



Family Ties

Family and Consumer Science

Human Development

Help Teens Have a Good Summer

School's out . . . and kids are free from homework, tests, and getting up early. Most students look forward to the summer because they can sleep late, have a more relaxed schedule, and hang out with friends. We know that taking a break from school is healthy and refreshing, especially for teens, yet relaxing can grow dull quickly. That's when parent's help and encouragement can go a long way toward helping your child have a good summer.

Guarding against teen drug use is a year-round concern for parents, but risks increase during the summer - especially when too much free time leads to boredom. With time on their hands, restless teens may fill the void with unhealthy and risky activities such as alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drug use.

Develop a Plan

What can you do to make sure that your teen has a good summer? You can start by making sure that your teen is occupied and supervised. However, a bit of planning can turn summer from an exercise in killing time into a chance to learn and grow while still having fun.

What are your teen's interests - sports, music, art, cameras, cars, computers, children, or animals? Does he want to help others or maybe learn new skills? Ask your teen, "What would you like to do this summer to make the most of your time away from school?" Suggest they shop for choices - check newspapers and Web sites for ads and announcements. Be sure to check with the 4-H agent at your local Extension Office. The Tennessee 4-H program is loaded with summer activities for youth. . . .camps, trips, judging events, etc!! Park and recreation centers, colleges, civic groups, and churches also have summer activities for youth.

Putting Work Into the Mix

Neither play nor personal interests are the only paths to a meaningful summer. Work, whether paid or volunteer, can expose teens to a slice of life that builds social skills and work habits. Examples of volunteer activities include helping at a shelter or daycare center, working with Habitat for Humanity, or working in efforts to improve the environment.

If your teen takes on a volunteer project, caution him to follow through. Just because he isn't getting paid does not mean that he can dodge the job he promised to do. Work also can focus a teen's outlook on the future by providing a close look at a profession or work setting and helping develop good habits in managing money.

DID YOU KNOW ??

WARNING

"In the good-old summertime," more American teens try marijuana for the first time than at any other time of year

The report from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows a 40 percent increase in first-time youth marijuana use during June and July, compared to the rest of the year.

Each day in June and July an average of 6,300 youths try marijuana for the first time. The number of new underage drinkers and cigarette smokers also jumps during the summer months.

A Hundred Measly Calories

Did you know if you consume **100 fewer calories** per day you could lose 10 pounds in a year? If you burn another 100 calories every day through exercise, you could lose up to 20 pounds per year.

Here are some easy ways to cut 100 calories per day:

- < Put mustard instead of mayo on a sandwich.
- < Try a "light" or fat-free salad dressing instead of regular.
- < Substitute Canadian bacon for regular bacon.
- < Eat fresh fruit instead of juice or dried fruit.
- < Order thin crust pizza instead of pan pizza.
- < Order your coffee "skinny" — with skim milk instead of cream.
- < Use a smaller bowl for your morning cereal.
- < Drink club soda with lime instead of regular soda.



Burn 100 more calories with these ideas:

- < Set your alarm 15 minutes earlier and go out for a morning walk.
- < Stand up and walk around while on the phone at work.
- < Take your kids out for a bike ride after dinner.
- < Join a tennis league and play several times each week.
- < Go for a 15-minute walk on your lunch break.
- < Get off the bus a stop earlier and walk the extra distance.



Betty Greer, Ph.D.
Extension Specialist - Nutrition

TEEN SLANG . . . and What the Words Mean

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Ape | crazy |
| 2. Biscuit | reference for a gun |
| 3. Bounce | leave |
| 4. Candy | a code word for sex |
| 5. Chopping | selling drugs |
| 6. Dog | friend |
| 7. E or X | terms used for the drug "Ecstasy |
| 8. Frontin' | lying |
| 9. Hoovering | getting an abortion |
| 10. Hottie | cute guy/girl |
| 11. Jaba | marijuana |
| 12. Kicks | shoes |
| 13. Knickers | underwear |
| 14. Knocking boots | having sex |
| 15. Making cookies | having sex |
| 16. Off the hook | fun |
| 17. Out of order | not very nice |
| 18. Player hater | someone who doesn't like others' achievements |
| 19. Po po | police |
| 20. Riding dirty | driving with drugs |
| 21. Slanging | the act of selling any illegal substance |
| 22. Talking To | starting to date |
| 23. Tina | slang for crystal meth |
| 24. Trashed | drunk |
| 25. Wassup | what's up |



Slang Internet Sites

<http://www.thesource4ym.com/teenlingo/>

<http://parentingteens.about.com/cs/familylife/1/bldictionary.htm>

Judy Cloud Berryhill, MS, CFCS
Extension Specialist - Adolescent Development

What Does Research on Families Mean for Me?



When you hear research reports on TV or see articles in the newspaper or magazines talking about statistics from the latest research on families, how should you interpret it? Often, the information that is reported doesn't seem to match your own experiences. Sometimes, it may seem to be accurate for some people but not for others. So, what is going on?

