



# TEEN CHALLENGES

Parenting Tips & Tricks

As children move into their “Teens” (around age 13) their brains have a lot going on! Not only is the brain continuing to expand until age 25, hormones are affecting it. Stress, sex, and growth hormones influence how your Teen thinks, feels, & behaves. Add peer pressure and it’s a boiling pot ready to explode. While the Teen years are some of the most challenging... they’re also *very rewarding!*

## How You Can Help:

- **Learn More**
  - understand how life is different today than when you were a teen
  - check in with other teen parents to share family values and expectations (more communication among parents = greater chance to discuss differences)
  - call “family meetings”... work together to create & stick to meeting agendas; allow others to call “family meetings”
- **Listen Openly & Ask Questions**
  - sit 1:1 with your Teen and make eye contact on a regular basis
  - don’t interrupt (take notes if needed to be clear on what they’ve said)
  - remember they’re developing their own life views (perhaps different than yours)
  - be clear you’ve heard what they said (not how they said it); i.e., “*I think I heard you say <repeat back what you heard> Is that what you meant?*”
- **Be Fair & Consistent**
  - establish family rules focusing on family values like respect and connect behaviors to the rules through examples
  - work with your Teen to create guidelines focusing on “boundaries” that allow them to gain more independence, i.e.: curfews, driving, etc.
- **Keep Your Cool**
  - Teens know how to push parents’ buttons so staying calm is the best way to help
    - say “let’s both take a time out to cool off, then we can discuss this”
    - when you meet to talk... make eye contact, listen, & ask questions
- **Acknowledge & Encourage**
  - thank or reward your Teen when they succeed or follow the rules
  - allow them to try new things and take safe risks; then let them know you love them even if or when they fail

