

6 WAYS DADS CAN CONNECT WITH TEENS

Great Tips for Moms Too

Here are six ways that you can positively influence their daily decision making, impact healthy behaviors, and help today's youth to become responsible adults.

By: Ashley Foster

1

EAT A DAILY MEAL TOGETHER

Food (eaten together) is a good way to your child's heart. But it's not just the food that makes a difference, it's all of the connections, conversations, and confidences that you can share by keeping regular contact through mealtime.

2

AVOID THE PETTY BACK & FORTH

The key to successful parenting is to know which battles are worth tackling. Concentrate only on those issues that genuinely need your attention to protect your teen's well-being. Teens will try and outwit us or start an argument. Don't over-explain, and don't renegotiate. Just remind them of the rule.

3

TALK WITH THEM OFTEN & EARLY

Many parents fear that talking about serious topics (like sexual activity) will lead to an interest in engaging in the behavior. This simply is not true. Furthermore, research shows that youth "want to hear about sex education from their own moms, dads, and guardians.

4

TELL THEM WHEN YOU DISAPPROVE

It's important to be good examples for your teen(s). Teens want their parents to act like parents. They say that "parents are their number one choice for support and information. Setting clear boundaries and enforcing rules are two ways to offer healthy support to teens.

5

BE ON YOUR TEEN'S SIDE

Teen aspire to be accepted and respected. Specific and honest praise is one good way to show teens that you approve of them. Remember to keep it real. Generic praise, "nice job", is much less helpful than specific praise, "I like how you told your friends that your family is important to you."

6

RECOGNIZE EVERY CHILD IS DIFFERENT

As a parent, you are blessed with a unique child who – despite the challenges – has many positive qualities. As a parent, learn to support your teen in positive ways, no matter who he or she is becoming. The support and love of caring parents are important factors in helping your child to grow in confidence, healthy attitudes, and life skills.

For more quick tips on parenting, personal well-being, and couples visit www.uaex.edu/nlj