

# Communication Tip No.14: Teens

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For many parents, the teen years throw them a curveball. Suddenly, the dynamics change as kids slowly transition toward adulthood, while still needing steady guidance and limits.

Maintaining a healthy parental relationship is key during these years. And, while teens don't always realize it, they rely on parental support and nurturing more than they know.

There are, perhaps, as many tips for parenting teens as there are teenagers (because each person is so unique), but here are a few things to keep in mind for this age range:



- **Show them you respect their perspective.** This does not mean that you agree with their point of view or that they will necessarily get their way. Rather, truly listening to them demonstrates that you value them as individuals with their own thoughts and feelings.
- **Listen, but don't be overly empathetic.** Teens have their friends to chat endlessly about various challenges they are facing. What they need from parents and caregivers is the listening ear of someone who is more experienced and can serve as a sounding board.
- **Be authentic.** Teens recognize (and often disdain) when adults try too hard to be their friend. Be true to the role God gave you in their life!
- **Set clear expectations.** Like most age groups, teens need to know exactly what you expect of them in different situations. Do they need to call every few hours to check in? Let them know. Do you expect them home at a certain time? Let them know!
- **Let them know they can always come to you about anything (and mean it!).** It's important not to assume teens understand they can come to you about difficult situations. If you want them to turn to you if they are in trouble (whether that be underage drinking at a party, relationship problems, psychological issues, abuse, etc.), tell them directly and give concrete examples.

The teen years are challenging, but the rewards of mature, well-adjusted young adults can't be overestimated-making your role as a trusted caregiver invaluable!