



## Prevention Strategies for Parents—Part 1

Just like in any job you strive to do well, it's important to have a strategy for the best way to be successful. The job of parenting is no different. Over the next several months, you can learn ten prevention strategies for preventing your teens' harmful use of drugs, sexuality and violence. These ten strategies are the result of a project called "Parenting is Prevention," assembled by the U.S. Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. The results of this work emphasize the importance of skilled parental involvement in the prevention process.

The first strategy we're going to talk about is "Be a positive role model and teacher of values." Your teens are just beginning to learn how to act like adults. Since adult decisions and choices are new to them, they need values and beliefs they can base their actions on when they're not sure what to do. As the most important person in their life, you can help them form these values by talking with them about issues and setting a good example yourself. You are your teen's role model. What you do is a much stronger indicator of your values than what you say. As the saying goes, "Values aren't taught; they're caught!" What you teach your teen about risky behaviors is as much about your own behavior as it is about what you say you value. Sometimes parents aren't aware that their actions conflict with the values they are trying to teach their teens. If you take the time to examine your own habits and behaviors, you can get a better picture of what your teen sees when they observe you and whether you need to change anything you do to make it match what you say.

### Skills for Talking About Your Values:

- **Show respect.**  
Your teens are entitled to their own opinions. Respect your teens' opinions, even if you disagree and try to avoid judging or speaking to them harshly when they open up. Keep the lines of communication open.
- **Avoid communication blocks.**  
If you don't do this, you may not only end the conversation, you may also motivate your teens to rebel against your values. If you command your teen to believe something, then the only way for them to feel they have power over themselves is to believe the opposite.
- **Listen for feelings.**  
Your teens' feelings change rapidly during these years. They may not know why they hold certain values. Help them to decide for themselves by listening closely and repeating what you hear.
- **Encourage your teen when they express a value you approve of.**  
For example, if you would like your teen to learn to treat others respectfully, catch them being respectful and make a positive comment.
- **Talk about values and beliefs, not just the facts.**  
When discussing touchy subjects, keep in mind that your teen needs to trust you before they'll confide in you about personal issues. Earn their trust by telling stories that reveal your own struggles to do the right thing—as long as you feel comfortable doing so and think you teen will benefit from the story.

## 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.acfccares.com) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

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.acfccares.com), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.