

## PARENTING TIPS

### Don't Overreact to Teenagers

Are you planning to have teenagers? If you're going to let your children live past twelve years old, you better get used to the idea. Adolescent changes often startle parents. They feel threatened by the new thinking and behavior. In fact, it's hard to not feel threatened knowing that a teen may attack or explode at the slightest irritation.

Teen actions and questions are often perceived as forms of rebellion and parents have a hard time knowing whether this is a phase to be ignored or the beginning of a problem that needs urgent action.

It's important to know where to draw the line. Independent thinking is healthy but disrespect is not. Choosing one's own values is necessary but can't be an excuse for dishonor. Parents who don't realize the difference, miss valuable teaching opportunities.

Teens may appear hard but they're still very sensitive. When parents dish out criticism the same way teens do, teens get hurt. Their understanding of themselves is much more fragile than their actions lead you to believe. Teens are at a prime time for life-altering experiences. An offhand comment may make a lasting impression so be careful what you say and how you say it.

Tie privilege and responsibility together. A young person shouldn't be able to experience the benefits of family life without also abiding by the principles that make it work. "I feel uncomfortable taking you to the all right now because of the way you asked me to leave your room a few minutes ago. First, let's deal with the way you're treating me and then we can talk about the privilege of going to the mall."

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This parenting tip is taken from the book, Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes, In You and Your Kids by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN