

STRATEGIES & SOLUTIONS – Navigating Teen Party Scene

HELPING THEM MAKE THE TOUGH CHOICES

Establish clear, basic boundaries that provide structure and safety

- Set the Bar high – a bit higher than you hope to achieve – Tough to Go Backward
- Rules for: curfew, unsupervised time, media, homework, chores, checking in
 - Expect PushBack – they are emerging teens
- They need to be able to ID the principles and rules
- Make it about your love for them, NOT your lack of faith in their judgment

AGE-APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

- Reasonable – Consistent - Easily Understood - Promote a Safe Environment
- Agreed Upon and Enforced by both Parents
- Most effective when begun at early age, refined with each stage of development
- Support and uphold the LAW (curfew, driving, drinking, drugs)
- Modeled by parents, siblings, other adults that guide your child's development
- Don't sweat the small stuff! (i.e, let the clothing, hair issues go, in lieu of BIG issues)

BUILDING SKILLS FOR REFRAINING

- Match PRIVILEGES with EARNED RESPONSIBILITY
- Not based on chronology or how many times they have asked
- Encourage jobs (volunteer/paid) – responsibility outside of the home
- Opportunities to interface with adults and people of different interests, acumen...

MONITORING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH

- Make your expectations clear – your values, not society's
- Agree on boundaries & consequences in advance – in 'Fair Weather'
- Stick by your rules - Hold your kids accountable
- Do not go back on your word/consequence/ultimatum

EFFECTIVE CONSEQUENCES

- Meaningful loss of privilege – number ONE motivator of behavior change
- Related to infraction
- Child-Generated
- Enforceable
- Self-Designed Reward Systems increase good behavior – Reward Good Behavior

TOOLS: Parallel Parenting, RolePlay and Debate – Every chance you get. They all say they never get PRACTICE! (getting in a car with ..., your best friend offers you a blunt...)

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS THAT WORK

- Keep tabs on afterschool/weekend activity – sleepovers at your own peril
- Be sure they know how to be social and sober; that they have a way OUT of bad situations
- Know signs of use/tools of abuse – crosscheck with others who know your child
- Have a family code word – free pass to get out of difficult situations
- Talk to the parents' of your child's friends
- Make it a habit to hug and kiss them goodnight – be sure that conversation is part of their return home – ALWAYS!

Building TRUST: What to SHARE and How to COMMUNICATE it

Make opportunities for multiple Conversations – not the BIG Talk

- DIRECT : Conversations about drugs, alcohol, risky behaviors
 - Do they know directly that you do not want them using alcohol?
- INDIRECT: General conversations about their experiences (ie., new dress)
- Let them know you are interested and listening to it ALL
- Curiosity vs Interrogation - Non-judgmental if you want them coming back
- Limit the sharing of historical transgressions – remember the end goal – do not glamorize past exploits

DIFFERENT RULES IN DIFFERENT HOMES

- What are YOURs? Agree on Safety.
- House Rules worth discussing: Curfew, Alcohol, Tobacco, home alone
- Get the Skinny on the homes your child visits.... MAKE the CALL
- Give them an out – sometimes kids get stuck in situations they cannot handle
- Sometimes they get stuck on friendships they cannot resist
- Be the NO, the excuse, the shoulder to cry on, the place to land
- Provide the Safe and Sober alternative

When They Mess-Up (and they will)

- Their SAFE arrival trumps all – wait 24 hours before discussing
- Breach of TRUST results in Loss of PRIVACY
- Reasonable, time-limited consequence with hope for winning your trust (perspective)
- Avoid public sharing and long-term re-hashing of transgression (yours and other's kids)

TOOLS: Behavior contracts, Networking, Family Meeting, Family Password, Role-Play: entre into social situations, healthy risk-taking options, Boundary Breakers

Great Resources:

SettheRules.org

Yes, Your Teen is Crazy! By Michael Bradley

Teenage as a Second Language, Barbara Greenberg

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