

# THE ART OF PARENTING SUCCESSFUL ADOLESCENTS

Carrie Vick, LCSW-C  
Senior Social Worker  
Johns Hopkins Hospital  
410-955-2679

1. Be a good role model, teens generally do what you do, not what you say.
2. Be explicit about your values and have a zero-tolerance policy regarding cigarettes, alcohol and drug use (including marijuana).
3. Brag to extended family and your friends about your child, when possible do it so that your teen can hear you. Don't put your child down or embarrass them in front of others.
4. Discipline only when you are not angry. Discipline to teach a lesson and avoid physical discipline and long lectures. Both parents need to support each other in their discipline efforts.
5. Don't show favoritism.
6. Don't over burden your child with adult responsibilities.
7. Encourage your child and their friends to do their socialization at your house, with at least one parent home. Know your child's friends and associates. Meet the parents of your child's friends.
8. Encourage your child to eat breakfast daily. Eat family meals together as frequently as possible and be sure your child eats nutritious foods.
9. Encourage your teen to exercise and develop creative outlets or hobbies to relieve stress.
10. Get help for your child if s/he exhibits signs of depression, drug use, anti-social behavior or other problems.
11. Give increasing independence/autonomy with modified guidance. Allow teens to make as many decisions as possible and expect some mistakes.
12. Give teens their privacy but know what is going on in your home.
13. Give unconditional love.
14. Generously give acceptance, affection and affirmation.
15. If possible, involve extended family members or other responsible adults. It really does take a village to raise a child. Expose your child to as many positive people, places and experiences as possible.

16. If you are wrong or make a mistake, apologize.
17. If your child can't talk to you about an issue, give them permission to talk to another trusting adult.
18. Keep your word. Be consistent.
19. Let by-gones, be by-gones, don't keep bringing up your child's mistakes.
20. Listen, listen, listen. Be genuinely interested in what your child has to say. Maintain open communication.
21. Live your own life fully, don't live vicariously through your child/ren.
22. Move computers and televisions from the children's bedrooms to areas where you can keep an eye on what they're viewing.
23. Never attack the person, attack the behavior.
24. Nurture your sons and daughters. Institute a "2 hugs a day" policy.
25. One of the best gifts you can give your child is to respect their other parent. Children need to see healthy adult relationships.
26. Practice humor and laugh together a lot.
27. Practice rituals and routines. Create memories. Plan special times.
28. Provide sex education at home. Be open and prepared for multiple discussions.
29. Raise your child's self-esteem. Know your child's strengths. Remind your child of their strengths and reinforce and reward the positives.
30. Set high expectations, especially for academic achievement. Provide the necessary tools your child needs to be successful. Parental engagement in the education of their child is a strong predictor of academic success.
31. Start each day in a positive manner and give your child a positive send off.
32. Tell your child how glad you are to be their parent.
33. You cannot be your child's friend!