

KEEP

Keeping Families Supported

Parent Handouts
KEEP SAFE

Please note: Most of the handouts in this packet are single-sided, but several are double-sided. Accordingly, blank pages have been inserted to enable double-sided printing of the entire file.

December 2022

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Welcome and Overview—Summary

1. Group Purpose and Guidelines

A. Purpose

KEEP SAFE groups have a few main purposes.

Support

Parenting can be complicated and a tough job under the best of circumstances. We know that some teens in your homes may have come from troubling situations. We can support each other by:

- sharing successes and positive experiences
- talking about difficulties and frustrations
- discussing ways to solve problems

KEEP SAFE is Trauma-Informed

Numerous studies show that a safe, predictable, and nurturing home environment, along with positive parenting, can help reverse the effects of trauma. KEEP SAFE is a trauma-informed model that promotes positive attachments. In KEEP SAFE, we focus on parenting skills you can use to provide safety and predictability along with support and encouragement for the teens in your homes.

New Skills

Parenting skills that you have relied on with your own children and teens may not work with the challenging behavior that some teens have. We will be looking at skills you can use to get you over the rough spots as smoothly as possible.

B. Guidelines

We hope the idea of getting support and learning new skills is an exciting one to you. We also hope that everyone will feel comfortable enough in the group to share experiences and give support to each other. In order for everyone to get the most out of

our time together, it's necessary to establish a few basic guidelines.

1. Confidentiality—what is said in the group stays in the group (including teens' names)
2. Assume good intentions. Each parent is here because they have a teen that they want to support.
3. Listen to each other and offer encouragement and support.
4. Share talk time; give everyone a chance to talk.
5. Be respectful of cultural differences.

2. PDR

There is a telephone interview that you will be doing on a regular basis. It is called the Parent Daily Report, or "PDR" for short. The questions will ask you about yesterday—from the time your teen got up to when they went to bed.

The PDR is...

- a tool to keep track of teen behavior
 - a tool to record progress and challenges
1. How is it useful?
 - a) It helps us provide additional support for you as we learn more about what your days are like.
 - b) It provides us all an overall picture of your teen's behavior that can help determine patterns and other important information.
 - c) It helps us catch challenging behaviors when they are small, when it is easier to work on them.
 2. The most important thing to remember about PDR is that there are no judgments being made about your parenting. There are no right or wrong answers to PDR. It's just about what you're experiencing.
 3. Once a week one of us will call you to get the PDR data. This will take about 5 to 10 minutes.

3. Four Key Roles of Foster/Kin Parents

As we all know, parenting can be a complex job, especially being a foster or kin parent. The curriculum that we are using in this group has been used with many groups. There has been quite a bit of research on KEEP and it has been shown to be very effective.

Focus groups with KEEP foster and kin parents discussed many roles that foster and kin parents have. The four main roles parents themselves identified are:

1. You are your teen's most important Teacher
2. You are also sometimes a Detective
3. You play the role of a Referee
4. We also see you as a Protector

4. Teens' Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Throughout KEEP SAFE we will be talking about how to increase your teens' success in life, both now and in the future. We will do this by teaching them new skills and by helping them to change negative habits.

5. Home Practice

This week the home practice is about noticing your teen's strengths and areas for improvement, building on our discussion today. During the week, fill out the sheet and bring it back next week.

GROUP GUIDELINES

Confidentiality—what is said in the group stays in the group.

Assume good intentions. Each parent is here because they have a teen that they want to support.

Listen to each other and offer encouragement and support.

Share talk time; give everyone a chance to talk.

Be respectful of cultural differences.

Parent Name: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Teen Name: _____

Group: _____

Parent Daily Report (13+)

Did your teen do any of the following behaviors yesterday?

| 0 – Did not occur | | 1 – Yes, but not stressful | | 2 – Yes, and stressful | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|-------|--|
| TEEN BEHAVIOR | | SCORE | | TEEN BEHAVIOR | | SCORE | |
| 1 | Anxious or worried | | | 20 | Jealous | | |
| 2 | Argue | | | 21 | Lie | | |
| 3 | Ask repetitive questions | | | 22 | Nervous or jittery | | |
| 4 | Back talk | | | 23 | Pout | | |
| 5 | Competitive | | | 24 | Run away | | |
| 6 | Complain | | | 25 | School problems | | |
| 7 | Cruel to animals | | | 26 | Skip school | | |
| 8 | Cry | | | 27 | Sleep problems | | |
| 9 | Daydream | | | 28 | Sluggish | | |
| 10 | Defy | | | 29 | Soil | | |
| 11 | Depressed or sad | | | 30 | Stay out late | | |
| 12 | Destructive | | | 31 | Steal | | |
| 13 | Fearful | | | 32 | Swear | | |
| 14 | Fight | | | 33 | Tease or provoke | | |
| 15 | Hyperactive or short attention span | | | 34 | Use drugs or alcohol | | |
| 16 | Inappropriate sexual behavior | | | 35 | Wet | | |
| 17 | Interrupt | | | 36 | Whine | | |
| 18 | Irresponsible | | | 37 | Yell | | |
| 19 | Irritable | | | | | | |

RATE YOUR DAY

1 – 10

August 2021

Four Key Roles of Foster and Kinship Parents

TEACHER

Parents are the most important teachers.

You teach how to succeed, what is important, what is real.

Parents might teach skills at different levels to different teens.

DETECTIVE

You identify strengths.

You observe their behavior.

You find out information to help solve problems.

REFEREE

You make the rules.

You make the game safe to play.

You set limits and follow through.

PROTECTOR

You provide warmth, nurturing, and care.

You help and support teens through difficult situations.

You watch over your teen's development and relationships.

Teen Strengths and Areas for Improvement

A. List some of the key strengths that your teen has going for them:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. What are some of the things your teen likes to do (interests)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. What areas could your teen improve upon?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples of Teen Strengths

- Has a sense of humor
- Is thoughtful
- Helps with the dog
- Gets along with others
- Notices when people need help
- Makes bed every morning
- Reads to or plays with younger children in the home
- Is a good friend
- Self-motivated to help without being asked
- Sociable
- Positive attitude toward others in home
- Helps clean up after a meal
- Does homework without reminding
- Completes chores that they are asked to do

The Importance of Cooperation—Summary

1. Pro-Social Opposites

One way to improve teens' behaviors is to focus on behaviors that we want to see more of. We call this behavior the "pro-social opposite." The pro-social opposite is just the behavior we want to see more of instead of the challenging behavior. When defining the target behaviors you have for your teen, it is important to be clear and specific.

2. Cooperation and Minding

One of the main things we want to encourage is cooperation.

Why is it important to teach cooperation?

Being cooperative will help your teen be accepted by others. Generally, peers, teachers, and other adults like teens better who are cooperative. Teens who are cooperative and accepted by others tend to...

- feel good about themselves
- have confidence to try new things
- be better prepared to meet new demands

What exactly is cooperation?

Cooperation is a skill and you can teach it, but first let's agree on what it is. Generally, it is the same thing as minding. You can think about most challenging behaviors as not minding, and most cooperative behavior as minding. If you have a set of rules in your home, minding would be following those rules. If you ask your teen to do something, minding would be doing it. Minding is simply doing what you are asked to or expected to do. When your teen minds, they are being cooperative.

If your teen responds to your request—the first time—within 10 to 15 seconds, that would be minding. If you had to ask more than once or it took longer than that, then they would not be minding.

How do you ask your teen to do something?

Many people don't think much about *how* they ask their teens to do things. When you are trying to teach your teen to mind, there are a few things you can do that will increase your chance of success.

1. **Get their attention.** Make sure they are paying attention to you before you tell them to do something. You can do this by calling their name or getting them to look at you. If you aren't sure you have their attention, you won't really know if they heard you.
2. When possible, **don't ask them to do something when they are deeply engaged in an activity.** For example, if they are watching their favorite TV show, it is going to be hard for them to stop and do something else. It isn't always an option to wait, but when it is something that could wait until the show was over, they will probably be more cooperative.
3. **Be clear and specific.** Try to be clear about what you are asking, so there is no misunderstanding. For example, if you want them to pick up their room, it would be better to say, "Johnny, pick up your clothes and put them where they belong," rather than, "Get busy on your room."
4. **Follow through.** If you ask your teen to do something and they do it—great! Acknowledge it. If you ask your teen to do something and they don't do it, don't keep repeating yourself over and over again. This only teaches them not to listen to you the first time. Give a consequence for not minding. At a later session, we'll look at some consequences you could give.

How often should you expect your teen to mind?

If you rated your teen's rate of cooperation on a scale of 0% to 100%, what would it be? Studies show that, in general, teens mind about 70% of the time. Expecting your teen to cooperate all of the time will only make everyone frustrated.

3. The Importance of Adult Attention

The key to encouraging cooperation and other positive behaviors is attention. We all like attention, and for teens it doesn't always matter if the attention is for a challenging behavior or a positive one. Think of it this way: "What you pay attention to, you get more of."

One way to make positive attention powerful is to be specific with praise:

- “Nice job on your room! Your clothes are put away, the bed is made, and you vacuumed.”
- “It was thoughtful of you to set the table and clean up the dishes.”
- “I sure appreciate when you are on time.”

Of course we all notice when teens do really great things, but how often do we let them know we notice the cooperative things they do day in and day out? It can take practice to learn to notice and follow through with specific praise about the ways teens are already cooperating.

4. The 5-to-1 Rule

We want to pay 5 times more attention to these positive behaviors as we do to challenging behaviors or making corrections. Said another way, make at least 5 positive statements for every 1 correction.

5. Home Practice

This week, we want you to practice observing your teen’s strengths and pro-social behavior. Fill out the Home Practice Observation Chart with one strength your teen already has, as well as the pro-social opposite of the behavior you want to change. In addition, every time you notice one of these positive behaviors, try to praise or acknowledge your teen with some positive word or gesture (thumbs up, pat on the back). Again, aim for a 5:1 ratio of praise to correction.

Behaviors to Encourage

Examples of behaviors to acknowledge and praise

- Did what was asked
- Did something without being told
- Worked or played quietly
- Shared something because they wanted to
- Was polite (“please” and “thank you”)
- Tried something new
- Used manners
- Offered to help
- Was cheerful
- Was sweet
- Thought of others
- Got up, got ready on time, on their own
- When asked to do something, gave responses like, “Yeah,” “Sure,” “No problem...”

