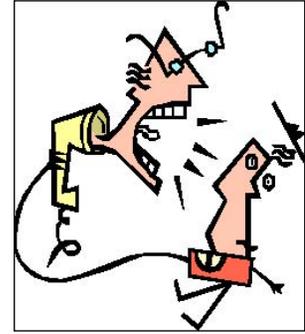


Discipline & Teens: What Am I Supposed to Do?...



1. **Fair and firm discipline is simply you, the parent, creating a discipline plan for your teen that is fair to both of you and sticking to it using a firm approach.** Here are three reasons why you should:
 - ◆ **Fair and firm discipline teaches respect for adults and those in authority.** Teens who do not have any, little, or have the wrong type of discipline in the home often are those who get into trouble at school and/or with the law.
 - ◆ **Fair and firm discipline allows your teen to feel safe.** When you set clear expectations and limits you are showing your teen the safe path for dealing with do's and don'ts in their daily lives. You are giving them the tools they need to make choices for themselves. This is a very safe feeling and helps with building self-reliance. Older teens will eventually learn how to set their own expectations and limits when this type of discipline is used.
 - ◆ **Fair and firm discipline allows your teen to take responsibility for his/her actions.** When your teen understands the rules and the consequences and knows that he/she is expected to follow the rules, then he/she will be ready to take consequences, whether they are positive or negative. This means you will have to remember to praise good behavior as well as stand by the discipline you have set for poor behavior.
 2. **Communicate the limits.** This should be done when you and your teen are not at odds with each other. Find the time to talk it through, stating clearly what the limit or rule is.
 3. **Let your teen have a say.** If you let your teenager help with what the rules are, he/she will be more likely to obey them. You may have to give and take on a few things. That is okay because, after a period of time, if the rule is not working it can be changed.
 4. **Be consistent.** If the rule is no TV until after they finish their homework, then it needs to be that way every school day. You may not always be in the mood to enforce the limits; that is part of what makes parenting so hard. Once your teen understands that the limit will be enforced even when you are tired, he/she will stop testing that limit.
 5. **Be fair.** If something has come up that makes you feel that the rule needs to be changed or added to, wait until you have thought it through and are able to talk about it to your teen.
 6. **Don't forget your values.** Values make us who we are, so teach your teen your values when setting the limits. Never be taken in by what other parents let their kids do. Know ahead how to reply (i.e., "to each his own," "I'm sorry that it bothers you, but these are our rules"). When they come back at you with, "I wish I wasn't part of this family!," Take a deep breath and let it go. This is a very normal reaction. It's their job to test the limits, and push your buttons while testing.
- Adapted from *Tips on Setting Limits & Rules and 3 Reasons Why Your Teen Needs Fair and Firm Discipline* by Denise Witmer, About.com Guide: <http://parentingteens.about.com/cs/discipline/a/rules.htm>
7. If you need help giving clear messages to your teenager, think about writing them down in an Action Plan.
 8. Other resources you may find helpful are:
 - ◆ **Healthy Children, General Rules for Disciplining Teens** - <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/default.aspx>
 - ◆ **American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Facts for Families: Discipline** – https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/facts_for_families/43_discipline.pdf

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