

## 10 Tips for Parents... to help their children avoid teen pregnancy

1. **Be clear about your own sexual values and attitudes** -- and share those with your children, particularly at “teachable” moments.
2. **Talk with your children early and often about sex, relationships, intimacy and love** -- in age-appropriate, clear and caring ways. Be an “askable” parent, but also a parent with a point of view. Children want to know your views and expectations.
3. **Supervise and monitor your children and adolescents.** The Youth Asset Study conducted by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center identified *Parental Monitoring* as one of the strongest factors in protecting young people from risk behaviors during adolescence, including early sexual activity.
4. **Know your children’s friends and their families.** Jim Fay, author of *Parenting with Love and Logic* suggests, “Have high expectations for your children, but have higher expectations for their friends.”
5. **Discourage early, frequent and steady dating.** Allowing young people to begin one-on-one dating before age 16 can put them in situations that lead to trouble.
6. **Take a strong stand against your daughter dating someone significantly older than she is; likewise, don’t allow your son to develop an intense relationship with someone much younger than he is.** Try setting a limit of no more than two (or, at most, three) years for a relationship age difference during adolescence.
7. **Help your teenagers see options for the future that are more attractive than early pregnancy and parenthood.** Young people who have goals, options and opportunities for the future are more likely to delay having sex.
8. **Let your kids know that you value education highly.** Be very attentive to your child’s progress in school. Struggling in school and school failure is often an early sign of trouble that is linked to early sexual activity and other risk-taking behaviors.
9. **Know what your kids are watching, listening and linking to** – beyond TV, movies, the internet (now easily accessed on a cell phone or iPad) is packed with material and sites that send wrong, unhealthy messages to young people.
10. **These first nine tips for helping your children avoid teen pregnancy and risk-taking behaviors work best when they occur as part of a strong, close, trusting relationship with your child that begins at an early age.**

Source: Power To Decide, formerly National Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy ([powertodecide.org](http://powertodecide.org))

Prepared by Sharon Rodine, Healthy Teens OK! ([healthyteensok.org](http://healthyteensok.org))