

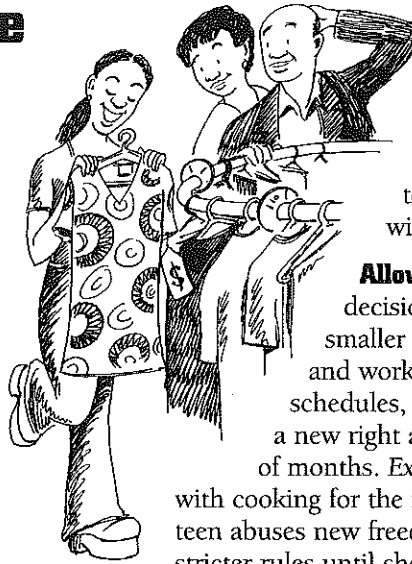
Guidance vs. independence

Finding the balance

One of the biggest challenges of parenting teens is knowing when to loosen the rules and when to tighten them. The payoff to striking the right balance? Helping your teen grow into an adult who's responsible and can make decisions. Try these suggestions for balancing freedom and control.

Decide which rules can't be compromised. For example, you can probably accept your high schooler deciding her own bedtime. But will you put up with her driving 20 miles over the speed limit? Set clear rules and consequences for those areas you won't budge on.

Negotiate flexible areas. Listen to your teen's input and pick rules you both can live with. *Example:* She can have



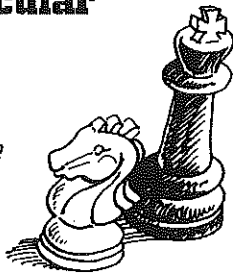
her girlfriends sleep over as long as they clean up any mess the next morning. Also, listen to her side of a situation. You don't always have to change your mind, but be willing to think it over.

Allow your teen to make more decisions as time goes by. Start with smaller matters (hairstyles, clothes) and work up to larger issues (class schedules, managing money). Try granting a new right and responsibility every couple of months. *Example:* a later curfew along with cooking for the family once a month. If your teen abuses new freedoms, you can go back to stricter rules until she shows she can be trusted. 👍

Extracurricular activities

A good way to spend free time

How can your child cure the boredom blues and make school more enjoyable? By getting involved in after-school activities. From sports to chess, extracurriculars...



- ▲ help teens make friends;
- ▲ provide the opportunity to learn teamwork and responsibility;
- ▲ fill time in a positive way—so kids are less likely to get into trouble;
- ▲ may lead to better attendance and grades.

Note: Suggest that your teen check with school staff as well as your local parks and recreation department or youth center for information about available programs. 👍

Parent to Parent No drugs!

My son Andy desperately wanted to attend a friend's party. I was worried about other teens there using drugs, so I decided we should talk.

First, I reminded him that I am against illegal drug use of any kind. Even drugs some high schoolers may think are "harmless," like marijuana, can damage a growing body and mind. I explained that getting high can also lead to dangerous behavior such as car wrecks, falls from windows, and sexual harassment.

Then, Andy and I talked about ways to say no. For instance, since he plays soccer, he could say using drugs would get him kicked off the team. He could also pretend not to hear an offer and walk away without responding. Andy seems relieved to have an "out" if pressured, and I feel better now that we've talked. 👍



Q & A On course for college

Q My daughter is just starting high school. How can we be sure she takes the right classes for college?

A Planning early and staying in touch with the guidance counselor will help ensure that your daughter takes the class she needs. You could also check with a few colleges (call the admissions

office or visit their Web sites) for course requirements.

Different colleges have different standards. Generally, they like students to take four years of English; multiple courses in math, science, history, and foreign language; and a few classes in computers, PE, and the arts (drama, music, painting). More and more, colleges want to see students stretching themselves by taking higher-level courses, such as honors and advanced placement classes. Challenging electives in subjects like economics and psychology are smart choices, too. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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