

Parenting in a Democratic Society

Of all the challenges facing our teens, most parents would agree that the three most threatening are drugs, sexuality and violence. Each of these dangers not only has the potential to damage a teen's life, it can also end that life. In today's world, just one dose of an illicit drug can result in death. A teen high on alcohol or other drugs is much more likely than a sober teen to become sexually active or physically violent. Parents can do much to help prevent tragedy in these areas. First, you need skills to help you build a positive relationship with your teen. This will increase your ability to influence your teen to make good decisions about drugs, sexuality and violence. When you offer choices instead of issuing commands, you empower your teens by letting them know that you trust them to make their own decisions. A good relationship based on mutual respect and trust decreases the likelihood that your teens will make bad decisions when you aren't there to guide them. Second, by helping your teens develop courage, self-esteem, responsibility, cooperation, respect and other important qualities, you help them achieve the stability of character, or ballast, needed to make it through the storms of adolescence and continue on to become a successful adult. Third, you can use concrete prevention strategies to directly influence the chances of your teen becoming harmfully involved with alcohol and other drugs, sexuality and violence.

An effective way to talk with your teen about drugs, sexuality and violence is to hold a Family Meeting. In this meeting you can:

- Identify a potential problem and/or risk
- Share your thoughts and feelings about the problem
- Acknowledge your teen's thoughts and feelings
- Generate guidelines through brainstorming and negotiation

It's especially important to emphasize to your teen that they should never accept drugs from friends, or anyone, that were not administered by a pharmacist. Fentanyl in illegal drugs has caused the number of teen overdoses to rise at an alarming rate, from 492 deaths in 2019 to 1,146 in early 2021. There have been stories of teens who died from Fentanyl poisoning when a friend gave them a Xanax tablet that was purchased off the internet. These are not teens that have a drug problem. They were just stressed from school studies and work schedules and just trying to find a way to deal with the stress.

The ACFC offers its members a free online parenting class for parents of 'tweens and teens. Sign up today to learn effective parenting skills to learn concrete strategies for raising teens. Click on the Active Parenting tab on the [ACFC website](https://www.acfc.org) to get started.

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfc.org), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.



FREE LIFE-CHANGING ONLINE PARENTING COURSES

In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. With this self-study course, you have the option of when to participate based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

Choose from four available courses:

- **Active Parenting: First Five Years:** For parents of children from birth to age 5
- **Active Parenting 4th ED:** For parents of children ages 5 to 12
- **Active Parenting of Teens:** For parents of preteens and teens
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:** For divorced and divorcing parents

Continue your experience as an "active" parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfc.org) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.