



CITIZEN'S CRIME PREVENTION ASSOCIATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Effective Parenting of Teens

Before you begin examining the advice and information contained here, there are a few important points to remember:

- No one is born knowing how to parent.
- Be gentle on yourself. Make sure to look after your own needs so that you will be able to look after those of people who depend on you.
- Learn from your mistakes. Educate yourself. There is a tremendous amount of parenting information in videos, text books and magazines that you can find at libraries and other community resource centers.
- Get help. Seek out support if you are feeling overwhelmed. Get help from people you feel comfortable with, for example: school counsellors, help lines, doctors, friends and other parents.
- Take a parenting course.
- The ways in which parents give information and guidance are as important as the facts offered. Some of the most effective parents are those who make a great effort to model the appropriate or desired behaviour, whether it be in conflict resolution, negotiating, problem solving, or just daily living.

It's Never Too Late to be a Great Parent

We can learn what our adolescents need by listening and observing. Are you an approachable person? Can your teens ask you questions? Are you available when they need you? You should be.

Trust yourself. Use common sense. Look things up if you do not understand. An adolescent does not usually rebel against his/her parents but against their power -- it feels unfair and unjust. Give them some room to make their own mistakes. Teens need to set some of their own limits.

Because "belonging" is seriously important to teens, they often form a society of their own with new fads in appearance and slang expressions. These things spread as fast as spilled water and change just as quickly. Accept them.

Your teens need your respect and recognition. Let them share in some of the family decision making. Encourage responsibility by making use of their abilities and remember to give them praise, love and understanding.

Have fair expectations of teens. You should treat teens as you would like to be treated. Remember they are not children any more, even though they may make inappropriate decisions at times.



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Communicating With Teens

Speak with respect. Envision them as friends or work colleagues. It will affect how you deal with them.

The environment in which the communication takes place is as important as the words themselves. Choose times and locations carefully. Body language and positioning are important. Everyone should be at the same level (sitting) and in a neutral environment.

If things get too stressful a cooling off period would help. Take time out!

Learn to express feelings rather than placing blame. Use "I" statements as opposed to "You make me when you do ". Always listen attentively.

Find a way to say what you believe without using a "preacher tone". Don't lecture. They will tune you out.

Don't worry if your teen doesn't feel like talking. Respect their privacy.

Find ways to let your adolescent know how much they mean to you.

Don't be over exuberant in your effort to communicate -- actions speak louder than words.

Talk about alcohol, drugs and sexuality with your children early in life -- it will be easier to discuss said issues when they reach teens. If speaking about these matters is too difficult, share your values and opinions through discussions of books, T.V. programs or movies. Perhaps another respected adult could be asked to speak with your teens.

A badly timed kiss, word of praise, question or teasing can be mortifying to a teen. Teens find it hard to laugh at their own absurdities. Worst of all is to shame them in front of friends. Be patient -- this too shall pass.

Teens are on the threshold of adulthood. Growth spurts and hormonal activity can create an emotional roller coaster -- an uneasy time for both the parent and teens.

Remember: you are not alone in this experience.



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O F N E W F O U N D L A N D & L A B R A D O R

Ways to Influence Your Teen

Make sure their friends are welcome in your home.

Be a good role model.

Compliment them when they do something well.

Build their self-confidence in any way you can. Help them get involved in activities which will make them feel good about themselves.

Don't make a big deal out of minor issues (messy rooms, earrings or long hair). Usually the less said the better.
Expect friction and don't take it too personally.

Expect good things and show confidence in them.