early. Students feel more comfortable bringing issues and situations to their parents when they know they will be listened to and not be accused.



Encouraging Words

Having a collection of encouraging statements helps you use them consistently:

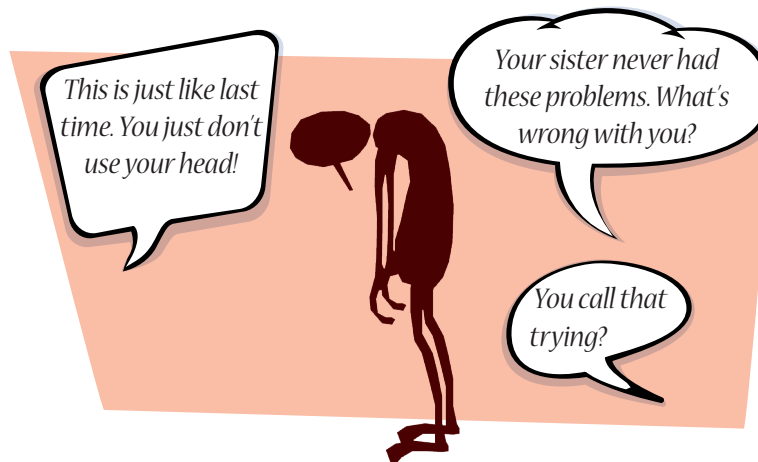
I know that wasn't easy
You did a lot of work today
You did such an awesome job
That's coming along nicely
You can do it
Keep on trying
You are very good at that
You are learning a lot
You can get it
You figured that out quickly
You remembered
I like the way you did that
I can tell you've been practicing
That was an excellent choice
It's great to see you working so hard
I'm so proud of you
You go, girl

Nice Work!



Practices that are Discouraging

- Being sarcastic or negative about your teen's ability to be successful
- Comparing a teen to brothers and sisters
- Taking over when a teen's progress is slow
- Reminding your teen of past failures



Extra Tips

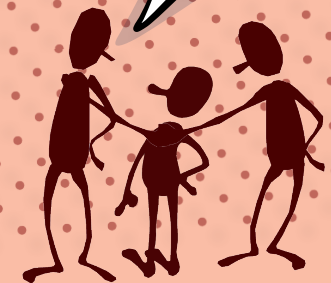
- Encourage your teen daily.
- Be specific in your praise.
- Be patient.
- Be tolerant of failures.

Encouragement Helps Parents

Be More Positive

Promote Cooperation

Reduce Conflict



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A Kind Word Goes a Long Way

Encouragement is key to building confidence and a strong sense of self. Many successful people remember the encouragement of a parent, teacher, or other adult. Consistent encouragement helps teens feel good about themselves and gives them confidence to:

- Try new activities
- Develop new friendships
- Explore their creativity
- Tackle difficult tasks

Encouragement promotes a strong sense of self because it sends three main messages to your student:

1. You can do it!
2. You have good ideas!
3. You are important!

**You
can do it!**

Teens believe they can do things if parents:

- Remind them of past successes
- Help them break a problem down into smaller parts
- Remind them of their strengths
- Encourage them by sharing how they have dealt with challenges

**You
have good ideas!**

Students believe they have good ideas if parents:

- Ask them for input concerning family plans and events
- Ask them for ideas to solve family problems
- Ask them to share their opinions and feelings
- Listen to what they have to say

**You
are important!**

Teens feel important when parents:

- Make time for them each day
- Attend school and extracurricular activities
- Let them know that you are thinking about them when you can't be with them
- Remember what they have told you
- Display things they have made and recognitions they receive from school or the community

Congratulations!

You did it!

*You're off to a
great start!*

Hang in there!

Keep it up!

Barriers and Strategies ... at School

Barrier:

My work schedule makes it hard for me to keep in contact with teachers.

Strategy:

Call the teachers and share your scheduling problem.

Usually teachers will accommodate your schedule.



Barrier:

Teen does not always bring classroom information home.

Strategy:

Ask teachers to mail, email, or leave a message at your workplace with information.

Extra Tips

- Find out about resources available at your school.
- Check in regularly with teachers.
- Talk to your student for at least 10 minutes a day.
- Monitor assignments daily.

Barriers and Strategies ... at Home

Barrier:

I have other children or a small home, and providing a quiet place on a regular basis is difficult.

Strategy:

The bedroom can be the quiet place, off limits to brothers and sisters during homework time.

Barrier:

Sometimes I come home too upset or tired to want to follow a daily routine.

