

## Prevention Strategies for Parents—Part 5



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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/activeparenting) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

We hope the strategies presented so far have given you some solid footing when dealing with your teens and given you some confidence in your parenting. This month's strategy is all about a parent's job to “get in they way”. Parents must be willing and able to provide safe limits on their teens' freedom until the teens become capable of establishing these limits on their own. Research clearly shows that positive parental involvement is a key factor in preventing delinquency, drug use, school failure, pregnancy, crime and a host of other teen problems. Here are some guidelines:

- **Provide things for your teen to do.**

Although it is unwise to try to monitor every moment of your teenager's day, it's worse to allow them to have a great deal of unsupervised time, which would put them at a much higher risk for drifting into negative peer groups and developing problems. Suggest healthy and challenging activities for your teen to do both alone and with other teens. Encourage them to take on a hobby that will provide something for them to do during otherwise idle time. As they demonstrate responsibility in handling unstructured time, you can gradually relax your supervision and influence.

- **Know where your teen is and who they're with.**

Make a habit of asking your teen to tell you their plans before they go out. Be sure that they know how to contact you or another responsible adult if they need to. Establish a check-in rule that you both can live with. If they could get away with it, some parents would have their teens call them every 15 minutes to report their whereabouts. However, teens would view such a requirement as mistrust. But asking for an occasional check-in call is reasonable and responsible. Even in families in which both parents work outside the home, telephone check-ins can help parents monitor behavior.

- **Set and enforce curfews.**

This should be agreed upon by both you and your teen. Sit down with your teen and have a Problem-Prevention Talk to set guidelines, continuing your discussion until you have agreed on weekend and weekday curfews and consequences for missing them. Setting curfews is a good way to reduce later conflicts and misunderstandings. Be awake when your teen comes home to make sure they are following the guidelines. If they do a good job of keeping to the agreed-upon limits, their responsibilities should earn them greater freedom. Likewise, if the guidelines are violated, then logical consequences can be used to reduce freedom.

Next month, we'll talk about how you can work with other parents to establish some consistent guidelines among your teen's peer group.

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.