Catch 'Em Being Good

Tips for praising teens

- **Be specific** about what your teen did well. Rather than just saying “Good job!” say, “You poured the kitty litter without any spills. Good job!”
- **Praise each small step** that contributes to achieving a larger goal. Example: “You made a good start on cleaning your room by picking up your clothes.”
- **Find some aspect of a task that your teen did well and comment** on that: “Hey. You started your homework on time. Good for you!”
- **It’s okay to give praise without perfection.**
- **Use positive facial expressions;** a smile can go a long way.
- **Use positive voice tones.**
- **Use non-verbal encouragement** such as a thumbs-up or high-five.
- **Avoid sarcasm.** Praise that encourages does not hurt.
- **Avoid adding a negative comment on the end of praise statements** (“Good job on the dishes. Why can’t you do that all the time, like your brother?”). A simple praise statement is more effective.
- **Praise soon after the positive behavior.**
- **Base your praise on your teen’s behavior,** not because you feel guilty.
- **Use the when-then principle.** When your teen starts following your direction, *then* they receive the praise.
- **Catch your teen in the act** of doing something well and praise them!

Home Practice Observation Chart

In Box 1. Write down one strength your teen is already doing (like, “gets up on time”), and enter a check mark in each day of the week that they do this behavior.

In Box 2. Write down a pro-social behavior that you listed in last week’s home practice.

Example: If your teen does not do homework without being reminded several times:

Box 1. “Great sense of humor.”

Box 2. “Does homework without being told.”

Enter a check mark each day your teen does the desired behavior.

| | MON | TUES | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Strength: | | | | | | | |
| 2. Pro-social behavior for the area you want to improve: | | | | | | | |

House Rules and Pre-Teaching—Summary

1. House Rules

House rules help establish a safe environment and provide structure that makes teens feel secure. Having a specified set of rules enables you to be clear about your expectations.

- Be clear and specific;
- Keep the list short (a list of 5 rules is recommended); and
- Include the most important things.

Some areas that are important to consider when making your house rules include: whereabouts and associations, physical interaction, food, household routines, privacy, and technology.

2. Pre-Teaching

Another way to help teens be cooperative is to use pre-teaching. Pre-teaching is a really great tool that you can use in all kinds of different situations. You are probably already doing it without even realizing it. It involves clearly telling your teen your expectations before a situation that might be difficult. Some really common difficult situations are:

- Meeting new people
- Stopping an activity and putting your stuff in the car
- Being in a store
- Going over to a new person's home

The advantages of pre-teaching are:

- Pre-teaching sets your teen up for success
- It makes expectations clear
- It gives you and your teen an opportunity for practice
- It sets you up to notice success and reinforce it

- It gives you an opportunity to help your teen be safe in the home and in the community

The basic idea for pre-teaching is to identify the behavior that you want your teen to do, break skills down into small steps, and tell your teen the steps before you are in the situation. It can be helpful to tie a reward to your teen being compliant.

3. Home Practice

This week, use the handout to put together a list of clear house rules. We will use them next week. Try pre-teaching at least one time this week.

Ideas for House Rules

Whereabouts and Associations

- Home within ½ hour of when the school day ends
- Parent meets the friend before going out unsupervised
- Parent talks to friend's parents before staying over at a friend's house
- Parent knows where teen is
- How often should check-ins happen? (Is a text okay with you?)
- Keep bedroom doors open when friends are over

Physical Interaction

- Be gentle when playing
- No rough play (wrestling, play-fighting, etc.)

Food

- Ask before snacking
- Certain snacks (designate which ones) are available without permission
- Snacks can be eaten in the kitchen or dining room

Household Routines

- Laundry must be put in the hamper every day
- Shower every day
- Phones and computers can be used after homework and are turned in at night.

Privacy

- Bathrooms and bedrooms are private—knock before entering and wait for permission to enter
- Other family members' bedrooms are off-limits
- One person in the bathroom at a time

Technology

- Parents have access to teen's social media accounts
- Parents can check cell phones to see pictures and texts
- Parental controls on the internet or television

Remember, a short list of house rules (5 or fewer) works best.

House Rules

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |

Using Charts and Incentives with Teens, Part 1— Summary

1. Using Incentives

Incentives are a tool to encourage teens to cooperate and follow house rules. Encouragement is the most powerful method of teaching. Incentives can be privileges (things you already give your teen) or rewards (extra things you choose to add). They are only given after the behavior occurs, and they don't have to cost money. They tell your teen that they matter and that their effort was noticed and appreciated.

2. Informal and Formal Agreements

Sometimes it is helpful to use a “when-then” or informal agreement to explain expectations like house rules to teens. You probably already do this. For example:

- “When you finish your homework, then you can watch TV.”
- “When you fold the laundry, then you can go out with your friends.”

Sometimes it is helpful to write the house rules or expectations down and clearly outline the privileges that teens can have when they follow house rules and expectations. One way to do this is to use a chart or contract. This is a formal agreement.

3. Effective Charts and Contracts

You probably have very busy households. With so much going on, it is easy to get distracted and forget about the behaviors you are trying to change or improve. Charts and contracts are a really good way to stay on track and not lose focus of what you want to do. Using a chart or contract is a lot like using an organizer. Your teen can see clearly what you want them to do and when they should do it.

When you are setting up a new chart or contract, think “SMART.”

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| S mall Steps | What are the steps involved? |
| M easurable | What does it look like when it is done? |
| A chievable | Is your teen able to do it? Is it realistic? |
| R eward | What reward will be motivating? |
| T ime | When does it need to be done? |

4. Home Practice

Create a list of privileges that are already available in your home. It is helpful to list some that are available all the time and some that might be offered once a day or once a week.

Think about a behavior you want your teen to learn that you can put on a chart (house rule, routine, etc.).

Characteristics of Privileges and Rewards

- **Incentives (privileges and rewards) are well defined.** It is important that your teen understand exactly what is being offered in the privileges they earn.

For example, when offering “extra video game time” as an incentive, be clear how much time is being offered—15 minutes or 30 minutes? Can the time be used whenever your teen wants, or is there a specified time they can play the video game?

- **Effective incentives fit your teen’s level of interest and maturity.**
- **Make incentives interesting and motivating to your teen.** Being able to earn a special pair of shoes over time might be highly motivating for one teen, but hold no appeal for another.
- **Choose incentives that are affordable and readily available.**
- **Make sure the criteria for the incentive are realistic.** Break large tasks down into manageable steps and offer incentives for each step in the right direction. The right incentive can be a powerful motivator—but only when it is achievable.

Examples of Privileges and Rewards

- Choosing a special TV program
- Having shared bedroom to self for one hour a day
- Having first dibs on bathroom in the morning (for a specified amount of time)
- Video game time
- Privacy time
- Staying up half an hour later
- Having access to their cell phone
- Having a friend spend the night
- Keeping your room light on after bedtime
- Riding a bike
- Go fishing or hiking
- Go to friend's home
- Computer time
- Being taken out to a movie
- Going out for ice cream
- Going to park alone or with family
- Baking or cooking with family
- Shopping with family
- Choosing dessert
- A special activity with a family member (taking a walk, playing a game, shopping, etc.)

Other Ideas:

Morning Routine Chart Example for School Days

Name: Clara

| Responsibilities | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Up by 6:30 am | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bed made | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bathroom cleaned up | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Positive/helpful attitude | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Out the door by 8:15 am | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

Privileges:

Daily reward: When Clara earns a check for at least 4 responsibilities **including** positive/helpful attitude, she can earn:

- 1 hour of TV time in the evening
- Have her cell phone after homework until bedtime

Weekly reward: When Clara earns her privileges for at least 4/5 school days, she can choose:

- A movie with a friend
- Other:

Explanation:

In this example, because Clara's parents want her to improve her positive/helpful attitude, she must get a check for that responsibility in order to earn her daily reward. At the same time, they want to encourage the things she already does well like getting up on time and making her bed.

Privileges

List privileges that are available in your home. It is helpful to list some that are available all the time and some that might be offered once a day or once a week.

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |

Using Incentives and Charts with Teens: Part 2— Summary

1. Using Charts and Contracts

To teach a new behavior or reduce a challenging behavior takes time, consistency, and lots of practice. Here are some things to think about to help you put together a chart or contract:

- What is the behavior that you want to change or improve?
 - a. If it is a chore or routine, what are the steps to completing the chore?
 - b. If it is a behavior, what exactly is the behavior? If you are thinking about a challenging behavior, how would you say it positively—what do you want your teen to do?
- List three or four incentives that can be used, and at what point in the process the chore, routine, or behavior will be rewarded.

2. Introducing Charts/Contracts to Teens

When you are ready to tell your teen about using a new chart or contract, you will want to choose the right time and place. It also helps to:

1. Focus on the positives.
2. State your expectations clearly.
3. Ignore negative statements.
4. Tell your teen where you will keep the chart/contract.

Remember...

- Charts and contracts help parents remember to encourage the behavior they want to see more of.
- Parents are in control of the chart/contract.
- Charts and contracts are tools to help you use contingent reinforcement.

- A successful chart includes a behavior that the teen is already doing well, as well as a behavior that the parent would like to see the teen doing more of or better.
- You can revise/change what is on the chart or contract.
- It might take a few days for a teen to experience success with a chart.

3. Obstacles to Overcome

Sounds so easy, doesn't it? It would be—if we were all perfect. But, since we are all humans, you can bet there will be a few challenges.