Strategy:

Take 15 minutes to yourself to relax and gather your thoughts so you can show your student that the routine is important.



Extra Tips

- Be calm and focused.
- Start with small, clear goals.
- Encourage your teen's efforts daily.
- Use incentives for reaching goals.

Improving Home-School Communication

Helps Parents

Communicate Regularly with Teachers

Support Daily Efforts

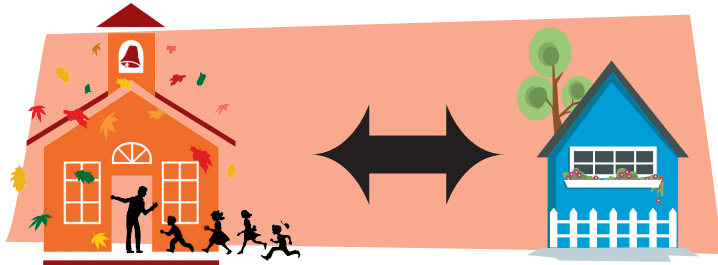
Encourage Academic Success



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Strong home-school communication

promotes teens' school success and feelings of self-worth. School success helps adolescents prepare for life success.



For School Success . . .

Teens need to:

- Be prepared
- Pay attention
- Ask questions
- Respect others
- Be involved in learning
- Follow school rules

Parents can help by:

- Setting up routines at home and at school
- Building relationships with teachers
- Following a daily checklist

Setting Up for Success

At Home

- Establish a weekly routine.
- Have a daily study time.
- Have a quiet place with good lighting and study materials.
- Check homework log.
- Talk about the importance of education.



At School

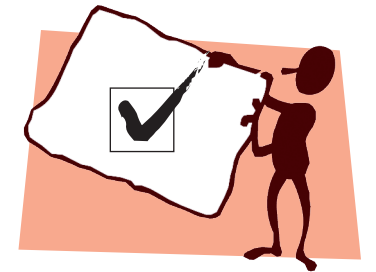
- Know your teen's schedule.
- Meet all of your teen's teachers each term.
- Know teachers' expectations for classroom behavior.
- Know teachers' expectations for homework.



Making a Daily Checklist

Have I . . .

- Checked on what my student has for homework?
- Talked with my teen about classes, experiences, and friends?
- Encouraged efforts and successes?
- Asked if my student needs help with anything?
- Looked at completed assignments?



Peer Influence

Teens do not always make wise choices in picking friends. Help them see what qualities they should value in friends:



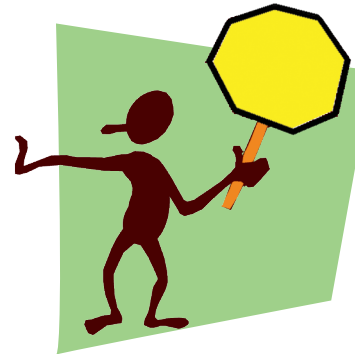
To decrease negative peer influence, spend time together. Try these ideas:

- Play board/outdoor games.
- Read with your teen.
- Tell family stories.
- Include your teen in social/cultural events in the community.
- Include your teen's friends in family activities.
- Encourage your teen's interests (drawing, scientific curiosity, music, cooking...)

Should I Be Concerned?

When is it time to talk to your teen about negative peer influence? When you become concerned about changes in your teen's behavior, such as:

- Spending time with friends you don't know
- Changes in speech and attitude
- Changes in school-work
- Lying and sneaking around



Extra Tips

- Observe, don't react—it may pass.
- Be patient.
- Keep lines of communication open.
- Share your interests with your teen.

Knowing Your Teen's Friends and Peers

Helps Parents

Improve Communication

Reduce Conflict

Teach Responsibility



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Parental Influence

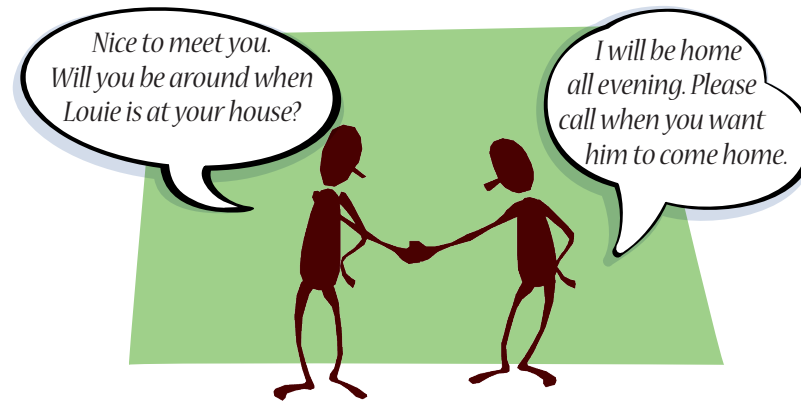
Adolescence is a period of major growth and change. Teens tend to be uncertain about themselves and how they “fit in.” At times they can feel overwhelmed by a need to please and impress their friends. These feelings can leave students open to peer pressure. They need their parents to help them make good choices.

