Parent Fact Sheet

Adolescents feel more secure when their parents are available to them, such as before or after school, at mealtime, and in the evening. Adolescents need their parents to be there when they are ready to talk, which for a teen may be late at night.

Some things to try:
- Stop what you are doing and listen to your teen.
- Ask your teen about what happened during the day or while out with friends.
- Take off work and attend a school function important to your teen.
- Give your teen a hug.

Spend time with your teen.
Adolescents may not always say it, but they do like spending time with their parents. Teens need and want their parents to be involved in their lives.

Some things to try:
- Make a date with your teen to spend time together.
- Stay and watch your teen at basketball or piano practice.
- Take your teen camping or to the mall.
- Have dinner together on a regular basis.

Set limits for your teen.
Adolescents still need guidance in making decisions. Setting limits on their behavior helps adolescents make good decisions and avoids placing them in negative situations.

Some things to try:
- Help your teen set and meet goals.
- Monitor your teen's activities.
- Give your teen a curfew.
- Expect your teen to help with chores around the house.

Expect your teen to succeed.
Adolescents need their parents to encourage them to succeed. Teens feel a sense of accomplishment when they achieve the realistic expectations that their parents set for them.

Some things to try:
- Say “You did it!” or “Keep up the good work.”
- Talk with your teen about the importance of attending school regularly.
- Encourage your teen to be healthy by eating right and getting plenty of rest and exercise.
- Suggest that your teen be involved in activities such as boys and girls clubs, 4-H, or a church youth group.
- Allow your teen to make mistakes.

Set a good example for your teen.
Believe it or not, adolescents are still watching what their parents do. Model behavior that you expect your adolescent to live. If teens see their parents using alcohol or other drugs, they are more likely to use them.

Some things to try:
- Don't be late picking up your teen from school, movie or other outings.
- Keep promises that you make to your teen.
- Respect your teen's privacy.
- Follow the speed limit.
- Enjoy the natural highs of life, such as laughing, crying and exercise.

For more information on adolescent health, please refer to the September 10, 1997 issue of JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association.