

Secrets of Parenting Podcasts

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Hello, This is Karen DeBord and today we will be talking about Secrets of Parenting for teenagers. I want to start with a question. Think about how you would respond. In general, **where do teenagers prefer to get advice?** Do they prefer their families, their peers, or their teachers? If you said peers and teachers you were partially right, however teens show a greater preference for getting information they can count on from their families and mom and dad in particular. So...it's good to find time to connect. Not just tell them what to do all of the time but to find time to listen as well and hear them.

Let's try another one:

A trusted adult such as a parent will not always be around, so children need to follow:

- a. an inner voice to help guide them
- b. the advice of other children or
- c. rules that other adults spell out for them.

Having an inner voice is really critical. Often teens have not developed a sense of speaking up for themselves, they will listen to other children especially if they have learned to listen to others outside themselves instruct them what to do all of the time. Our goal is that children develop an inner sense of what is right and wrong. And in the case of rules spelled out by other adults...we need to help children learn to listen, certainly, but also to begin to act independently on their own. We will not always be around to guide them. So the best answer is "an inner voice that helps to guide them" Otherwise known as conscience, an inner voice is still needed! If we don't give children a chance to practice this in the safe confines of our supervision then they will listen to others coax them and tell them to do this or make that decision (drive fast, try drugs for example) and not develop a way to decide on their own.

Ok- let's try one more. How would you respond to this question?

The most effective way to keep a teenager safe is to

- a. monitor the places they go and whom they are with
- b. Keep them at home
- c. put off letting them get their driver's license.

Although we may want to keep them at home and put off getting their license, it is not realistic. Instead, research says that the strongest protector for teens is to know who they are with, know the families and the personalities of the kids they are with. Talk with them and listen to them. Meet the parents of the kids and check in with them. Ask the friends of your teens questions to get to know them so they will also know and trust you. Know what movie they are seeing or what mall they will be visiting. Set a time to be home and expect that they will stick to that. This is monitoring—with heart and that is key to connecting with and protecting your child.

This is Karen DeBord with North Carolina Cooperative Extension.