- What to do if your teen doesn't earn the reward: Often, adults feel bad or responsible when this happens and want to give them the reward anyway. It is important to stay consistent and not give the reward if it is not earned. Use praise for the effort they have made and be positive about their ability to make the reward next time.
- What to do if your teen earns the reward one day and not the next: You might feel like they are not trying hard enough and it might make you discouraged or angry. Try not to give any attention for failing to earn the reward. What you pay attention to is likely to be what you get more of. If you pay attention to the failure you will probably get more failure. Stay positive. Express confidence that your teen can do it next time. "You didn't make it today, but I bet you can tomorrow."
- What to do if your teen has worked and made some effort but not enough to get the reward: Give praise or points/checkmarks for the steps they have accomplished and an encouraging statement like "I'll bet you'll make it tomorrow—you are trying very hard."
- What to do if your teen is not responding or says it is stupid: Follow through anyway and ignore their negative talk.
- What to do if your teen has so many challenging behaviors that it is hard to find things to encourage: In this case, it may be best to start off with one thing they are already doing well and another that they aren't doing well. For example, you may start off with a chart for getting up in the morning (which they are doing pretty consistently) and one for minding within 10 seconds (which they are not doing well). This way you build in some attention to positive behavior.

It is natural to focus on the challenging behavior—we all do it. While you are teaching your teen, you are also practicing learning a new behavior yourself. Ignoring some behaviors and giving attention to positive behaviors will take practice to be consistent.

Remember, teens will focus on what you focus on. If you only focus on the challenging behavior, you will probably get more of it. Be sure to give lots of encouragement too. There are studies that show that the best way to change a teen's behavior is to really tip the balance of positive to corrective statements. Remember, we recommend that for every corrective statement you make, you give 5 positive or encouraging statements (5:1).

4. Fine-Tuning Charts/Contracts

After you've been using a chart or contract for a little while, and especially if you aren't happy with your teen's progress, it is a good idea to step back and ask yourself a few questions.

- ✓ Did I check the behavior often enough? Does this have to happen once per day or more often?
- ✓ Was the behavior broken down into small enough steps so my teen could be successful?
- ✓ Did I encourage what had been accomplished?
- ✓ Did I provide an incentive if it was earned?
- ✓ Does anything need to be added or dropped to make the chart/contract better?

5. Home Practice

Introduce your chart or contract to your teen and use it. Keep using any informal (when-then) agreements you are already using.

Contract

When I:

- Get up by 6:30 am
- Make my bed
- Clean up the bathroom
- Have a positive/helpful attitude
- Get out the door by 8:15 am

Then I can:

- Stay up ½ hour later that night

Teen signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Contract

When I do:

Then I can:

Teen signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

When I do:

Then I can:

Signed:

Date:

Session 5 Handout

| Task | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | | |

Privilege Ideas:

Session 5 Handout

Name: _____

| Responsibilities | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

Privileges:

SCHOOL SUCCESS

GOALS:

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Track assignments in daily planner | | | | | |
| Start homework by 4:30 | | | | | |
| Ask parent for help if you need it | | | | | |
| Take completed assignments to school | | | | | |

PRIVILEGES:

SCHOOL SUCCESS

GOALS:

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
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PRIVILEGES:

LOOKIN' GOOD

| TASK | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| BRUSH TEETH | | | | | | | |
| ▶ MORNING | | | | | | | |
| ▶ EVENING | | | | | | | |
| TAKE A BATH/SHOWER | | | | | | | |
| ▶ USE SOAP | | | | | | | |
| ▶ RINSE OFF | | | | | | | |
| WASH HAIR | | | | | | | |
| ▶ USE SHAMPOO | | | | | | | |
| ▶ RINSE WELL | | | | | | | |

PRIVILEGES:

LOOKIN' GOOD

| TASK | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
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PRIVILEGES:

Session 5 Handout

Name:

Date:

| Chore or Behavior & Description | Time | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Incentives:

What I need to do

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

What I can earn: 1.
2.
3.

Session 5 Handout

Behaviors:

| | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
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Privileges:

Fine-Tuning Charts

- 1. Did I check the behavior often enough? Does this have to happen once per day or more often?**
- 2. Was the behavior broken down into small enough steps so my teen could be successful?**
- 3. Did I encourage what had been accomplished?**
- 4. Did I provide an incentive if it was earned?**
- 5. Does anything need to be added or dropped to make the chart/contract better?**

Setting Limits—Summary

1. Purpose of Setting Limits and Using Discipline

So far, we have focused on how to encourage your teens to behave the way you want them to. The key to addressing challenging behavior is the right combination of encouragement and discipline. Keep in mind that discipline discourages challenging behavior, and encouragement promotes positive behavior. Now, we are going to shift gears and talk about how to set limits and use discipline.

Setting limits is an important part of being a parent. When teens know what the limits are, they feel safer. As you know, teens in foster care may have had experiences that make them feel insecure or unsafe. They may have experienced lots of disruption and instability. It is especially important for teens with these histories to feel safe, and by setting limits you will be a part of that process. That doesn't mean they won't test the limits. They will. It is important to be clear about what the limits are, be firm when they test the limits, and use effective discipline to enforce the limits. Through your consistency, your teen will begin to feel safer.

In addition to helping your teen feel safe and secure, discipline teaches teens acceptable ways to behave by discouraging challenging behavior. Most kids learn acceptable ways to behave through their everyday experiences.

Sometimes small misbehaviors appear too small to warrant discipline. Why does anyone want to be so picky? You might think you are over-reacting. At the same time, those small things can add up quickly, and that's when things can escalate. For example, a towel on the bathroom floor one day might be no big deal. But after picking up wet towels for 3 or 4 days, you might get irritated. So, instead, taking a small privilege for a small behavior can be effective and avoid an escalation.

Some teens have learned to complain, nag, argue, and not mind to get what they want or to get out of doing something they don't want to do. In addition to not being very acceptable, these kinds of behaviors put teens at risk for other problems. Teens who have a lot of these kinds of challenging behaviors tend to get in trouble more and people tend to shy away from them more. So, using limits and discipline (and lots of encouragement) can help your teens learn positive behaviors.

Remember, the best time to catch challenging behaviors is early, when they are small and when you are calm. The behavior escalation curve shows the teachable moments.

Another important thing to keep in mind as you discipline your teen is to limit the amount of talking or lecturing that you do. Often, when parents lecture, teens aren't listening or they argue, parents get upset, and you both go up the escalation curve. Talking too much about challenging behavior also puts the focus, and your attention, on the challenging behavior. Talking is reinforcing and can have the opposite effect than you intended. It is more effective to use one of the discipline tactics we will cover and then consider the issue over and move on. Save the talking to reinforce and encourage!

2. Examples of *Ineffective* Discipline

Lecturing and grounding are two common discipline strategies that may feel good in the moment but actually are not helpful in changing teen behavior. Grounding may limit teens' access to positive activities, and parents often relent on long groundings due to having to keep track of an unhappy teen. Lecturing usually evokes arguments and is ineffective for teaching, because teens will not listen during conflict.

Another ineffective form of discipline is "the look." If you think about your parents, you can probably remember times when they gave you a "look" or used guilt to discourage challenging behavior. This might not work with teens in foster care. Teens with delayed development, poor social skills, or difficulty connecting with people often don't respond to social approval the same way other teens do. So, if you try to use the "look" that your parents used, they probably won't respond the way you did or the way that you want them to. However, they WILL respond to tangible rewards and consequences.

3. Taking a Break

"Take a break" is quick and easy strategy for addressing challenging behavior. Often this involves cooling off, taking some space, or disengaging in order to deal effectively with the thing that got them upset; often, this is what you expect everyone in your homes to do when they get upset.

4. Privilege Loss

Another discipline strategy is privilege loss. Your teens have lots of privileges in your home. We can use these privileges to reinforce following the house rules. This way, when your teen follows the house rules they have more privileges. When they don't, they don't earn the same privileges.

Here are some things to keep in mind about using privilege loss:

- Privilege loss can be relatively short and small, or, based on the behavior, it might be longer and bigger.
- The privilege is lost soon after the discipline event.
- The parent is in charge of timing.
- Make sure it is a privilege you can remove without punishing yourself or other family members.
- Make sure it is something you can control without a struggle.
- Don't remove: a privilege or event that was earned as a reward for positive behavior (e.g. birthday party or friend's visit); a positive experience such as team sports participation or cultural experience; or an important learning or social experience.

5. Extra Chores

Another form of discipline that has been found to be effective is extra chores. This is an alternative to provide you and your teen more flexibility around consequences. This is an *extra* chore you give to your teen as a consequence for misbehavior, and it can be used together with privilege loss.

6. Home Practice

Continue using incentive charts, contracts, informal agreements, and other incentive systems. Think about where you would like your teen to take a break and tell your teen about the take a break routine. If you have an opportunity, try removing a privilege or giving an extra chore.

Understanding Discipline

Use discipline to discourage challenging behaviors. Use encouragement to promote positive behaviors.

Use small consequences. Small penalties are fair and easy to use consistently.

Act quickly. Quick response helps teens connect their behavior with a consequence.

Pick your time. When you can, choose a time and place for discipline encounters.

Be contingent. Base consequences on teens' behavior, not on your mood.

Be consistent. Consistent parents create consistently good behavior.

Be calm yet firm. Breathe. Count to 10. Don't match your emotions to your teen's emotions. You are the parent.

Respond, don't react. Decide what you're going to do before you act.

Avoid lecturing. Lectures make parents feel better, but teens don't listen.

Respect the teen's personal space. Stay involved without getting too close.

Avoid threats. Threats teach teens to push parents to their limit.

Avoid arguments. Talking to a teen about challenging behavior when you are upset can make it worse. Talk later.

Avoid demanding promises. We all repeat mistakes. Next time the challenging behavior occurs, be consistent. Don't make teens say they'll never do it again.

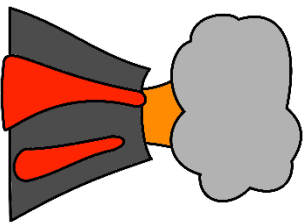
When it's over, let it go. Discipline cleans the slate. Don't hold grudges.

Present a united parenting front. Work together effectively.

Discipline is not revenge. Used effectively, discipline is a teaching tool.

Give 5 positive statements for each correction. Balance discipline with encouragement.

The Behavior Escalation Curve



Teen yells back and then leaves

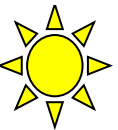
Parent lectures, yells, feels angry

Teen yells back, "I said I would later"

Parent feels tuned out and repeats the direction...louder this time

Teen doesn't respond or says, "Later"

Parent tells teen to do something



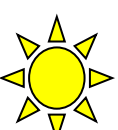
Parent is frustrated and mad. Feels hopeless.