You can help your teen and increase your influence by:

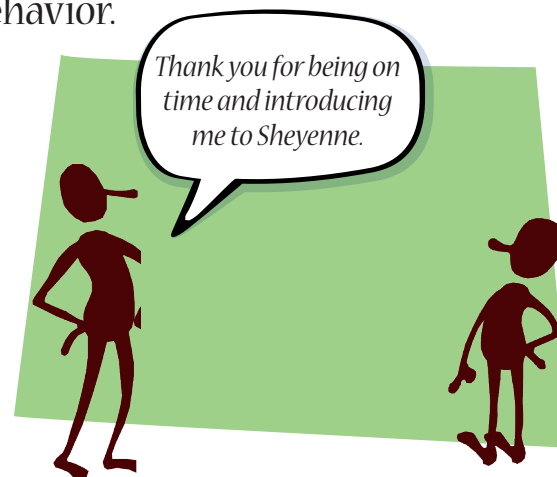
- Knowing your student’s friends in the neighborhood and at school
- Staying involved in your student’s activities
- Talking to your student when a concern comes up

The amount of peer influence and the amount of parental involvement can make a difference in the choices your teen makes.

Knowing Your Teen’s Friends in the Neighborhood and at School



- Communicate with friends and their parents whenever possible.
- Observe behaviors, speech, and attitude.
- Go to school, pick up your student, observe hallway behavior and who your student spends time with at school.
- Acknowledge and encourage positive behavior.



Staying Involved

Your teen is easily influenced at this age.

Do:

- Help your student understand his/her feelings.
- Discuss your teen’s new ideas.



- Be responsible for sex and drug information.
- Share your values and beliefs; it gives your teen a base to work from.

Try to avoid:

- Criticizing or putting down your student’s friends on the basis of their appearance.
- Giving feedback or discipline in front of their friends.

Problem-Solving

"Do's"

When:

- An unemotional time, not in the middle of a problem. Catch problems early, before you have become upset.
- Have a regular time that family members can bring problems up for discussion.

Where:

- A neutral place in the house, such as a living room instead of a bedroom
- A place with the fewest distractions: no TV or phone

How:

- Sit together for at least 15 minutes.
- When bringing up the problem:
 - Be specific
 - State the problem neutrally
 - Recognize the other person's positive behavior
 - Accept part of the responsibility for the problem
- When listening to a description of the problem:
 - Restate what you hear
 - Show understanding
 - Stop if you get too upset

Problem-Solving

"Don'ts"

These are common traps that families can fall into when trying to make changes and solve problems.



1. **Don't try to solve hot issues.**
2. **Don't blame the other person or put the other person down.**
3. **Don't defend yourself—try to let it go.**
4. **Don't talk about intentions.**

Reading into the behavior of another person and making assumptions keeps that person in a box of old behavior.
5. **Don't bring up the past.**

Avoid using words such as "always" and "never."
6. **Don't lecture.**

A simple statement will get your point across better.

Problem Solving

Helps Parents

Make Change

Promote Cooperation

Improve Cooperation



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A Problem-Solving Approach

Family problem solving offers a way to work together to make changes and deal with problems.

Family problem solving teaches teens:

- How to focus on solutions rather than problems
- How to think through possible outcomes of behavior
- How to develop communication skills



