

Parenting Matters

PARTNERS IN PARENTING

Quarterly Newsletter

March 2000

For Colorado Parents

Colorado State University

Teens need privacy, trust

Why do teens keep so much to themselves, emotionally and physically? Because, say experts, it's critical to the most important job of adolescence: identity development.

Parents should respond to a teens need for privacy by allowing more and more privacy. Trying to find out too much about a teens life will usually back fire. At the same time, too much distance can be equally devastating. Experts offer these guidelines for what is off-limits and recommend.

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

- Going into a child's room to look through their things without permission.
- Listening to phone conversations, picking up an extension.
- Interfering with dress or bodily functions beyond basic health and decency. Teens need to protect their emerging sexuality.
- Prying in to details about relationships, where the child has been and what he or she has been doing.

SUGGESTED INVOLVEMENT

- Maintaining hard-and-fast rules against behaviors we deem unacceptable,

such as drug and alcohol use.

Teens may not like it, but it is okay for parents to check whether there will be alcohol at a party and whether there will be parent chaperones.

- Sharing activities you both enjoy.
 - Being available to talk.
- The key is to follow the teen's timetable and be a good listener.
- Imparting values.

Parents are a powerful force in teens' lives, and they need to know what their parents values are.

If parents suspect delinquent or dangerous behavior, they not only have the right but they have the responsibility to

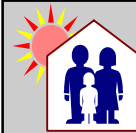
intervene. Begin by observing the teen and talking to other parents, teachers and counselors. Be observant to signs of withdrawal from friends and activities, dropping grades, changes in eating, sleeping patterns and mood changes.

If parents suspect a problem, they should confront the teen honestly and directly, rather than going behind his or her back to search for evidence. If a search must take place, it is best to have the teen present and tell them exactly what you are doing.

“You must be aware (without being nosy), attentive (without being intrusive), supportive (without being valueless.”

-- Advice to parents from *Your Adolescent: Emotional, Behavioral, and Cognitive Development from Early Adolescence through the Teen Years.*

—Compiled from *Parenting through the Teen Years*, June/July 1999



Fast Facts for Families

Ways to structure your

child's time through the ages

0-1 Have your baby spend most of the time with you or one or two consistent caregivers.

Be flexible regarding the schedule your child would like and gradually introduce predictable routines.

2-3 Have consistent times for sleeping, feeding, playing and relaxing.

Balance stimulated structured time with free playtime.

4-5 Find some simple chores that you and your child can do together.

Begin to introduce your child to community activities that welcome young children.

6-10 Allow your child to have two outside-the-home activities that are lead by caring and nurturing adults.

Help your child not to overbook or underbook activities

11-15 Help your young adolescent set boundaries on structured activities. Look for ones that are positive, stimulating, have caring adults involved and don't require excess time commitments.

Evaluate the amount of hang out time your child has. Balance it with structured time.

16-18 Help your teenager think about how time spent on different activities helps or hinders in reaching goals.

Encourage your teenager to be involved in at least one activity that may continue into his or her adult years.

—Compiled by Brooke Baldwin, Editor

Guiding your kids on the internet

The Internet is full of wonderful sites that can create many positive experiences. Vast amounts of information are available at the click of a mouse. "Cyberspace", however, is part of "real life" and there is good reason to be cautious here. The same dangers that exist in "real life" exist on the Internet.

We all learn what part of town is the "bad part of town" and avoid it if we want to. The same holds true with the Internet. Just as we encounter good and bad people on the street, we will encounter good and bad people online. Although adults usually exercise common sense, children need guidance and protection.

There are two schools of thought regarding the guidance and protection of our young people. One

camp believes that the Internet should be regulated much the same way television is. The second camp views this as censorship and feels that there is a technology available to protect children without limiting the Internet for everyone.

The Internet is an exciting medium because it allows, and encourages, the exchange of ideas. Some of these ideas may be of an adult nature and not intended for children. Rather than eliminate these areas of the Internet, they can be "blocked" from your computer using software.

Here is where you can go to read about and download the software that is available:

CYBERSitter – blocks adult-oriented content and graphic file downloads. It filters offensive terms

and phrases

Cyber Patrol – This has a customizable dictionary for each member of the family. It can also limit the amount of time spent online

Cyber Snoop – In has a customizable list of Web sites that are forbidden. Log entries allows parents to see where the child has been.

Net Nanny – This has a customizable filter list. It will check incoming and outgoing text against a dictionary of words that the parents create.

Setting guidelines for internet use is also important. Parents can also visit a site called SmartParent, at www.smartparent.com. It offers parents an extensive collection of advice, resources and links to other pertinent sites.

—Compiled by Brooke Baldwin, Editor

Internet Safety Tips

The following is a list of practical rules for parents and children to ensure online safety.