Teen feels like they are always getting yelled at and can't please anybody

Parent gives in or forgives the teen

Teen might feel bad and apologize

Teen learns how to get their way by being defiant



= Teachable Moment

Understanding Privilege Loss

Privilege loss serves as a backup for take a break and extra chores. When teens refuse these penalties, the parent provides a slightly stronger consequence. The use of privilege loss has the same qualities of smaller consequences: short, paired closely in time with the challenging behavior, and administered calmly.

Qualities of candidates for privilege loss:

- Small and relatively short
- Stronger than the original penalty
- Easy for parents to control

Avoid for privilege loss:

- A privilege or event that was earned as a reward for positive behavior
- A positive experience such as team sports participation or cultural experience
- Identity affirming activities or items
- An important learning or social experience

Parenting tricks to strengthen privilege loss:

- Have several back-up privileges for difficult situations:
 - ❖ *If your teen is watching TV, can you turn it off without a physical conflict?*
 - If the answer is yes, carry on.
 - If the answer is no, remove a different privilege.
- Ignore “I don’t care” statements.
- It can feel mean to remove a privilege. Remember, your teen had the chance to take a smaller penalty.

Examples of Backup Privileges to Remove

Examples

USING THE TV IN THE LIVING ROOM

EXTRA POCKET MONEY

VIDEO/STREAMING GAMES

CLOTHES, MAKEUP

GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS

SAVINGS FOR A CERTAIN ACTIVITY

HAVING FRIENDS OVER

LOGIN FOR STREAMING VIDEO

USING THE INTERNET

GETTING A RIDE

Privileges to Remove:

EXAMPLES OF LONG AND SHORT **EXTRA CHORES FOR TEENS**

Short Chores

1. Clean kitchen sink or bathroom sink
2. Sweep floor
3. Clean mirror in bathroom
4. Empty dishwasher
5. Fold one load of laundry
6. Vacuum carpet in one room
7. Dust one room
8. Wipe down one wall
9. Sweep front or back sidewalk
10. Clean tub or shower
11. Clean out a kitchen cabinet
12. Wipe down kitchen cabinets
13. Scrub floor
14. Water plants
15. Clean out garbage can
16. Pick up litter in yard
17. Take out garbage

Long Chores

1. Wash dishes
2. Bring in firewood
3. Wash windows
4. Clean mold off tiles in shower
5. Clean baseboards
6. Scrub the outside of pots and pans
7. Rake leaves
8. Pull weeds
9. Clean out the refrigerator
10. Mow the lawn
11. Go to the store for an errand

Power Struggles—Summary

1. Power Struggles

A Power Struggle is: When you ask your teen to do something, they refuse or are openly defiant, and you engage in a back-and-forth struggle to get them to comply with your request.

Avoiding power struggles is important. When you don't engage in power struggles, you teach your teen that you are not going to focus on the negative stuff on their terms. Although power struggles can arise over many things, typical areas of conflict between parents and teens include:

- Chores
- Choice of friends or what they are doing with friends
- School and work performance
- Following through on responsibilities
- Appearance (clothing, hairstyles, and make-up)
- Dating

2. The Behavior Escalation Curve and Teachable Moments

Be aware of good times and harder times to address challenging behaviors with your teens. The behavior escalation curve shows that as the teen continues to be defiant, the parent gets increasingly mad, and often the teen ends up not doing what they are asked and not receiving a consequence for their behavior—instead, the parent backs off and the teen gets their way. We call the ends of the curve, when emotions are under control and stable, “teachable moments.” In both the uphill and downhill sides of the curve, you and your teen are engaged in a power struggle, and emotions are too high to accomplish anything.

3. Walking Away from a Power Struggle

One way that parents can stop the behavior escalation is by walking away from the power struggle—without giving up on correcting your teen’s behavior. Remember, you don’t have to “win” in the moment. Instead, you can give your teen a clear direction and walk away from an argument. If your teen doesn’t do as they are asked, you can deliver the consequence at a calmer time. Teens are not likely to hear us when they are upset and moving up the behavior curve so give a consequence later at a calm, teachable moment.

4. Avoiding or Disengaging from Power Struggles

No matter how hard we focus and try to avoid power struggles, there will still be times we find ourselves being pulled into one. Let’s talk about your options if you get into a power struggle or if you seem to be heading in that direction.

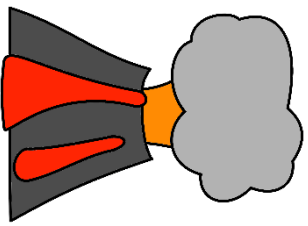
- Give yourself some credit for noticing the struggle. This is often the hardest part!
- Ask your teen to do something in a way that limits their choices. If you want your teen to do their homework, give them choices that are acceptable to you.
- If your teen argues with you, say nothing, do nothing, say “hmm.” By saying something completely neutral, you’ve let your teen know you have heard them, and that you aren’t going to respond any further.
- Distract your teen (change the subject) and move on.
- Walk away and remove the audience. Your attention is a powerful reinforcement. This can be hard to do, but very effective.
- Give a consequence later. Remember, you don’t have to “win” in the moment. Come back later when things are calm, tell your teen what the challenging behavior was, and give a consequence.
- Do something for yourself for 5 minutes so you can regain composure. Go to your bedroom and read a magazine, have a cup of tea, etc. Do something to take the focus off the situation and give yourself a chance to get calm.
- Avoid lecturing—talking fuels the fire.
- Avoid arguing with your teen. Remember, arguing about not minding is about arguing, not minding.
- Think about power struggle situations in advance and make a plan for how you will handle them. If you have no plan—you are on their plan.
- If your teen follows and tries to argue with you after you walk away, find something to do and don’t argue with them! Some parents turn on the vacuum or start reading a magazine.
- Know your limits—we all have them.

Using these strategies can help parents avoid or disengage from power struggles. When parents stay calm and don't engage in the power struggle, teens are also less likely to become more defiant or aggressive.

5. Home Practice

Continue using the chart, contract, or informal agreements that you are using. See if you notice any times in the week that you were able to avoid going up the behavior curve.

The Behavior Escalation Curve



Teen yells back and then leaves

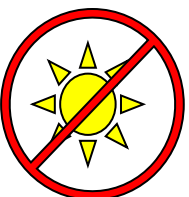
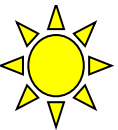
Parent lectures, yells, feels angry

Teen yells back, "I said I would later"

Parent feels tuned out and repeats the direction...louder this time

Teen doesn't respond or says, "Later"

Parent tells teen to do something



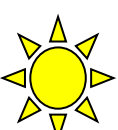
Parent is frustrated and mad. Feels hopeless.

Teen feels like they are always getting yelled at and can't please anybody

Parent gives in or forgives the teen

Teen might feel bad and apologize

Teen learns how to get their way by being defiant



= Teachable Moment

Practicing Walking Away from a Power Struggle

Remember these skills:

1. Address the behavior at a calm, teachable moment.
2. Give a clear direction.
3. Do not explain why the teen needs to do the task.
4. Walk away after the second time giving a clear direction and the teen refusing, and give a consequence at a calmer time.

Practice Example:

“ (name) , please go make your bed.”

Your teen might argue or say they will do it later.

“ (name) , go make your bed now.”

Parent walks out of the room.

Emotional Coercion—Summary

1. Review of KEEP Tools

So far, we have covered many KEEP tools and concepts, including:

- Adult attention
- Giving clear directions
- 5:1 ratio of encouragement to correction
- Incentives, rewards, and privileges
- Pre-teaching
- Clear expectations
- House rules
- “When-then” agreements
- Charts and contracts
- Take a break
- Privilege loss
- Extra chores
- The behavior escalation curve
- Walking away from/avoiding a power struggle

2. Balancing Encouragement and Limit Setting

Encouragement and limit setting are both teaching tools that work best when they are in balance. Be consistent, be patient, and remember the 5:1 ratio of positive reinforcement to correction.

3. Emotional Coercion

Emotional coercion happens when a teen attempts to elicit a negative emotion from a parent, such as guilt, worry, or anger, in order to either get something they want or get out of something they don't want to do. Emotional coercion is successful when the

parent focuses on what the teen said or did to elicit the negative emotion, rather than on the issue at hand. A teen might use threats, accusations, put downs, sulking, tears, or other distractions to get you to back down.

4. How to Avoid Reinforcing Emotional Coercion

In the moment you can:

- Avoid taking the bait: stay calm and focused. Avoid letting any negative emotions that you feel distract you from addressing your teen's challenging behavior.
- Stay on target: calmly restate what you want your teen to do and then remove yourself. Walk away!
- Remember the behavior escalation curve? Don't let your teen use threats or put downs to get you upset and distract you from what you have asked them to do.
- Disengage by giving a neutral look or a neutral comment, such as "hmm."
- Change the subject: distract your teen by talking about something else.
- Sometimes just noticing that your teen is trying to use emotional coercion can help you stay calm and focused.

Later, when things are calm you can:

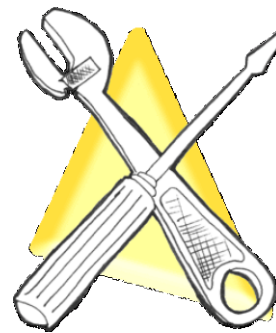
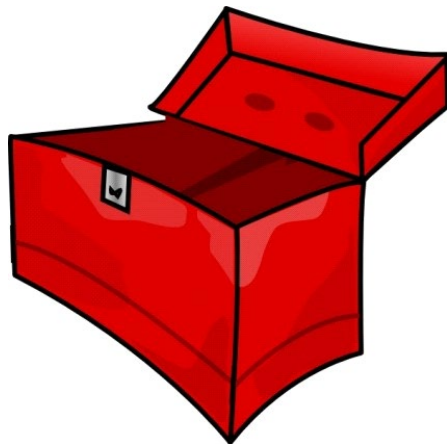
- Find a teachable moment to pre-teach your expectations for next time.
- Put the desired behavior on a chart or contract.
- Give a consequence of your teen didn't do as they were asked.

5. Home Practice

Continue using the chart, contract, or informal agreements that you are using. See if you get a chance this week to practice not taking the bait.