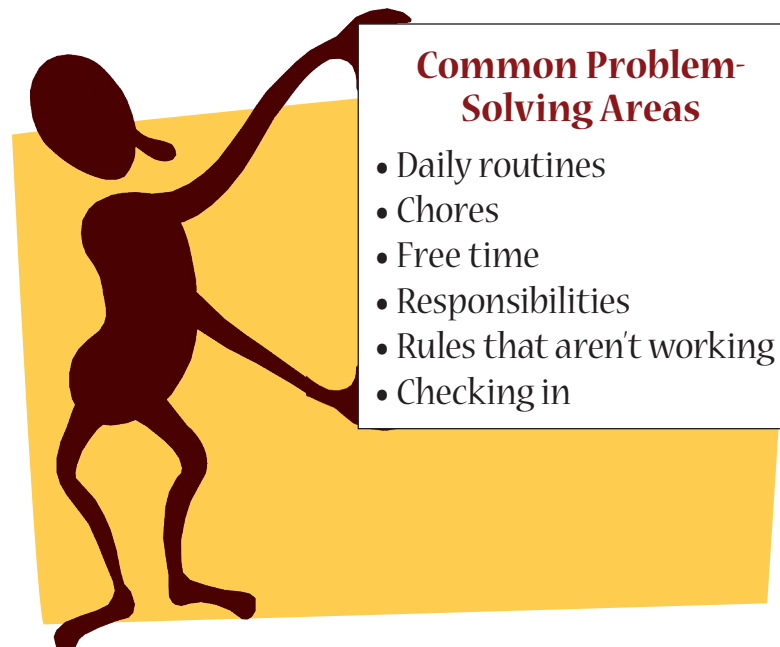
Parents and teens should work together on problem solving.

- Take turns bringing up problems.
- Try combining ideas.
- Encourage your student's ideas and accept his or her feedback.

Set Up for Success

Picking a problem:

Parents should decide what situations or issues to problem solve as a family. Choose problems that are small and specific!



Before bringing up a problem:

- Choose a place with the fewest distractions
- Have at least 15 minutes set aside
- Remind yourself of the do's, don'ts, and problem-solving steps
- Bring a pencil and paper

The Steps to Problem Solving

1. Brainstorm—open your mind to all ideas:

- Try to come up with three ideas each.
- Any idea is good—even ones that seem silly.
- Take turns coming up with ideas.



2. Evaluate your list of ideas:

- Go through and list the pluses and minuses of each idea.
- Cross off ideas that don't have pluses.

3. Choose a solution:

- Combine ideas if needed.
- All of you should agree on the chosen solution.

4. Follow up:

- Check in with each other after you have tried your solution a couple of times to see how it is working.
- If it isn't working, go back to your list of ideas.
- If necessary, start over with brainstorming some more.

Testing Limits

Testing limits is a natural part of growing up, but it presents a special challenge for parents. Often our first reactions may come from fear for our teen's safety, or anger at being disobeyed. The **SANE** guidelines can help parents establish appropriate consequences when students break rules.



Small consequences are better

Avoid consequences that punish you

Nonabusive to teen

Effective consequences (are under your control and nonrewarding to teen)

Students may get angry, act out, or isolate when parents enforce consequences. Your teen is testing you and your limits. Don't react. Be consistent with your rules.



Ideas for Consequences

- Added chores/work
- Loss of privileges (restricted phone/cell use, playing video games, using the Internet, visiting friends)
- Send to room (if nonrewarding)
- No extra activities (sports, movies, out-of-town trip)

Extra Tips

- Catch the problem early.
- State the limit and the consequence clearly.
- Avoid arguing and threats.
- Remember to use a firm and calm tone of voice.
- Follow through each time a limit is stretched or a rule is broken.
- Offer encouragement each time a rule is followed.

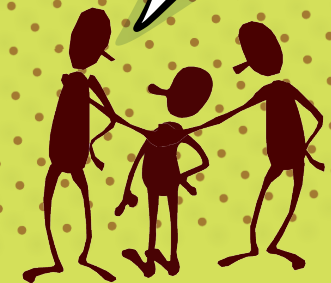
Setting Limits

Helps Parents

Teach Self-Control and Responsibility

Show Caring

Provide Safe Boundaries



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Setting Rules

Setting Limits gives teens guidelines to follow and teaches them that following rules is important for their success in life. This is a two-step process:

