

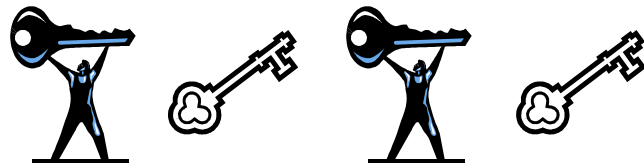
Parent Tip # 1

Keep your eye on the ball.

- ? What characteristics do you want your teen to have when he or she graduates from high school?
- ? What obstacles might prevent your teen from achieving these characteristics?
- ? What can YOU do to help your teen overcome these obstacles?



MISSOULA FORUM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
www.missoulaforum.org



1. Communicate

2. Show love and stay involved

3. Establish clear expectations and consequences

4. Provide opportunities for growth and independence

Parents Make the Connection

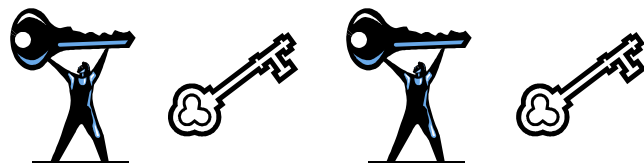
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Parents Make the Connection

communicate = Listen

* Stop, drop and listen

Create an open environment for communication. Stop what you're doing, drop what you're doing, even drop into a chair, and just listen. If you absolutely can't talk when your teen wants to, explain why, and set up a time when you can give your teen your undivided attention.

* Practice good listening

- Make eye contact
- Use phrases like "oh? I see... Mhm.. Really?"
- Ask specific questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" response.
- Ask questions seeking clarification or more information: "Why? When? Do you mean...?"
- Try not to interrupt, jump to conclusions, or be thinking about what to say next while your teen is talking.

* Try not to judge, attack, or get defensive

Teens are developing their own identities, in part by declaring who they are not (rebelling): critiquing social standards and values (including yours!) and experimenting with adult roles. Enjoy the process. While sharing your opinions, help your teen develop his or her own by asking specific, questions and respecting your teen's individuality.

* Use I-statements

I-statements are assertive statements describing how one feels or thinks; they are designed to avoid attacking the other person and minimize defensive reactions. E.g. "When I expect someone to you to be home at a certain time and you are late, I feel... worried, ignored, tired the next day, etc. What I'd like is for us to agree on a curfew and on a consequence for breaking curfew, so I don't feel this way and I always know where you are, when to expect you, and that you are safe."

* Be patient! And listen for what your teen's

not saying. Be on the lookout for comments or questions that might indicate your teen wants to talk about something but doesn't know how to bring it up.



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