PARENT POWER TOOLS

1. Say nothing, do nothing, stay calm, say, “hmm.”
2. Walk away and remove the audience. The parent’s attention is a powerful reinforcement.
3. Use a chart, contract, or when-then to encourage positive behavior.
4. Pre-teach your expectations when things are calm.
5. Consequences can happen later. Do something for yourself for 5 minutes so you can regain composure.



**REMEMBER:
NO PLAN IS THEIR PLAN.**

**ARGUING ABOUT NOT MINDING
IS ABOUT ARGUING...NOT MINDING.**

Super-Tough Behaviors—Summary

1. Introduction to Unseen Behaviors

There are a lot of things that your teens do that you might not see or be aware of. You might not see them because they happen when your teens are not with you or because they are trying to hide the behavior. These unseen behaviors can make parents feel powerless, but parents *can* have an impact on these behaviors.

2. Super-Tough Behaviors

There may be some behaviors you feel you can't change or are especially difficult to change. Also, there may be some behaviors that really get to you, that really upset you. We are going to call those "super-tough" behaviors. Some of the most common super-tough behaviors are:

- Lying
- Stealing
- Sexualized behavior

For these covert behaviors, unless you catch someone in the act, you can't really know for sure whether they happen. That makes it really hard to teach to, reward, or set limits around.

3. Make a Plan

The steps for making a plan with these super-tough behaviors are not that different from what you would do with any behavior you want to change. There are four steps in making a plan for super-tough behaviors:

1. Track and observe the behavior: when it happens, under what circumstances, etc.

2. Identify pro-social opposites: what you want your teen TO do.
3. Set up a reward or limit.
4. Stay calm and matter of fact.

It can be hard to be specific about what you want your teen to NOT do and to know if they are NOT doing it. The pro-social opposite is what you want your teen TO do.

4. Special Circumstances

Some ideas for addressing sexualized behavior include making the environment safer by: having no blankets on couches, keeping doors open when friends are over, and monitoring screens.

For covert behaviors like lying and stealing there are some general strategies you can apply. We can teach teens how to act in a way that shows responsibility and does not draw suspicion.

Lying can be difficult to address because often there is no physical evidence of the behavior. Avoid confronting your teen about whether or not they are telling the truth. Rather, when you suspect your teen might not be telling the truth, verify it.

Your teen says “My teacher said that we don’t have any homework today because we got it all done in class.” You say “OK” and then call/email the teacher to verify the information. If your teen lied, give a consequence for lying.

If you are concerned that your teen is stealing, you may make a house rule: always have a note or receipt for anything you bring home. If they don’t have a note or receipt, you hold onto the item until your teen can show they bought it or it was given to them.

For lying and stealing, don’t ask what you know! If you know they lied or stole, give a consequence. When you ask them, you set them up to lie.

5. Tips to Remember

Here are a few things to remember when addressing “super-tough” behaviors:

- Stay calm—leave the emotion out.
- Remember that it isn’t personal.
- Focus on teaching a more acceptable or positive behavior.
- Set limits on the challenging behavior, but avoid paying too much attention to it. Remember, attention reinforces!

- Don't label your teen a "liar," "thief," etc. That only reinforces the challenging behavior. Instead, focus on the situations that support more acceptable or positive behavior.
- Telling tall tales can be a normal part of development. Making up stories may be socially awkward, but it is not worth paying a lot of attention to. Ignore it unless it is causing problems.
- Teens in foster care sometimes exaggerate how wonderful their birthparents are. It's best to ignore it.
- Sometimes you may not see your teen's behavior directly, but you can see enough evidence of the behavior to give a consequence. For example, if you told your teen not to eat the cookies, and later you see an empty cookie plate and crumbs on your teen's shirt, you can give a consequence.
- Letting your teen know that you might check pockets, bags, or stories can help if there is a problem or concern. By doing the checking, you are creating a safe environment for your teen.
- Avoid the temptation to set traps to catching your teens lying or stealing. It only encourages the negative behavior.
- Know when to get help. If your teen's super-tough behavior is new to you, talk to your caseworker or other professional for guidance..

6. Home Practice

Continue using the chart, contract, or informal agreements that you are using.

If you identify a super-tough behavior, make a plan! Identify the pro-social opposite and set a limit. Add the plan to the incentive chart if appropriate.

Stress and Managing It—Summary

1. Feeling Stressed

It is no wonder that, with so much going on, foster and kinship parents get stressed from time to time. It is a good idea to develop some strategies for dealing with stress, as over time stress can lead to a serious case of burnout as well as physical and emotional issues. When do you know that stress is getting to you?

- Are you tired all the time?
- Are you noticing more minor health problems (stomach or head-aches, etc.)?
- Do you feel more sad or irritable than usual?
- How is your motivation level?
- Do you feel like you can never catch up—that you need more hours in the day?

When you start feeling these ways, it is time to focus on yourself and what helps you RELAX.

2. Stress Relief Strategies

Everyone's needs are different. What makes one person feel refreshed and relaxed may make another person anxious. Sometimes a 5-minute breather will do the trick; sometimes you need more of a vacation.

Here are some ideas:

- Keep a journal—write about your day, what went well, what didn't, how did you feel, what are your hopes and dreams, etc.
- Exercise—walk around the neighborhood, lift weights, stretch, ride a bike, etc.
- Set the timer for 5-20 minutes and announce you will be in your room undisturbed for that time.

- Do something you enjoy: read, listen to music, sing, take a bath, etc.
- Watch a funny movie with your kids or listen to music with them.
- Work on a hobby.
- Go out with a friend or call a friend on the phone.
- Load music or podcasts on your phone or keep a magazine or book in the car to read while you are waiting at the doctor's office, school, etc .
- Learn to let the little stuff go! The spices in your cabinet do not have to be alphabetized!
- Do things that make routine tasks more efficient so that you spend less time on them.
- Don't forget to take a lunch break.
- Cook YOUR favorite dinner.
- Skip the laundry and go to bed an hour early.
- Spend some time with another adult (friend or partner).

Start to develop a support network. Who do you know that can watch your kids when you need a break? What other family do you know that would be fun to have family get-togethers with? Who do you know that you can call when you are having a bad day?

3. Home Practice

Continue using the charts, contracts, or informal agreements that you are using. If you get a chance, try using one of your stress relief strategies.

Promoting School Success—Summary

1. Importance of School

You have heard about the importance of staying in school for a teen’s success in life. At school, teens learn how to fulfill their responsibilities. By helping them fulfill their school responsibilities, you are helping them to develop important life skills.

2. Encouraging

Paying positive attention to the effort (even if it is small) that your teen makes in school is a powerful way to support them. Sometimes showing interest and talking with them about what they are actually doing at school or in their schoolwork is a good way to do this. Praising success and offering help are ways to encourage teens’ engagement in school.

3. Homework Routines

Some teens might already have a routine that works for them. Other teens might avoid doing their homework and need more support and structure.

4. Communication with Teachers

Initiating conversations about your teen’s school performance with their teachers can help address problems early. Other than contacting teachers to discuss class expectations and resources, two fun ways to have contact with your teen’s school are to join school organizations and to attend school-related activities with your teen.

5. Supporting Homework and Attendance

The use of a school card or assignment log both gives your teen some responsibility and gives you an opportunity to reward this responsibility.

6. Home Practice

Continue using the chart/contract or informal agreements that you are using. If your teen does not have a regular study routine, try setting one up this week. See if you get a chance to talk to your teen about school.

What Teenagers Learn at School *Beyond* Textbook Materials

At school, teens learn how to:

- Start and finish projects
- Meet deadlines
- Work with others
- Communicate effectively
- Persevere when they face challenges or are bored

In two words, what they learn is to:

“Fulfill responsibilities.”

Ideas for Talking with Your Teen about School

Often, parents learn a lot when they listen between the lines. Teens like to talk, and may want to tell you a lot of details. Remember, most of what they are saying is information about how they're thinking and experiencing life. By listening to what they have to say, you can learn many things about your teen.

1. Ask a specific question.

"What did you do to help with your group project in Science today?"

"What do you want to write about for your social studies paper?"

2. Focus with 100% attention

Make sure you have 5 minutes when you're not watching TV, cooking, or busy with another task.

3. Listen

If you want your teen to talk...listen! If you're unsure about what they said, ask another question.

4. Praise successes

Identify something your teen is doing well and praise them.

"You are working so hard on your science project!"

"I can see that you are more confident in your math homework!"

5. Offer help

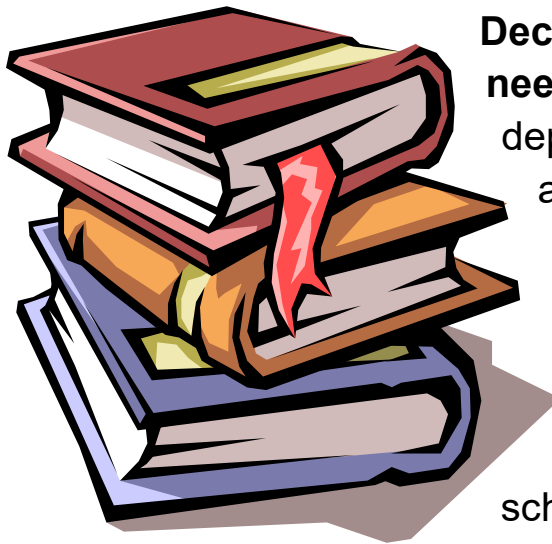
Offering help can let teens know you are interested in supporting them in school.

"Can I help you organize your assignments?"

"I'd like to help you set up a homework routine."

Providing Structure for Studying

Create a “Read and Study” Time. If the teen has no homework, they can use the time designated for homework for reading ahead, reading for pleasure, or doing another school-like activity. Having a regular study time routine can help teens stay focused on school, practice study skills, and develop positive work habits.



Decide how much daily time your teen needs to study. The amount of time can depend on the teen’s grade level, classes, and extracurricular activities.

Make regular study time a priority.

Set a regular time when your teen goes to the study place. At first, this may require you to restructure the after school or evening family routines. Plan alternative study times in advance when special events will interfere with the regular schedule.