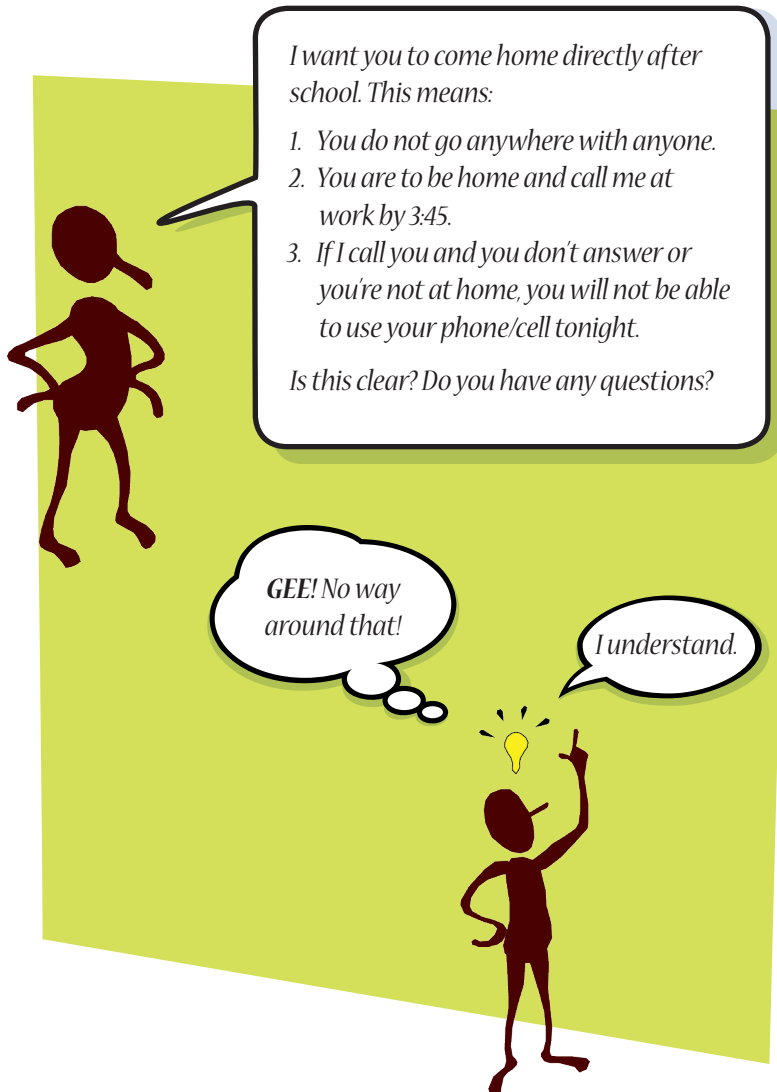
Step 1: Setting Rules

- Make clear simple rules.
- Make sure your student understands your rules.
- Have a list of consequences.
- Be ready to follow through.

Step 2: Following Up

Research shows that parents are most effective in setting limits when they follow up right away.

- Give a consequence when rules are broken.
- Offer encouragement when rules are followed.



Following Up

Teens are more likely to follow rules if they know you are checking up on them. Being consistent with your consequences teaches students that they need to follow your rules consistently.

When your guidelines and directions are ignored, consequences are an effective tool to teach teens that following rules is important. The chances of correcting a problem increase if you catch it early and are consistent.



Consistency

Supervision is most effective when parents set clear limits and follow through with consequences for misbehavior. Also, be consistent with giving praise and incentives when a rule is followed.

How do you supervise when you are not at home?

- Know your student's schedule.
- Call your teen at varying times.
- Have your teen check in with you or other caregivers when he or she reaches home.
- Have your student check in when he or she reaches his or her destination.
- Surprise your teen with a random visit or call.
- Remain in communication with adults who interact with your student.



Remember ... Consistency Is the Key!



Extra Tips

- Know who your teen's friends are.
- Observe your student with his or her friends.
- Talk to the parent(s) of your teen's friends.
- Watch your student interact with others.
- Spend time listening to your teen.
- Stay involved.

Supervision Helps Parents

**Recognize
Developing
Problems**

**Promote
Safety**

**Stay
Involved**

A stick figure family consisting of two adults and a child is shown at the bottom of the graphic. The adults are on either side of the child, and they are all holding hands.A small, stylized house with a red roof and a yellow body is located at the bottom left of the graphic.

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Clear Rules

Supervision is the centerpiece of effective parenting during the adolescent years. When teens begin to spend more and more time away from home, monitoring their behavior and whereabouts is challenging.



The 4 Cs of supervision can help you with this difficult task:

- **Clear Rules**
- **Communication**
- **Checking Up**
- **Consistency**

Have a few non-negotiable rules about your student's behavior and state them clearly!

For example:

- "Give me a phone number for any place you will be."
- "I need 24-hour notice for spending the night or going to a party, dance, or other special event." (This gives you time to check out the event.)
- "No friends at the house when I am not at home."

Communication

Regular communication with other parents and teachers

- Keeps you involved in your teen's activities
- Builds a strong safety network for your student
- Informs you of dangerous places or people
- Creates resources to deal with problems



Checking Up

Checking up lets your teen know that you care about his or her safety and that your rules are important.

This is hard for some of us because we want to trust our students and they may resist our efforts.

- When your student gives you the phone number of a friend, call it and talk to the parent.
- Meet all the parents of your student's friends to make sure new situations are safe and supervised.
- Find out about the parties and special events your student wants to attend to make sure that responsible adults will be supervising.

