



ADOLESCENTS

Strategies to Manage Life with Your Teen and Keep Them Safe

Raising a child will not always be easy. As children begin to mature, they begin to want to exercise their independence from their parents and this could be the beginning of many conflicts with your teen as they attempt to mature into adulthood. Monitoring teens is an art form. Too much and teens could rebel or not learn the skills they need to function on their own. Too little monitoring can result in behaviors that spell trouble. Here are a few helpful strategies to manage your involvement with your teen:

Monitor and Guide Teens:

- Know where your teen is, especially on evening and weekends.
- Let teens know using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs is illegal and unacceptable. Discuss the potential consequences of their use.
- Monitor television programs your teenager watches. Contact your cable company to have parental controls installed to block programs that you feel are inappropriate.
- Consider prohibiting teens to have a television in their room.
- Monitor the music your teenager listens to and set rules you feel comfortable with.
- Know how your teen is doing in school. Don't miss important parent-teacher meetings.
- Consider keeping computers in a public area of the house, such as the living room and monitor Internet use routinely. Insist your teen provide you with his/her password. If they refuse do not give them computer access. Consider creating a contract for use that both you and your teenager sign.
- Monitor cell phone records and set limits on use.
- Have your teen check in when they come home from school.
- Help your teen think through their plans for the night. Sometimes teens simply do not have the experience to make good decisions. Role-play potential scenarios. "What would you do if..."
- Insist your teen provides you with the name and phone number when visiting friends.
- Curfews are good to let your teen know there are rules to follow. Enforce curfews.
- Greet your teen whenever they come home in the evening; stay up until they arrive home. Ask how their night went.
- Have family routines. For example: Try to eat together on a regular basis (without the TV, please).

Respect Teens:

- First and foremost, express your love to your teen and let them know that it is your job as a parent to ensure their well-being.
- Explain why you need to know about their activities.
- Acknowledge their need for independence.

- Recognize that as teens mature, your expectations should change accordingly.
- Nurture their self-sufficiency. Build trust by giving more freedom gradually.
- Talk to your teenager—about both important and unimportant things—often. Be involved.
- Lastly, be your teen’s parent, not their pal.

Juvenile Behavior Issues

Sometimes, no matter how hard parents try, situations with children and teens arise that seem impossible handle. Teens often develop difficult behavior issues, and sometimes it leads to serious consequences – even detention. If you are concerned about your teen’s behavior and would like support, consider contacting one of the local agencies listed at the bottom of this page for resources such as counseling, case management, dispute resolution, or mental health assessment.

If your teen has been incarcerated in Travis County, he or she will likely be taken to:

Gardner-Betts Juvenile Detention Center

2515 S. Congress, Austin, TX 78704

Phone: (512) 854-7000 Fax: (512) 854-7097

About The Travis County Juvenile Court:

- Provides for public safety while addressing the needs of juvenile offenders, families, and victims of crime,
- Assists parents in collecting and distributing court-ordered child support.

Court Services

Intake (24 hours): (512) 854-7090

Court Services consists of

- Intake where juveniles are originally brought when an offenses has been committed;
- Deferred Prosecution where juveniles are informally processed for misdemeanor offenses, and mediation and community service restitution services are used to hold the juvenile accountable for his or her offense;
- The Court Unit where court investigators prepare cases for court to address the alleged delinquent conduct of juveniles; and
- The Legal Unit, which prepares and documents legal proceedings for court and maintains legal files.

Detention Services

Intake (24 hours): (512) 854-7090

Detention Services is the division responsible for housing and supervising juveniles awaiting trial who cannot be returned to the community during that time.

Remember:

Your teen needs your love and support more than ever when they have been incarcerated. Stay involved in the process, and attend hearings. Keep in touch with your child’s probation

officer and help your teen follow their plan. Be open with their probation officer and counselor about concerns, setbacks and successes.

Available Resources

Texas Runaway Hotline: 1 (888) 580-4357

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Runaway_hotline/default.asp

National Teen Dating Violence Helpline: 1 (866) 331-9474

www.loveisrespect.org

Lifeworks: South Austin - (512) 735-2400, East Austin - (512) 735-2100

www.lifeworksweb.org

24 hour Hotline, Individual and Group Counseling for Youth and Families, Educational and Vocational Assistance, Follow-up and Aftercare, GED Preparation; Independent Living Skills, Runaway Shelter.

Austin Child Guidance Center: (512) 451-2242

www.austinchildguidance.org

Individual and Family Therapy; Testing and Evaluation; Counseling; Child Abuse Services; Parent Skills Training

Dispute Resolution Center: (512) 371-0033

www.austindrc.org

Conflict Management and Mediation

Austin Travis County Integral Care (formerly MHMR): (512) 472-3142 or

PES – Psychiatric Emergency Services: (512) 472-HELP (4357)

www.integralcare.org

Crisis support for Psychiatric Emergencies; Mental Health Assessment and Treatment; Counseling

Communities in Schools: (512) 462-1771

www.cisaustin.org

School-based social services; Dropout prevention: Family and Group Therapy; Wrap-around services for youth and families

American Youth Works: (512) 744-1900

www.americanyouthworks.org

Charter school for At-Risk Youth; GED Classes/Self-Paced Program

Crisis Chat: Online Emotional Support

www.crisischat.org