Choose a good setting that has good lighting and clear work space, few interruptions, and no interference from siblings, phone calls, or television. Be flexible. If a study area doesn’t work out well, change it after a one-week trial.

Communicating with Your Teen's Teachers

It can be easier to support your teen with school if you know teachers' behavior and assignment expectations.

Examples of questions you can ask:

- What kind of work will my teen be bringing home?
- What should the work for their grade level look like?
- How long does homework usually take for students with classes like my teen's?
- What are the different resources available to parents and students, and how are they accessed (e.g., tutors, workshops, newsletters, websites)?
- Is there a study hall available for my teen?
- How are my teen's interactions with peers? What about with teachers?

Examples of effective ways to communicate with teachers:

- Email
- School calendars
- School websites
- Online reports

Example of a School Card

| Name: | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|----------|--------------------|---------|
| Class | Today's Assignment | Turned In | Overdue Homework | Tardy | Behavior Good/Poor | Initial |
| 1. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 2. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 3. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 4. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 5. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 6. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 7. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |
| 8. | | Yes / No | Yes / No | Yes / No | Good/Poor | |

Please identify any overdue homework assignments below.

To start using a school card, talk to your teen's teachers. Let them know that you have come up with a plan to stay on top of what your teen is doing at school and you would like their help. Show them the school card and let them know how it works (they may have already used one before, but let them know what would be helpful for you; for example, you might want the teachers to note when part of the homework was completed).

Be sure you know what each teacher's signature or signatures look like. Then, introduce the card to your teen, keeping the discussion brief. You can say that it will save you from having to bug them about every class. Point out that it will also give you a chance to reward them for being responsible by remembering to give the card to their teachers and for showing it to you.

Another great thing about the school card is that you can adapt it as needed. For example, you can add a column where teachers can let you know when the next assignment is due and what it is, if you are finding that your teen is having trouble with being clear on exactly what is due and when.

School Success at Home

Week of: _____

Study Time: _____

Length of Study Time: _____

Study Place: _____

| TASK | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Bring home schoolwork | | | | | |
| 2. Organize schoolwork | | | | | |
| 3. Fill out assignment sheet | | | | | |
| 4. Show assignment to parent | | | | | |
| 5. Work at designated study place | | | | | |
| 6. Start studying on time | | | | | |
| 7. Complete full study time | | | | | |
| 8. Make progress during study time | | | | | |

INCENTIVES:

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| | |

School Success at Home

| |
|-----------------------------|
| Week of: _____ |
| Study Time: _____ |
| Length of Study Time: _____ |
| Study Place: _____ |

| TASK | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | |
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INCENTIVES:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Promoting Positive Peer Relations for Teens— Summary

1. Skills for Teen Friendships

Friendships are really important to teens, and parents are in a great position to help teens learn how to get along with other teens and be liked by them. Start by noticing your teen's strengths and existing social skills. When you observe a problem with your teen's peer interactions, you can then follow the same steps that you would use with any other challenging behavior.

2. Introduction to the Power of Peer Influence

As kids move into adolescence, their peers become more influential than ever. As they navigate divisions at school, teens need parents' guidance identifying and building friendships that are associated with their physical, social, and emotional health.

3. Paying Attention to Teen Peer Associations

A. Reasons to Know Your Teen's Friends

- To learn more about what is going on in your teen's life
- To learn what influences your teens are experiencing
- To help teens develop the skills needed to develop positive peer associations
- To help teens tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy peer activities and associations
- To have the chance to counter teens' misperceptions (e.g. about teen substance use rates)
- To limit access to risky peer activities and negative peers

B. How to Get to Know Your Teen's Peers

- Spend time with them doing something fun
- Encourage them to bring their friends home. This is your chance to see who they are and whether they are the kind of influence you want.
- When your family goes on outings, let your teen bring a friend along sometimes. You can specify certain pro-social friends.
- Maintain contact with the parents of your teen's friends.

C. How to Get to Know the Parents of Your Teen's Friends

Foster and kinship parents have identified that when they know the parents of their teen's friends then they can agree as a group on expectations for their teens. For example:

- What time teens should be home at night
- Bedtime
- Expectations for social media

You can get to know the parents of your teens' friends by:

- Having a parent party to get to know other parents
- Creating or joining a parent social media group
- Volunteering at the school or on the class board

4. Common Barriers and Solutions to Teen Supervision

You might be thinking that these are all great ideas, but... "I work. There's no way I can be there when they are home after school with their friends." Or, "I have too many kids to supervise all of them constantly." Can you identify others who can help with supervision—relatives, friends, afterschool activities?

Other things make supervision easier, such as communicating with your teen when they arrive home, or communicating when they start and leave their activity. You could even reward them for communicating, or set up clear communication expectations on a chart or contract.

5. Encouraging Positive Peer Involvement

Parents encourage positive peer involvement in several ways:

- Identify their positive peers and encourage contact with them.
- Practice social skills for resolving conflict.
- Encourage your teen to try out different extracurricular activities.
- During the summer, keep your teen busy with supervised activities that allow for positive peer involvement, such as summer camps, youth groups, and sports teams.
- Invite positive peers to join you for family activities.
- Encourage teens to be mentors or tutors at school (some schools have identified mentors for other students) or through community organizations (e.g., camp counselors).
- Attend cultural events and activities.
- Encourage your teen to make friends through volunteering, a job, or internship experience.
- You can be an example: model positive peer relationships through your own social relationships.

6. Setting Expectations for Being with Friends

In addition to supervision and communication, it is also important to create a safe and supportive environment in which teens can have friends over. It is helpful to set some clear house rules for having friends over. Some examples of house rules that you might want to use are:

- Be gentle: no wrestling or rough-housing
- If you hang out in your room with a friend, keep the door open
- Get parent permission before exchanging games or other things
- Ask for things in another room, away from friends

7. Home Practice

Ask your teen to help you come up with a cool extracurricular activity or interesting elective they would like to take. Continue using the chart/contract or informal agreements that you are using. Try to practice one of the ways to encourage your teen's positive peer interactions this week.

Having Friends Over

Agree on house rules when friends are over:

- Which friends can come over
- What activities are acceptable, e.g.
 - *Play gently: No wrestling or rough-housing*
 - *If you hang out in your room with a friend, keep the door open*
 - *Get parent permission before exchanging games or other things*
 - *Ask for things in another room, away from friends*
- Be clear on what happens if drugs or alcohol are brought into the home
- Make a plan for when friends can come over, when they go home, and how they are going to get home

Be visible and available, and give them space.



Talking to Teens About Sex—Summary

1. Understanding Risky Behavior in Teens

Adolescence is a period of extensive brain development. Teens typically think that bad things, such as car accidents, happen to other people. For this reason, they can engage in high-risk behavior, such as having unprotected sex or getting into a car with a drunk driver. Parents have a positive influence on teen sexual behavior by sharing information and values.

2. What Teens Need to Know about Sex

We looked at a handout with information for teens. Your own values and beliefs will determine what additional messages you give or which content areas you emphasize. Consider the maturity level and sexual experience of your teen.

3. How to Talk to Teens about Sex

There is no need to have “the big talk” where you say everything at one time. You can give your teens small doses according to what they need to know at their age and maturity level. Here are some tips:

- Encourage your teen to talk and ask questions. Studies show that open communication protects against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and early pregnancy.
- Maintain a calm and non-critical atmosphere for discussions.
- Use words that are understandable and comfortable.
- Try to determine your teen’s level of knowledge and understanding.
- Keep your sense of humor, and realize it is okay to talk about your own discomfort.
- Relate sex to love, intimacy, caring, and respect for oneself and one's partner.
- Be open about sharing your values and concerns.

- Discuss the importance of responsibility for choices and decisions.
- Help your teen to consider the pros and cons of choices.

Remember when practicing and preparing:

- Be positive, calm, and matter-of-fact.
- Consider the age and maturity level of your teen.
- Avoid unnecessary details.

Try to find a non-threatening way to initiate a brief conversation—for example, on a short drive.

4. What to Do if You Suspect Inappropriate Sexual Behavior

If you suspect inappropriate sexual behavior, you can use the tools that we have been discussing over the last few months.

5. Setting and Respecting Limits

When your teen practices safety and refusal skills, they are more likely to use them when they need to. Talk to your teens about how to identify and avoid risky situations and how to respect limits others set.

6. Responding to Teens Who Have Experienced Child Abuse

Listen to what your teen wants to tell, but avoid repeated heart-to-heart discussions about abuse. If you create a sense of intimacy or bonding around your teen's history of sexual abuse, you may unintentionally reinforce their feelings of helplessness. Instead, divert attention to your teen's positive behaviors, strengths, and things they now have control over.

7. Home Practice

Continue using the chart/contract or informal agreements that you are using. See if you can have a short conversation with your teen about sex this week.

What Teens Need to Know about Sex

Teens tend to worry about being normal. Answering their questions about their own sexuality can be reassuring. When talking to your teen about sex, consider their age, maturity level, and sexual experience.

Younger teens:

- The emotional, social, and physical changes of puberty.
- Kissing and holding hands is something that young adolescents might do.
- When two people care for each other they might want to express their feelings through sex but that there are many ways to show that one cares for somebody.
- Sometimes teenagers, feeling sexual urges, confuse caring for somebody and wanting to have sex with that person.
- Decisions about sex require a lot of maturity and responsibility because consequences come with being sexually active.
- This might be a good time to describe intercourse matter-of-factly.
- It might also be a good time to talk about masturbation and where it is appropriate in your home to masturbate.

Older teens:

- Sex is more than the act itself, and it is one of many ways people can express love and affection. Having a good relationship means that one knows how to make a commitment, respect their partner's limits, and the different ways to express love and affection.
- Responsibility to use contraceptives and how to get accurate information and access to contraceptives
- Discuss sexual orientation matter-of-factly. Some teens will be exploring questions about their own sexuality and sexual orientation.
- Discuss moral concerns and questions surrounding sex and your family's values.

Respect and Consent:

It is always the teen's responsibility to respect their partner's limits—and for their partner to respect their limits. These are some ways people communicate their limits:

Verbal

“Stop!”

“I’m not ready.”

“I don’t want to go any further.”

Non-verbal

Pushing hands away.

Walking away.

Moving head away.

