



# The Five Basics of Parenting Adolescents

Adapted from "Raising Teens: A Synthesis of Research and a Foundation for Action"<sup>1</sup>

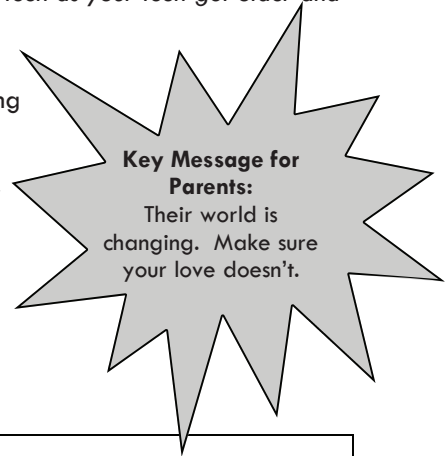


## LOVE AND CONNECT

Teens need to have a connection with their parents. Support and accept your teen as your teen get older and more mature.

### Strategies for Parents:

- Compliment and praise your teen when you see they have done something well.
- Acknowledge the good times.
- Your teen will challenge your point of view. Discuss your ideas with your teen. It's ok to have a difference in opinion.
- Spend time just listening to what your teen is feeling, experiencing, etc.
- Treat each teen as a unique individual.
- Appreciate and acknowledge your teen's interests, strengths, humor, etc.
- Provide meaningful roles for your teen in the family.
- Spend time together one on one and as a family.



**Key Message for Parents:**  
Their world is changing. Make sure your love doesn't.

## MONITOR AND OBSERVE

Teens need parents to know what is going on in their lives. Be aware of things like: how they are doing in school and what after-school activities they do. Let them know you are aware of their activities. Find out what is going on by talking, not by constantly watching your teen.



**Key Message for Parents:**  
Keep an eye on your teen's activities. It matters more than ever.

### Strategies for Parents:

- Keep track of where your teen is and what they are involved in. Listen, observe and talk with other adults who know your teen.
- Keep in touch with the other adults in your teen's life. They will let you know how he is doing when you are not there. Ask to know the good and the bad.
- Involve yourself in school events.
- Stay on top of information about your teen's grades, job, etc.
- Learn and watch for warning signs of poor physical and mental health.
- Ask for advice if any warning signs worry you.
- Keep an eye on relationships your teen has in and outside of the home.
- Make sure that your teen challenges him or herself.

## GUIDE AND LIMIT

Teens need parents to have clear boundaries that can be subject to change. These limits should protect family rules and help your teen grow and mature.

### Strategies for Parents

- Keep two kinds of "house rules." The rules around safety can't be argued. The rules around household tasks and schedules can be discussed.
- Make clear standards that are high and also realistic.
- Choose your battles and let go of smaller issues.
- Teach teens with discipline, don't use it for revenge.
- Punishing teens should not hurt their bodies or feelings.
- Give your teen both more duties and choices as they grow into adults.

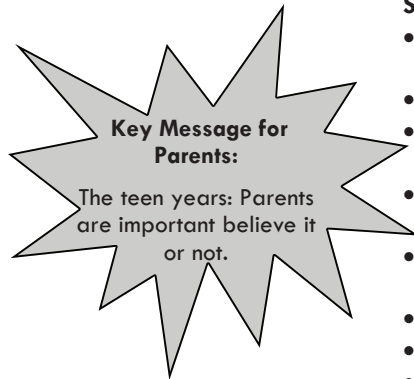


**Key Message for Parents:**  
Remember to be both firm and flexible.



## MODEL AND CONSULT

Teens need parents to help them make good choices and guide them while they grow older. Talk to your teen, support him or her and teach by example!



### Strategies for Parents:

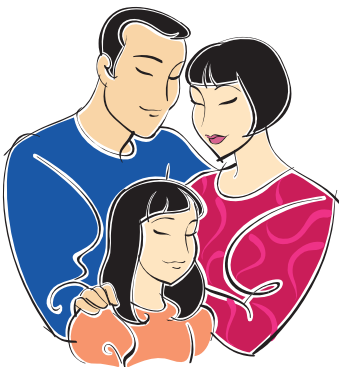
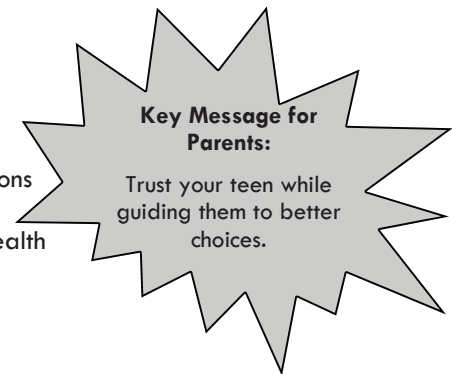
- Set a good example by behaving the way you want your teens to behave.
- Share your opinions with your teen.
- Model the kind of adult relationships that you would like your teen to have
- Give teens truthful answers when they ask questions. Keep in mind their maturity level.
- Take pride in your family customs. Share your family's history with your teen.
- Support teens' school habits and job training.
- Help teens get connected with their future plans.
- Give teens the chance to use their own reason and make decisions.

## PROVIDE AND ADVOCATE

Teens need parents to give them healthy food, clothing, shelter and health care. They also need a caring home and loving adults in their lives.

### Strategies for Parents

- Meet with people in your neighborhood, schools, and local groups.
- Choose the best schools and learning programs for your teen.
- Choose the safest neighborhood you can for your teen. Look into options for youth programs.
- Make sure your teen gets yearly health care check ups and mental health care.
- Find people and local groups that will help you be a better parent.



<sup>1</sup>Simpson, A. Rae (2001). *Raising Teens: A Synthesis of Research and a Foundation for Action*. Boston: Center for Health Communication, Harvard School of Public Health.

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