

September 17, 2009

Section: community

Bright Ideas for Parents: The busy parent's checklist
*Carter County **Turning Point** Family Hlth. & Dev. Comm.*
The Ardmoreite

Try these simple, easy steps to take each day, week and month to stay connected to your teen.

Daily:

- ◆ Know your teen's main activities and plans for the day.
- ◆ Know where your teens are when you are at work or not otherwise with them, and who they are likely to be with.
- ◆ If appropriate for that day, remind your teen about relevant rules.
- ◆ At the end of the day, ask about your teen's activities.
- ◆ Praise and thank your teen for good behavior.
- ◆ Check that homework and other responsibilities have been completed.
- ◆ Try to have family meals together or engage in a family activity on a regular basis.

Weekly:

- ◆ Take some time to check in with each child. Set 20 minutes aside to find out how friendships are going, what's happening at school, and what other events are important in your teen's life.
- ◆ Ask you teen mid-week if there are any special plans for the weekend that require your input. Do this early to avoid last-minute conflict.
- ◆ Every once in a while, check that your teens are where they say they are going to be.
- ◆ Encourage your teen to have a friend over or engage in fun activities together.
- ◆ Remind your teen about weekday/weekend rules when appropriate.

Monthly:

- ◆ Make sure you've had at least a couple of individual activities or outings with your teen.

- ◆ Check the temperature of your relationship. How are things going?
- ◆ Check in with your teen to see what has taken up his or her time and interest this month, and discuss it. Ask if there's anything you can do to help.
- ◆ Make sure you've followed through on any recent promises to your teen.
- ◆ Plan one special family event or activity. Try to do things that your teens enjoy.
- ◆ Get a report from teachers on your teen's school progress. Check in with coaches or a guidance counselor about extracurricular activities.
- ◆ Take a monitoring inventory. Who has your teen been spending time with? What has he been doing? Follow up on any red flags or concerns.
- ◆ What have they been spending their money on?
- ◆ Stay up-to-date on news and trends among teens in the area. Talk with other parents and discuss concerns with your kids. Check with local youth organizations to find out about problems in your community.
- ◆ Check in with your teens about rules. If they've been doing well, then be flexible and reward them in meaningful ways. When your teens are ready, allow them more freedoms. Discuss any new rules or limits for new activities.

To ask questions or to find out how you can be involved with prevention efforts in your community, contact the Area Prevention Resource Center at (580) 490-9197.

Taken from Navigating the Teen Years: A Parent's Handbook for Raising Healthy Teens
www.TheAntiDrug.com