Getting up and leaving and calling for a ride if needed.

What to Do if You Suspect Inappropriate Sexual Behavior

Make a plan:

- Track and observe the behavior: knowing when inappropriate sexual behavior happens and under what circumstances can help you develop a plan.
- Identify what you want your teen TO do. For example:
 - Tell their foster or kinship parent if they receive or are asked to send nude photos.
- Set up a reward or limit.
- Stay calm and matter of fact.

Discussing the plan with your teen:

- Calmer is better.
- Lectures are ineffective, particularly ones meant to instill guilt about the teen's behavior, such as ones with the message that if the teen really loved or cared about you, they would never...
- Focus on what your teen is doing well using incentives and for rule violations use limit setting (e.g., take a break, privilege loss, or extra chore).
- Matter-of-factly focus on your expectations.

Apply the tools that we have been discussing over the last few months:

Effectively communicating expectations (rules), emphasizing positive behavior (healthy boundaries) using behavioral incentives, setting limits, and monitoring.

Maintain clearly-defined, realistic, and enforceable rules about sexual behavior.

Remember when trying to help your teen change behavior:

- Be sure that you discuss the family rules ahead of time and get on the same page with any other adult in the home to maintain a united front.
- Define the goals according to what your teen is doing now; you want the goals to be a reachable challenge, to set your teen up for success.
- Outline a plan to achieve these goals.

Evaluate the effectiveness of your plan (e.g., chart, contract, or informal agreement) and fine-tune as needed.

Setting & Respecting Limits

Recognizing Limits

Teens who are able to define and set their own boundaries are often more skilled at recognizing their partner's boundaries. You can teach your teens to recognize and respond appropriately when their partner sets limits. Let your teen know that it is their job to respect their partner's limits.

Ways to Refuse

Brainstorm with your teen how to respond to pressure to go beyond their boundaries around sexual behavior. What might your teen say or do? Here are some ideas:

- Walk away.
- Change the subject or suggest doing something else. "Let's do _____ instead."
- Be assertive. Learning to stick up for oneself is an essential life skill.
- Enlist help from a trusted peer or adult. Get a ride out of a bad situation or potentially bad one. Stick by friends who will tell somebody to back off for you, if they know this is what you want.
- You can say:
 - No.
 - I don't feel like it.
 - Are you talking to **me**? **Forget** it!
 - Why do you keep pressuring me when I've said "NO!"
 - Back off!
 - My parents would kill me. If the other person says, "They'll never find out," one comeback is, "You don't know my parents."
- Combine a verbal "no" with walking away or pushing them away.
- Be a broken record. For example, keep saying no until the person pressuring you stops or until you can use one of the other ways to say no.

Specific Risks for Teen Sexual Behavior Posed by Child Abuse

Re-victimization

Many studies show that having been abused as a child puts one at risk for being abused again (and again) as a teen and adult, such as:

- Poor boundaries
- Having a hard time setting limits and enforcing them (saying no)
- Seeing their sexuality as a source of power, a way to get others to like them
- Having a harder time recognizing risky situations and trusting any sense of danger they may have about situations
- For young teens, indiscriminately disclosing their abuse histories to others; others may come to see them as exploitable
- Risk-taking and inappropriate sexual behavior
- Viewing self as “damaged goods” and developing a self-concept that leads to risk-taking, including taking sexual risks
- Seeing future as shortened and being less optimistic about it, leading to a “live fast, die young” kind of thinking

Responding to Risks for Teen Sexual Behavior Posed by Child Abuse

When talking with teens about sexual behavior, help teens to understand that their sexual behavior, like all their other behaviors, can impact their future goals, especially in the areas of their health, the quality of their personal relationships, and their social reputations. Most teens will want to be physically healthy, have positive and supportive personal relationships, and have a good social reputation. Let your teen know that the choices they make in terms of their sexual behavior will impact on each of these areas of their life.

Remember to:

- Keep channels of communication open.
- Communicate respect for children's and teens' boundaries (having privacy when getting dressed, using the bathroom).

When you talk to them about sex, emphasize that:

- It is unacceptable to coerce or exploit another person sexually, whatever the sexual behavior (kissing, hugging, touching, sexual intercourse, talking about sex).
- This includes sexual behavior with a person whose judgment and self-control are impaired by alcohol or other drugs (can also be illegal).
- Sexual intercourse is one form of sexual expression, and there are several healthy ways to act on sexual feelings, whether alone or with another.
 - ♦ Teach them how to identify risky situations and how to avoid them.
 - ♦ Teach them refusal skills.
 - ♦ Supervise your teen to minimize opportunities for sexual behavior and put limits on unsupervised time.

What if your teen comes to you to talk about their abuse experience or its impact? What do you say? What do you do?

- Listen to your teen the first time, but without delving into it and needing to know everything (let your teen tell what they feel prepared to tell).
- If your teens want to tell you the story again and again, redirect their attention to the present by asking, for example, what they want for their lives now & what they are going to do to get it.
- Let your teen know that the abuse never should have happened to them and you are sorry that it did and that you will do your best to keep them safe and to help them to keep themselves safe.

Avoid repeated heart-to-heart discussions about abuse.

- If you create a sense of intimacy or bonding around your teen's history of sexual abuse, you may unintentionally reinforce their feelings of helplessness. Instead, divert attention to your teen's positive behaviors, strengths and things they now have control over.
- Emphasize current respectful and safe relationships with others.
- Show interest in your teen's pro-social behaviors.

Substance Use and Your Teen—Summary

1. Drug and Alcohol Norms

There are two kinds of norms that influence teens:

- **Attitudinal norms** are the common beliefs that a large part of a group has about what most individuals of the group do and think.
- **Behavioral norms** are what most individuals of the group actually do.

Research studies show that teens overestimate their peers' alcohol and drug use. For example, when it comes to drugs and alcohol, teens often come to the conclusion that “everyone uses,” even though this is not true. When teens think that everyone uses alcohol or drugs, they are more likely to use it themselves. Giving teens accurate information is a powerful tool to reduce alcohol or drug use.

2. Parents' Influence on Teen Substance Use

Research studies show that parents' attitudes and behaviors related to substance use are predictors of teen substance use. You can help your teen to stay drug-free by setting clear rules against substance use, enforcing the rules, and monitoring your teen's behavior.

Here are some ideas about how to talk to teens about substance use:

- Encourage conversation by talking to your teen about their interests, listening without interrupting.
- Talk about their goals and how drinking or using drugs can get in the way of reaching their goals.
- Stay calm and avoid lecturing.

When you talk to your teen about substance use, find a non-threatening way to initiate the conversation. Share what you know about the norms for teen substance use so that you can debunk false perceptions, such as “everyone uses.”

3. Teen Risk-Taking Behavior and Substance Use

Teens often focus on expected pleasurable aspects of alcohol and drug use, and ignore the negative aspects of using. Another major concern of adolescents is “fitting in.” Peer pressure can lead to experimenting with alcohol and other drugs.

4. Make a Plan: Motivating Teens to Be Drug- and Alcohol-Free

Teens need good reasons to say no to drinking and using drugs. Scare tactics often fail because most teens are aware that many people, for example, drink without problems. However, you can treat substance use like the other challenging behaviors we have discussed and make a plan.

Remember the steps for making a plan for super-tough behaviors:

1. Track and observe the behavior: knowing when it happens and under what circumstances can help you develop a plan.
2. Identify what you want your teen TO do (pro-social opposite).
3. Set up a reward or limit.
4. Stay calm and matter of fact.

You can set house rules and other limits. For example, “If you hang out in your room with a friend, keep the door open.” You can also tell your teen you may decide to give them a home drug test if you suspect use.

You can limit the teen’s time with any friends you suspect of using drugs or alcohol. Encourage your teen to spend time with positive friends by getting to know your teen’s friends and inviting the positive ones over for family get-togethers.

You can use incentives to motivate your teen to stay within the limits you set, and plan for short consequences if they are using.

5. Talking to Teens about Substance Use

We practiced talking to teens about substance use.

6. Answering Questions about Your Own Use as a Teen

Your teen may ask you about your own use as a teen or you may have already talked to your teen about your own use. Even if you drank or used drugs as a teen, you want to

avoid giving your teen the message that you think it is okay for them to use.

7. Refusal Skills

Even when teens know about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs and want to say no to them, they may have a hard time saying no. You can teach your teens refusal skills that will help them know the many ways that they can say no to different unsafe situations.

8. Home Practice

Use your teen as a consultant for identifying 3 realistic “comebacks” to offers to drink or use drugs.

See if you can find a time to talk with your teen about substance use norms or facts this week as well.

Think about setting up house rules for avoiding substance use or making a plan if you are concerned your teen might be using.

Continue using the chart/contract or informal agreements you are using.

Teen Alcohol and Drug Use: The Facts

Teen Attitudes Toward Peer Substance Use: Teens increasingly say that they disapprove of their peers using alcohol and drugs. The majority of teens disapprove of peers:

- Smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day
- Using marijuana regularly
- Drinking alcohol regularly

Alcohol and Teens:

- By age 15, 35 percent of teens have had at least 1 drink.
- More teens drink alcohol than smoke cigarettes or use marijuana.
- Young people drink less often than adults, but when they do drink, they drink more than adults. On average, young people have about 5 drinks on a single occasion, which can be considered binge drinking.

Important Facts about Alcohol:

- Alcohol is a powerful drug that slows down the body and mind. It impairs coordination; slows reaction time; and impairs vision, clear thinking, and judgment.
- Beer and wine are not “safer” than hard liquor. A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and 1.5 ounces of hard liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol and have the same effects on the body and mind.
- On average, it takes 2 to 3 hours for a single drink to leave a person’s system. Nothing can speed up this process, including drinking coffee or taking a cold shower.
- People tend to be very bad at judging how seriously alcohol has affected them. That means many individuals who drive after drinking think they can control a car—but actually cannot.

Good Reasons Not to Drink or Use Drugs. In talking with your teen about reasons to avoid alcohol and drugs, stay away from scare tactics. For example, most teens are aware that many people drink without problems, so it is important to discuss the consequences of alcohol use without overstating the case. Some good reasons why **teens should not drink or use drugs:**

- **You want your teen to avoid alcohol and drugs.** Clearly state your own expectations about your teen’s substance use. Your values and attitudes count with your teen, even though they may not always show it.

