

## Family Focus

### Top Ten Tips for Parenting Teens...

**Practice 'active' listening.** It builds trust. By listening attentively and acknowledging what your teen is saying, you will better understand their point of view.

**Encourage independent thought and expression.** To build a healthy sense of self. In doing so, you'll encourage your teen to think for themselves and problem solve.

**Formalize expectations by communicating clear rules.** This includes assigning consequences for breaking rules and rewards for following them.

**Recognize your teen's independence.** As teens learn about the world around them, they become more independent and develop their own individuality. This means spending less time with family and more time with friends.

**Create family times around activities that your teen enjoys.** A shared interest can open up the lines of communication.

**Pick your battles wisely.** Your job is to ensure that the really important rules are followed. Avoid small battles (such as your teen's hairstyle) and focus on matters that are really important, such as "No drugs or alcohol."

**Openly talk.** To teens about the things that can harm them including drugs, drinking and driving, or premarital sex. Your teen needs to know what can happen.

**Include your teen in decision-making.** Not only do teens respond better to change when they are involved in decision making, it also helps them to develop the necessary skills they need to become responsible adults.

**Be a role model.** How you view the world around you can make a lasting impression on your teen. Your teen is more likely to adopt your own values when they see you living by them.

**Praise your teen when they make a good decision or do a good job.** People of all ages respond to praise. Practice 'active' listening. It builds trust. By listening attentively and acknowledging what your teen is saying, you will better understand their point of view.