



# Top tips

## for parents of teenagers

My name is Rachel Lees-Dewhurst and I am a Family Support Worker for Tîm Teulu, Ceredigion County Council. I am also a parent to teenage twins, and have real-life experience of raising teenagers today.



### 1. Pick your battles

Prioritise the behaviours/problems and focus only on the most important at any time. Behaviours that are unsafe for the teenager or others should always be the priority. So channel your inner Elsa (Frozen) and "Let it go".

### 2. Think long term

You are raising a child to become an adult. What skills do they need to become independent and reach their potential?

Being accountable for their actions, able to control themselves (self-regulation), able to bounce back (resilience), listen and speak up (communicate) and understand and respect others (empathy). These skills are just as important as practical skills, such as organisation and self-care.

### 3. Positive praise

Teenagers make some of their choices based on revisiting earlier stages of their development with new information, so may act very grown up one moment and very immature the next.

They will make lots and lots of mistakes as they learn and practice skills. So stay focussed on and praise what is going well and when it isn't, forgive their mistakes and move on. Also praise them for just being themselves.

### 4. Problem solve together

If your teenager shares their problems with you, don't rush in to solve them but work together and encourage good communication by asking them what they feel is the best solution. Always ask their permission to intervene, if you need to, and don't break their trust. Remember that it's often our problem, not just theirs.



## 5. Keep communicating

Find opportunities to listen. Be respectful of their opinions even if you don't agree. Use 'I statements' when addressing the issue, 'I get very worried when you don't check in at the time we agreed'; 'I find it very irritating when you keep all the cups in your bedroom'.

## 6. Be clear about your rules

Do give clear instructions or messages when rules are non-negotiable such as 'you may not drink alcohol until you reach the legal age', as teenagers will be aware that there are some rules that they have to follow and hear the underlying messages 'your welfare and safety is important'.

## 7. You are the role model

Parents/carers are the most influential people in a teenager's life, so don't just tell them but show them by example.



## 8. Work together

Each of you will need to negotiate and compromise with one another. Using directives i.e. 'Do this /don't do that' has two responses, obedience or defiance which can create feelings of resentment, dominance, lack of respect and distance in relationships.

## 9. Practice self-control

By controlling our own impulsive reactions we develop better judgment, patience and persistence that gives us strength, stability, influence and status as a parent.

## 10. Identify and sustain your own support network

'It takes a village to raise a child' and trusted family, friends and professionals can help support both you and your teenager. They will offer practical help, advice or emotional support when the going gets tough.



## 11. Keep connected

Parents often feel marginalised in their child's life as their teenager becomes more independent. Keep connected to them by taking an interest in their lives, keep communication lines open, share experiences, & remember and reminisce about past events to help maintain their sense of belonging, and retain your presence in their lives.

Always look after your own physical and mental wellbeing as you will not be able to support your teenager's needs if you are not taking care of your own.

# Teenagers need **RESPECT**

**R**ole models to learn from

**E**mpathy

**S**afety from physical and emotional harm

**P**ositives, praise, prospects

**E**motional literacy and regulation guidance

**C**onsistency, compromise, compassion

**T**rust, tolerance, time




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 [gov.wales/giveittime](https://gov.wales/giveittime)



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