- **To maintain self-respect.** Teens say the best way to persuade them to avoid alcohol or drugs is to appeal to their self-respect. Teens also are likely to pay attention to examples of how alcohol or drugs might lead to embarrassing situations or events—things that might damage their self-respect or alter important relationships.
- **Drinking and drug use is illegal.** Because alcohol use under the age of 21 is illegal, getting caught may mean trouble with the authorities. Even if getting caught doesn't lead to police action, the parents of your teen's friends may no longer permit them to spend with your teen.
- **Drinking and drug use can be dangerous.** One of the leading causes of teen deaths is motor vehicle crashes involving alcohol. Drinking and drug use also makes a young person more vulnerable to sexual assault and unprotected sex.

Sources: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov> and <http://www.nida.nih.gov>

Talking to Teens about Substance Use

- When you talk to your teen about substance use, find a non-threatening way to initiate the conversation.
- Teens benefit from hearing what you feel about alcohol and drug use. Your silence may give your teen the impression that alcohol and drug use is okay for teens.
- Help your teen to stay drug-free by setting clear expectations against substance use, enforcing your expectations, and monitoring your teen's behavior.
- Encourage conversation by talking to your teen about their interests, listening without interrupting.
- Stay calm and avoid lecturing.
- If your teen has already used, you might say, "I know that you have tried (alcohol/marijuana/other drug), and I want you to know some facts about teen alcohol and drug use."
- Debunk false perceptions such as "everyone uses." Your teen might have inaccurate information.
- Find a time and place free from distractions when you talk to your teen about substance use.

The Sensational Six

Good Reasons for Teens to Say No to Alcohol and Other Drugs

1. Parents disapprove of teen use.
2. Teen is aware of negative effects of use.
3. Teen has better things to do (e.g., playing sports, theater, dance) and has goals, and using would interfere with doing these things and with achieving these goals.
4. None of their *good* friends use.
5. They have refusal skills that give them confidence saying no.
6. It is against the law.

More Reasons for Teens to Avoid Substance Use

For many teens, the best reason for avoiding substance use is keeping parents' approval. When they know that parents disapprove of substance use, they are less likely to use.

- There are different ways that parents can communicate this disapproval. One is by saying, the other is by doing. If you drink, show them that instead of using alcohol to cope with stress that you have healthier ways to cope, such as exercise, listening to music, or talking with a friend.
- You can say, "I've had a hard day, I need to exercise" instead of "I've had a hard day, I need a drink."

In addition to parents' approval, another motivation teens have to stay alcohol- and drug-free is to get to enjoy other activities.

- One reason that teens try alcohol and other drugs is to escape boredom, so encourage your teen to be a part of supervised after-school and weekend activities, such as joining a sports team.
- Many teens are thrill seekers and like to do things that give them a rush. Physical activities like sports, roller derby, or rock climbing can be a good replacement activity.
- When teens have enjoyable alternatives to alcohol and other drugs, they are less likely to use them. When teens have friends who choose healthy alternatives, they are less likely to use alcohol and drugs.

Also, talk to your teen about what makes a person a good friend, such as never trying to get friends to do something that could get them into trouble or asking them to do something that makes them uncomfortable.

Risk Factors

Four factors put teenagers at risk for alcohol or drug problems:

- Early, regular use
- Truancy and school failure
- Hanging out with peers who use alcohol or drugs
- Lack of parental supervision

Other factors that increase the risk of young teens' use:

If your teen has:

- Poor social skills and peer-refusal skills
- Favorable attitudes toward alcohol or drug use

A family with:

- Favorable attitudes toward alcohol or drug use
- Poor supervision and discipline
- Inconsistent rules and consequences related to alcohol or drug use

Five Warning Signs

Five areas of warning signs of teenage alcohol and drug problems:

- **Physical:** fatigue, sleep problems, repeated health complaints, red and glazed eyes, and a lasting cough.
- **Emotional:** personality change, sudden mood changes, irritability, irresponsible behavior, low self-esteem, poor judgment, depression, withdrawal, and a general lack of interest.
- **Family:** starting arguments, breaking rules, or withdrawing from the family.
- **School:** decreased interest, negative attitude, drop in grades, many absences, truancy, and discipline referrals.
- **Social/behavioral:** peer group involved with drugs and alcohol, problems with the law, dramatic dress and appearance change.

Make a Plan

The Steps for Making a Plan for Teen Alcohol and/or Substance Use

- Track and observe the behavior: knowing when drug or alcohol use happens and under what circumstances can help you develop a plan.
- Identify what you want your teen TO do. For example:
 - Take a regular urinalysis test and get clean results
 - Get permission from you before spending time with friends
- Set up a reward or limit.
- Stay calm and matter of fact.

It can help to find out how other parents deal with alcohol and substance use. Give your teens extra supervision as you are developing and starting to use a plan.

Discussing the Plan with your Teen

Some things to remember for this discussion:

- **Calmer is better.**
- **Lectures are ineffective**, particularly ones meant to instill guilt—e.g., suggesting that if the teen really cared about you, they would never (drink/use drugs).
- **Matter-of-factly focus on the rules** and the incentives and consequences.
- **Avoid power struggles. If your teen looks ready to argue, disengage.** Give the consequence later to avoid escalation.
 - Example: “Your red eyes and the smell of marijuana in your room tells me that you have been smoking pot. We’ll talk later about the consequence,” and walk away.
- **Monitor your teen’s behavior and, based on behavior, consistently deliver incentives or consequences.**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of your plan and fine-tune as needed.**

Continuing to Focus on Pro-Social Behavior

- Get them into extracurricular activities.
- Spend time with them doing what you both enjoy.
- Encourage them to bring their friends home (your chance to see who they are and whether they are the kind of influence you want).
- When your family goes on outings, consider having your teen bring a friend along sometimes (you can specify certain positive friends).
- Maintain some contact with the parents of your teen’s friends.

Answering Questions about Your Own Use as a Teen

Your teen may ask you about your own use as a teen or you may have already talked to your teen about your own use.

Even if you drank or used drugs as a teen, you want to avoid giving your teen the message that you think it is okay for them to use. Some ways to do this:

- Point out that it is against the law for teens to drink alcohol or use drugs and that there are serious consequences associated with breaking the law.
- Tell your teen that it is your job to bring up a healthy child and point out how unsafe drinking and using other drugs can be.
- Focus on the present. The conversation is about them rather than you and any conflicting feelings you may have.
- When you answer your teen's question about past use, be straightforward and avoid unnecessary details. Adjust what you say according to your teen's age and maturity, and let them know what you would have done differently and expect them to do.

Teen Comebacks

- “No thanks.”
- “I don’t feel like it—do you have any soda?”
- “It’s (alcohol, drugs) NOT my thing.”
- “Are you talking to me? FORGET it.”
- “Why do you keep pressuring me when I’ve said NO?”
- “Back off!”
- You can do what you want, but I’m not going to risk getting in trouble!
- “I’m not into doing that (drinking/drugs) right now.”
- “My parents would kill me.” If the other person says, “They’ll never find out,” one comeback is, “You don’t know my parents.”
- Be a broken record. Tell your teen to keep saying no until the person pressuring them to use stops or until your teen can use one of the other ways to say no, including giving one of the reasons above.
- Walk away or ignore the offer.
- Change the subject or suggest doing something else.
- “Let’s do ____ instead” (this can also save a friend from using)
- Assert yourself. Learning to stick up for oneself is an essential life skill.

What is your teen ACTUALLY going to say?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List of Comebacks

Teen Responses When Encouraged to Use Alcohol or Drugs by Their Peers

Some examples of comebacks are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

*Ask your teen for their comeback ideas and write them here to share with the group.
Please bring this back to group next week!*

Technology and Your Teen—Summary

1. Technology and Your Teen: Norms

As you think about how to help your teen navigate today's technology, it can be helpful to know what is "typical" for teens around social media, cell phones, and internet usage. For example:

- Teens will text. They will do it a lot, and that is normal.
- Teens will be on multiple social media accounts.
- Teens will post comments and photos on social media.
- Sexting does happen.

Remember: it is normal for parents to monitor teen's texts and social media accounts and to limit screen time. Teens might tell you that you are invading their privacy or are more strict than other parents, but it is very common for parents to set limits on technology use. When teens know that adults are checking their texts and social media accounts they are reminded to be more thoughtful about what they post.

2. House Rules and Supervision for Technology

While it might be difficult to control the technology teens use outside of your home, you can set clear rules about technology in your home. For example:

- Cell phones don't come to the dinner table
- Put your phone down when people are talking to you
- Cell phones, tablets, laptop computers, etc. are charged in the kitchen at night
- Parents have access to passwords and social media

Technology is always changing. Not everyone wants to tune into what the latest social media sites are—but you can be sure that your teen is! If you are not tech-savvy, is there someone who could be your Tech-Helper?

Some parents like to have teens agree to contracts about technology. Cell phone contracts have become a popular way to talk to teens about rules for cell phones.

Just like with other behaviors, you might want to have an incentive or a plan for setting a limit for teens who have difficulty following house rules about technology.

3. Technology and Bullying

Bullying on social media can be really hard to monitor. Pay attention to your teen's attitudes and behavior around technology to catch any red flags.

4. Talking to Teens about Technology

It is helpful to take the same approach when explaining expectations about technology as when you talk to your teens about other expectations: stay calm and clearly describe the behavior you want to see.

5. Home Practice

Think about your house rules for technology this week and see if you have a chance to talk to your teen about those expectations.

Continue using the charts, contracts, and incentives you are using.

Sample Cell Phone Contract

- I understand that having a cell phone is a privilege, and my foster parents might take my phone if I don't follow the rules.
- I will respond when my foster parents call or text me.
- I will turn off my cell phone when my foster parents ask me to.
- I will follow school rules around cell phone use.
- I will use my cell phone to send, post, and receive only appropriate content.
- I will give my foster parents the passwords to my phone, and they will have access to all content on my phone.
- I understand that my phone will be checked in to my foster parents at night by _____ and I will get it back in the morning at _____.

Signature

Date

