

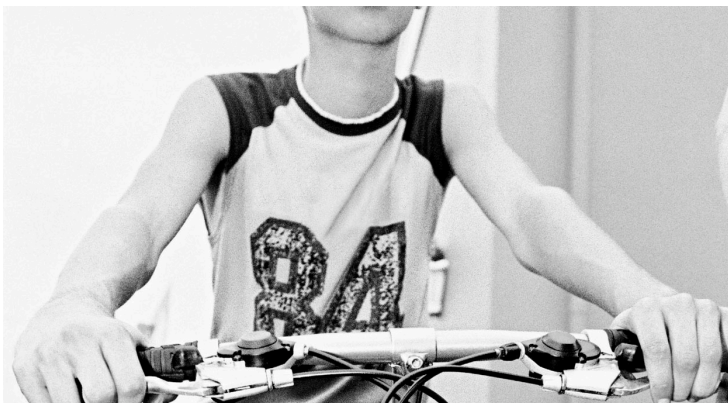


Monitoring teens is an art form. Too much and teens will rebel or not learn the skills they need to function on their own. And too little monitoring can result in behaviors that spell trouble. What to do? Here are some strategies to consider for keeping track of teens.

- Know where our teens are – especially on evening and weekends.
- Let teens know that using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs is illegal and unacceptable, and that it would upset you – very much.
- Monitor television programs teens watch.
- Set rules about the music teens listen to.
- Know how teens are doing in school. Don't blow off parent-teacher meetings.
- Monitor Internet use. This is a big one. Keep computers in "public" rooms of the house.
- Try to eat together on a regular basis (without the TV, please).
- Curfews are good. Enforce them. And know the curfew laws in your community.
- Check in when teens come home from school.
- Have family routines.

- Explaining why we need to know about their activities.
- Acknowledging their need for independence.
- Recognizing as teens mature, our expectations should change accordingly.
- Nurturing their self-sufficiency. Build trust by giving more freedom gradually.

Sometimes the best plans don't work and teens find themselves in over their heads. Have a family code word like "blue fish." When a teen calls to say "there are a lot of blue fish here," it means something is wrong. Go get them, no questions asked.



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