



Tuning in to Your Teens

What You Can Expect

Teenagers will question values and rules. This is a basic and healthy part of adolescent development.

Annoying habits such as refusal to wash, poor manners, and untidy dress are normal ways in which teenagers try to assert themselves.

Teenagers have a very strong sense of fairness. They will become judgmental if adults or peers do not do what they think is fair.

Teenagers will sleep late on weekends and during school breaks. Most young people need more rest during this stage and too little sleep can result in moodiness.

As teenagers become more outspoken and independent, many parents feel less important. It's OK! You are not losing your kid. It is normal for teens to need distance from their family and closeness with their friends.

What You Can Do

When setting and enforcing rules, make sure each rule is reasonable, clear, and enforceable. The risks and consequences of breaking the rules should be made clear along with exactly what is not allowed.

Recognize that their appearance is their own problem. Set strict standards only when it's very important to you.

Try to be cheerful. Ignore teen moods as much as possible.

Praise your teenagers when they do well.

When you hear, "I'm the only one who has to ..." check out the rules with other parents. You aren't the meanest parent in the world!

Recognize the difference between giving advice and listening. You may think you're being helpful, but if your kids think you're lecturing or nagging, they will tune you out. Ask, "May I make a suggestion about that?" If they agree, then you'll really have their attention.

If you are at the end of your rope, call the PIRC 24-hour helpline at 1-800-342-7472. Someone will listen to your concerns and help you find services for yourself and your family.