

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

#12

5/06

PARENTING TEENS

Which is more difficult, being a teenager, or parenting one?

Parenting teens is difficult. There is no way to smooth all the bumps or solve all the problems. However, caregivers who show respect for their children and an interest in their activities help build a positive relationship. When rules are fair and the consequences are appropriate, teens are better able to make positive choices and feel good about themselves. Teens who feel good about themselves are better able to avoid getting into trouble.

How does a caregiver promote positive behaviors and better self-esteem?

CHOOSING RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WISELY:

- Encourage family activities at home or in other settings
- Promote school activities
- Support activities that require responsibility that your teen can handle

MONITORING TEENS:

- Get to know your teenager's friends
- Know where children are and what they are doing
- Your teen may think you do not trust him or her to make the right decision, and that is probably true for some situations

FAMILY RULES AND BOUNDARIES:

- Provide consequences when rules are broken and make sure to follow through on the consequences
- Let teenagers have a hand in setting rules, and the consequences if the rules are broken
- Teenagers will still break rules, but this can help avoid power struggles
- Teenagers will not admit that firm rules are actually reassuring
- A relationship built on warmth and kindness can withstand rules and consequences

ALLOWING OR ENCOURAGING TEENS TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN OPINIONS:

- Encourage teenagers to express opinions, which may be different than the adult's
- Avoid attempting to control by guilt, withdrawing love, or other means of control
- Focus on trying to control the behavior rather than trying to control the child
- Caregiver's who give their teenagers love, time, rules, and encouragement to think for themselves may find they are better able to enjoy the teen years