

# POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AT HOME



While teachers and school administrators strive to create a positive learning environment, it is essential that positive behavior be taught and reinforced at home.

According to Neil Bernstein, a psychologist and author of *How to Keep Your Teen Out of Trouble and What To Do If You Can't*, moodiness, self-absorption, and negative behavior are all part of the typical teenage life.

Parents may feel that they are being pushed away during the teen years, yet it is our responsibility to firmly push back. Indeed, pushing boundaries is how teens learn to grow up and set their own boundaries as adults. Here are some ways to get things moving in a positive direction at home:

**Look in a Mirror.** In a nutshell: Teens often reflect your behavior. If you speak in anger, your teen will too. If you are disinterested, your teen will be bored as well. So, act how you want them to. Feed them a steady diet of positive attitude and watch their behavior improve. It may take time, but it will happen.

**Teach Accountability.** Let them know they are responsible for their own behavior. Clearly explain your expectations and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Then expect them to challenge you, because it is what teens do!

**Set limits/stick with them.** Once a teen knows that you mean business, they'll stop trying to undermine your authority. The word “no” should be a positive part of their life.

**Explain your reasons.** Let them know what the bottom line is, but explain your reasons for making it so. It shows you respect them, something they desperately desire from both peers and adults.

**Negotiate.** During the teen years it is all about give and take. Make your teen part of the decision making process and they will be much more likely to stick with the decision.

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**Teach responsibility.** Teens need to be responsible for chores, school work and personal behavior. Responsibility is a life skill they desperately need to learn if they are to succeed in the world.



**Communicate.** Talk with your teen's teachers - often. Let's work together to solve problems as they arise, not when they reach a point of explosion.

**Communicate again.** Talk with your teen in a positive way as often as possible. Approach them when they are not angry, busy or tired. Don't be hurt if they walk away. We all need our space sometimes. Just try talking positively again at a different time. Eventually they will hear you.

**Be Proud.** Let your teen know in many small ways that you are proud of them. Do this often and with sincerity. For example, if they fail one test, talk about how they succeeded elsewhere and express your trust that they will improve. They really want your approval, so give it whenever they deserve it.

**Be A Part of School.** Visit their school to share your support and applause. Attend concerts, sporting events, honor awards, and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Become their #1 cheerleader and they will reward you with excellence!



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