The fact is that statistics from research are often related to averages. In other words, they tell what is generally true for a large group of people. However, they cannot predict what will happen for any one individual or family. For example, researchers have reported that children from divorced families have a rate of long-term emotional or behavioral problems that is 2 to 2.5 times higher than that of children raised by their married biological parents. What does this mean? First, the same research shows that 75 to 80 percent of children from divorced families live normal adult lives, and 10 percent of children from intact families experience long-term emotional or behavioral problems. So, divorce would not seem to be the only thing that would account for these types of problems.

One of the first rules of research is that just because one thing is associated with another does not mean that the first caused the second. Just because children who are from divorced families are more likely to have problems as adults, does not mean that divorce is the cause of those problems. Further research has shown that, among other things, high levels of family conflict both before and after divorce are associated with poorer child outcomes. In high-conflict families, children whose parents keep them out of the middle of their conflicts after divorce, generally adjust to the changes and do well over time. Children whose parents continue to have lots of conflict after divorce have the poorest outcomes. Other researchers have found that children who have lots of contact with both parents after divorce, when it is safe to do so, have better outcomes than those who lose contact with one or both of their parents.

So, what does this research mean for individual families? For one thing, parents who are experiencing

high levels of conflict should try to reduce their children's exposure to the parents' conflicts. Mediators may be able to help parents make decisions about their children when it is safe for them to work together. When parents can't work together, conflict can be avoided by reducing contact between the divorcing parents. Families who are not divorced but who are experiencing high levels of conflict may choose to get help from a marriage counselor or therapist or take some marriage skills classes to try to improve their relationship and reduce the level of conflict. If parents choose to leave high-conflict or abusive situations, getting their children out of those situations usually helps rather than hurts them. In situations where it is safe, parents can make an effort to keep their children connected to both parents. This takes cooperation and lots of effort, but it can pay off for their children.

Often, research is used to by policy makers to determine what types of actions they might take to help children and families. In Tennessee, and in many other states, laws require divorcing parents of minor children to take parent education classes. The goal of the classes is to help parents learn some skills or strategies for keeping their children out of the middle of their conflicts and some ways to ease the transitions that come with divorce. On the federal level, funding has been set aside to help provide relationship education for teens, for couples who choose marriage, and for couples who are already married but desire to improve their relationships, and to increase fathers' involvement with their children. The goal is to strengthen couples and families on the front end so that the number of children experiencing their parents' break-up or divorce will be reduced.

There are many ways to interpret research related to individuals and families and many possible ways to apply that research to legislation or advocacy. It is important to continue this work to increase our knowledge about families and to improve practices in working with families.

Denise J. Brandon, PhD
Extension Specialist - Family Relations

Summer - A Risky Time for Teens

More teens try marijuana for the first time during the summer months than any other time of year.* Why? The main culprit is boredom. Ensuring that your teen is engaged in positive activities like camps, volunteering, or supervised outings with friends can be a way to deter youth from things that are harmful to them, such as drugs and alcohol use.

The following Summer Activity Checklist will help you and your teen have a safe and healthy summer:



1. **Set Rules**

Set clear rules. Establish a summertime curfew for your teen. Set some kind of check-in system, such as an established call time when they get home. Set limits with clear consequences for breaking them. Praise and reward good behavior.

2. **Understand and Communicate**

Talk to your teen about the harmful physical, mental, and social effects of marijuana and other drugs. Young people who learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to try drugs than their peers who learn nothing from their parents. Look for teachable moments in everyday life to keep the conversation ongoing.

3. **Monitor Your Teen's Activities and Behaviors**

Check to see where your teen is, whom he or she is with, and what he or she has been doing. Teens who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs. Sometimes surprise your teen by checking up to make sure they are where they say they are.

4. **Make Sure You Stay Involved in Your Teen's Life**

Talk to your teen's coach, employer, and friends. Stay in touch with the adult supervisors of your child and have them inform you of any changes in your teen. Meet your child's friends, especially those who hang out with your teen regularly.

5. **Engage Your Teen In Summer Activities**

Help plan activities to keep your teen busy. Research shows that teens who are involved in constructive and adult-supervised activities are less likely to use drugs.

6. **Reserve Family Time**

Plan a family activity with your teen in the coming weeks, such as going to the movies together, taking a walk, or sharing a meal. Schedule time together to do something fun as a family. Teens who spend time, talk, and have a close relationship with their parents are much less likely to drink, take drugs, or have sex.

References:

The NSDUH Report (2002): Seasonality of Youth's First Time Use of Marijuana, Cigarettes, or Alcohol, SAMHSA, National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

You Have the Greatest Impact on Your Child's Life

Set a Good Example . . .

Kids learn by watching others, especially parents. Be the kind of person you want your teen to be. Talk to your teenager about your beliefs. Talk about what you expect of them. Most important is that you set a good example.



Children learn social skills, manners, respect and confidence just by watching their parents. They watch what you do and how you do it – whether it's eating, exercising, drinking, taking drugs, driving, smoking, or wearing a seatbelt. They also watch how you deal with anger (and other emotions) and how you treat other people. What they see will affect how they behave.

