

# WHY WON'T MY TEEN FOLLOW MY RULES?

## So, you can't get your teen to follow your rules?

Developmentally, teenagers are ready for an expanded role. They can think about consequences, can compare what they see with what they think is possible, and are able to think about themselves and others in more complicated ways. Your parental authority can be enhanced by giving your teenager a voice in family decisions, especially those that directly affect them.

### “Will rules make my teen rebel?”

#### HAVING RULES

Most teens appreciate having rules even when they protest your rules and authority



#### THE KEY

Have rules that make sense

*Rules are one way to let your teen know you care. Many teens admit that when their parents are 'strict', it's "for their own good."*

## Why?

Teens are more likely to put their energies toward something they are involved in.

- Allowing your teen to make some decisions will show them that you respect their opinions and care about what they want.
- Encourage your teenager to explore what they can "bring to the table" in order to develop a positive attitude towards responsibility and decision making. They will soon begin to understand that they can make a difference!

## Here are some ways you can involve your teen in family decisions:

- Let your teen know the rules you have already made.
- Talk with your teen about what additional rules/ decisions are needed which directly affect them.
- Ask your teen for their opinions – you don't have to agree with their opinions, but listening to them is an investment in your relationship.
- Respect your teen's ideas and include them whenever possible in family decisions.
- Praise your teen for following family rules and making good decisions – remember, overheard praise can be more effective than direct praise, for example telling dad in their presence that you've seen an improvement in your teen's behaviour, rather than telling your teenager directly.
- Define your expectations and determine your teen's responsibilities with them.
- It is better to have fewer, and extremely important rules, than to have lots of rules.

- Decide before talking with your teen which rules are non-negotiable and why.
- For rules and decisions you are willing to negotiate, remember to be flexible. Your teen is likely to be interested in making decisions that affect his or her life. When your teenager offers useful opinions try to incorporate them in your decision making - be willing to compromise.
- Always use positive reinforcement too. This means that when your teen makes a responsible decision, praise them for it.



### **Allowing your teen to be involved can benefit them.**

- Self-esteem increases.
- Greater development of life skills, such as leadership and dependability.
- Decreased loneliness, shyness, and hopelessness.
- Less involvement in risky behaviours.
- Better academic achievement.

### **A few ways to meet your challenges along the way:**

- Work towards sharing power by giving them responsibility at levels which both you and your teen are comfortable with.
- Build off each other's strengths!
- Try to give examples of what other young people have accomplished and why you think your teen is capable of similar successes.

### **IMPORTANT!!!**

- You must remember that your teen is no longer a child.
- Take him or her seriously.
- Give your teen the same respect you would want for yourself.

They are young adults who are ready to start making some of their own decisions. This is the only way they will be prepared to make decisions as an adult.

Adolescents also have a great need to be seen as mature, unique people, so instead of minimising their experiences and feelings, make an effort to be more understanding and accepting.

If you would like further details on how to develop household rules with the child you care for, please contact our PSA on the number below.

If you feel you need a chat (or emotional support) in contacting any professionals/agencies, or on any other issue, our PSA can help you. Call the Sunbeck PRS main number and leave your details with the office staff – the PSA will then get back to you as soon as they can.

**Main Telephone Contact Number - 01609 710 443**