

Your Teenage Child: Ten tips for managing

----- **Supriya Kumar Chakraborty**

Is your son/daughter anywhere between 12 – 18 years of age? Does s/he spend a lot of time on computer? Do you feel curious about what your son/daughter does on the computer? Are you sometimes confused because you don't understand your children anymore? Do you feel hurt because your children don't explain their activities to you?

These are just some of the situations that nowadays parents, having teenage kids, face in everyday life. Experience says that it is more difficult to manage teenagers of today's age than it was 20 years ago. With the growth of the media and internet a big social change has taken place in the world and we must learn to accept that our teenage children are also part of this change. While this change has advanced children a lot, it has also created a major difference between children and parents. For example, our children have learnt to speak in English – the majority of our parents have not. Our children have learnt to use computer and internet – the majority of our parents have not. All this creates a distance between parents and children, particularly teenage children. While it is true that teenagers need to change some of their behaviors, it is equally true that parents should change some of their behaviors too.

So under these circumstances how to develop an understanding relationship with your teenage son/daughter? How to guide him/her without raising a fight? This article provides ten tips to observe their activities and guide them appropriately.

1. Unless it's very necessary do not buy mobile phones for them. If you decide to buy them a mobile, then first of all be very clear about the purpose of the mobile. Explain to them the reason why you are giving the privilege of using a mobile. Don't opt for any expensive set with too many options. Just buy a set that will serve the basic functions like making phone calls and sending SMS.

The next thing is to select a SIM. In this respect, it is better to use the Grameenphone SIM because by registering this SIM online you can check the call list from time to time. No room for lies.

Besides mobile phones, also pay attention to your children's use of the computer. Tell your children to be attentive and careful in using popular social network "Facebook". You stay careful too.

2. Ensure his/her regular attendance to school. Check teachers' comment section of school/college diary everyday regarding his/her progress in home work and class work. Once in a while have a surprise check of his personal room and school bag.
3. When your daughter becomes an adolescent, discuss the feminine physical changes openly with her and advise her to communicate with you on such matters. Teenage girls are more emotional and sensitive than teenage boys. Girls always look for persons whom they can confide in, with whom they can share private matters. That person may be her boy friend, cousin, siblings or even a mentor. Try to read feelings of your daughter. In this regard, a mother can become the best friend of her daughter. Be a family doctor.
4. What is most important is to understand the feeling of your teenage children. You can do this by communication. It will play the most important role between parents and children. Make yourself approachable. Establish friendly cordial relationship with them. You can start by regularly chatting about school's activities with them.
5. A trait observed among teenage boys and girls is that they have a rosy picture of the world and they tend to get lost in the world of imagination. At this time what you need is to use right words at the right time. Your main duty would be to teach them the difference between good and bad. Another equally important thing to teach them is the value of money – don't give them a lot of pocket money or buy them whatever they want. Explain to them the difference between useful things and useless things so that they know what to spend their money on. This will help them become practical from an early age.
6. Whenever your teenage children make a mistake, whatever you do, do not criticize them. Try to persuade them so that they do not do it for a second time. Use logic and not sentiments to make it clear to them what you expect from them. . As today's adolescents are usually intelligent, you can quite expect them to accept logical explanation. Use less sentimental words.

7. Be very careful and adopt a strategy to correct your teenage boy or girl. Remember, he/she has a sense of dignity like everyone else and you do not have the right to undermine it. Bring him/her under control by using words and right conduct instead of physical torture or verbal abuse. Specially, don't blame them in front of others. Here again, communication plays an important role.
8. Give freedom to your teenage boy/girl. However, before doing this, you, as parents, must understand the difference between indulgence and freedom. Don't spoil them by giving them too much or too little freedom. Remember strictness is necessary sometimes. Help him/her learn how important discipline and punctuality in life are. At the same time you have to know when to be patient with them, when to give space. For example, try to understand their way of seeing things, their dress code, fashion sense etc as these are also the demands of time. You cannot expect them to dress in the way you dressed yourself as a teenager 30 years back.
9. Try to update yourself. For example you may learn the basic computer courses. This will help you use the internet, emails and most importantly, Facebook. Then again try to form reading habit within your family so that your children can never say "what do you understand of it"? Reading English magazines and literature books will also help you improve in English. Now, many of you might say, do we have the age or the time to do all this? My answer to such questions is, if you can make time to watch drama serials or cricket match, if you can make time to go to beauty parlors or shopping, you can also make time to develop yourself intellectually. It's not a matter of time or age; rather it's a matter of will. By remaining updated you will automatically earn respect from your children.
10. As teenage children spend a considerable amount of time at home, try to spend quality time with them, for example, eat together, pass happy time, sleep, and do everything as a team. But at the same time also remember that some teenagers may not want your company all the time and may feel disturbed. They may also not want to be looked after as small kids. In such circumstances, don't feel hurt and instead make sure that you are giving some privacy to teenagers. Remember everyone feels

the need to stay alone for some time. We all want some time for ourselves. So try to make a balance between your teenagers' family and personal hours. If you can do this, only then you can be the best judge of their behavioral and mental states.

Lastly, if the above tips don't work in your case and if you fail to fully read their minds then do not hesitate to consult an expert and call for professional help or additional support. Be their mentor and friend.

Note: You have brought a child to this world having made a great sacrifice, brought them up with great care and affection, culture and education. Can anyone play the same role as you? It is through your identity and your grooming that will define your son as a hero or your daughter as a beauty queen!

Author : Chief Consultant of SA Associates, A centre of career build-up affairs, supriyokumar@gmail.com