Research shows that parents' behavior has one of the biggest impacts on a teen's behavior. Research also shows that when parents are good role models, teens do better in life. They have better social skills, health habits, and coping skills. And they do better in school.

Eda LeShan, a family counselor and author of parenting books, says: "The only way to raise a decent human being is by being one."

Here are some examples of ways that parents can set good examples for teens.

- < **Remember that nobody's perfect.** If you smoke or use alcohol, talk to your kids about the mistakes that you made. Talk to them about how difficult it is to quit. They will understand that you don't want them to make the same mistakes you did. They will respect you for being honest and for trying hard to quit.

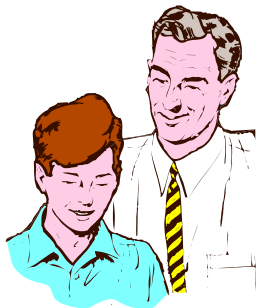
- < **Admit your mistakes.** Children should know that it's okay to make mistakes. But they also need to learn from mistakes. Show your teen how to do this by admitting your mistakes, apologizing, and talking about how you can avoid the same mistake next time.

(Continued on Next Page)

- < **Manage anger and avoid violence.** Talk about your problems with the person you are angry with. By keeping your cool instead of getting really mad and possibly violent, you can set an example of patience and tolerance. This doesn't mean you have to agree or never get angry, but talking about feelings (anger, for example) is a more effective solution than violence.
- < **Be active and eat a healthy diet.** Be active and with overweight rates rising in both teens and adults, it is important to keep your family active so that they develop healthy lifestyle habits. Do family activities that everyone enjoys (walking, biking, hiking, etc.) and eat meals together as often as possible. Eat fruits and vegetables everyday and limit fat (for example, fried foods) and sugar (for example, soda.) If you value your health, your teen will too.
- < **Do community service with your kids.** This teaches job skills and responsibility. It also puts kids in touch with good role models. It teaches them that they can make a difference by helping other people, and it builds self-confidence.
- < **Get involved with your child's school.** This will show your child that education is important. Talk to them early on about going to college and about careers that might interest them. Join the parent association or volunteer to help with a school event.
- < **Share your cultural identity and history with your teens.** Talk to your child about their country's history – the good and bad. Compare your culture to others. Talking about cultural differences will help your teen understand and respect others.
- < **Talk about your beliefs. Be honest.** Tell your child about why you do and think certain things. Explain that people have different beliefs and act in different ways. This will help your teen respect other peoples' points of view and beliefs.
- < **Be caring, fair, truthful, and responsible.** Keep your promises to your kids, if you want them to keep their promises to you. This will set an example they will follow. Tell the truth, if you want them to tell the truth.



Remember, your teen is always watching and learning from you.



Show your teen that you are responsible for your actions and they will learn to be responsible for their actions, too.

HOW TO SAY “NO” BY SAYING “YES”



As a parent, do you find yourself saying “No” to your children much more than you say “Yes?” If so, you may need to find another way to respond when your children make a request. Did you know that you can say “No” by saying “Yes?” Here are some suggestions from Jody Johnston Pawel, parenting author and President of Parents Toolshop Consulting.

Say “No” by saying “Yes.” If your child asks to have something to eat right before dinner, especially if the food requested is something sweet or high-calorie, you can say “Yes” and still mean “No.” Just respond by saying, “Yes, you may have the cookie after you have eaten your dinner.” Another option is to offer a healthy choice such as a piece of fruit or whole-grain toast. Say, “You may have a small piece of fruit or toast now to keep you from being too hungry until dinner is ready.” By saying yes, both of you get what you want—the child gets to eat now or later and you are assured that the food he is eating is healthy.

Acknowledge your child’s feelings before stating the limit. If a child hears the word “No” first, he is likely to think you are being unfair and is less likely to listen and obey. If your child is begging to ride his bike for another ten minutes, but it is time to leave, you can say “It is hard to stop riding when you are having so much fun. Tomorrow, you can show Jamie your new trick. Now, let’s check out what’s for lunch.” This is said as you are heading in the door with your child in tow.

Pretend or engage in fantasy. If your child is asking to stay up until it is dark, even though it is a school night and past her bedtime, you can engage in some pretend fantasy. As you lead her inside, say, “What would you do if you could stay up until dark?” Go along with the fantasy and make up some fun things yourself like, “I think I would ride an Ostrich down the street.” You might point out that your child can stay up a little later once school is out. If your child wants something like a new pair of shoes, you could ask “How fast would you be able to run if you had those shoes?” As the fantasy concludes, you could say, “Even if you can’t have the shoes, it is fun to pretend.”

When you respond positively to your children, you can meet many of your parenting goals: increasing cooperation, increasing your child’s self-esteem and your confidence, decreasing the need for discipline or punishment, improving communication skills, and teaching your children self-control and how to use power in positive ways.

**For More Information Contact
Your Local Extension Office**

Denise J. Brandon, PhD
Extension Specialist - Family Relations