Tip #1

Take the trip together. Take the time to see what your kids are doing online and what their interests are.

Tip #2

Teach kids never to give out their personal information to people they meet online especially in public places like chat rooms and bulletin boards.

Tip #3

Teach kids to never send a person they meet online their picture or anything else.

Tip #4

Instruct your child never to plan a face-to-face meeting alone with online acquaintances.

Tip #5

Tell your child not to respond when they receive offensive or dangerous e-mail, chat, or other communications.

Tip # 6

Tell your child not to give out their internet password to anyone other than parents.

Tip #7

Establish clear ground rules for Internet use for your kids. Decide whether or not to use parental control tools or protective software.

Tip #8

Place your computer in the family room or another open area of your home. Or use the computer together at a library, school, or community center.

—Compiled by Brooke Baldwin, Editor



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Published quarterly by
Partners in Parenting,
Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension.

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Designer DRUGS

Designer drugs are a class of drugs often associated with “raves,” all-night underground dance parties frequented by teens and college students. Designer drugs are modifications of restricted drugs and are made by underground chemists in order to create

street drugs that are not specifically listed as controlled substances by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Changing the molecular structure of an existing drug or drugs to create a new substance creates a designer drug. The street names of designer drugs vary according to time, place, and manufacturer. Because unlicensed and untrained amateurs

create designer drugs in clandestine laboratories, they can be extremely dangerous. In many cases, the designer drugs are more dangerous and more potent than the original drug.

Drugs that are derived from fentanyl, a pharmaceutical drug are extremely potent and have a strong potential for overdose. They have been associated with hundreds of unintentional deaths in the United States. Fentanyl was originally created for anesthesia during surger-

ies.

Fentanyl-based designer drugs’ effects are short lived, about 30 to 90 minutes. Sometimes fentanyl-derived designer drugs are injected. Increasingly the drug is sniffed or smoked, in part to avoid the

risk of getting HIV via infected needles. The respiratory paralysis that may occur is so sudden after drug administration that often victims who injected the drug are found with the needle still in their arm.

Another example of a designer drug is Ecstasy, or MDMA

(methylenedioxymethamphetamine). This is a synthetic drug that acts simultaneously as a stimulant and a hallucinogen. Users sometimes take Ecstasy for the sense of well being, the sensory distortions caused by the drug, or to stay awake through long hours at a rave. It stimulates the central nervous system and produces hallucinogenic effects. The price of Ecstasy depends on the supply and demand in the area, but usually ranges from \$10 to \$40 per dose.

Ecstasy has been shown to cause brain damage in animals. It depletes a very important chemical in the brain, serotonin, which effects mood, sleeping and eating habits, thinking processes, aggressive behavior, sexual function, and sensitivity to pain. Studies with rats and monkeys have shown that the use of Ecstasy can reduce serotonin levels in the brain by 90% for at least 2 weeks. Users who take Ecstasy at raves risk exhaustion and dehydration from a combination of the drug and non-stop dancing. Users have also died from heat stroke.

Ecstasy is not to be confused with Herbal Ecstasy, a combination of herbs, that are legal, inexpensive and marketed as a “natural high.” Herbal Ecstasy can be purchased over the counter in drug stores, music stores, and shops around the country at a cost of about \$3.00 per pill. The recommended dose for the “natural high” is 4 pills.

The packaging on these products, include brand names “Herbal Ecstasy”, “Cloud 9” and “Ultimate Xphoria,” promises “increased energy,” “inner visions,” “sexual sensations” and “cosmic consciousness.” Users report feeling relaxed, tingly, and energetic. Caffeine and ephedra (also known as ma huang) are the key ingredients in Herbal Ecstasy that cause such sensations, Ephedra is an herb that has been used in China for 2,000 years to treat respiratory problems. The active chemical of the herb

STREET TALK

Ecstasy a.k.a -- XTC, MDMA and Adam

Ecstasy is in the form of tablets, capsules, powder or liquid
This drug is swallowed, snorted, smoked or injected

Herbal Ecstasy a.k.a -- by brand names: Cloud 9, Rave Energy, Ultimate Xphoria and X

Herbal Ecstasy comes in pill form in bright packaging.
This drug is swallowed, smoked or snorted.

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ephedra is ephedrine, which is a chemical used in decongestant and asthma medications.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently received hundreds of reports of adverse reactions to Herbal Ecstasy, including liver failure, elevated blood pressure, strokes and deaths. The FDA is currently deciding whether a safe level of ephedrine in food supplements exists, or whether sales of ephedrine-based substances should be stopped altogether. Many states have banned the sale of herbal ecstasy following the reports of deaths.

—Compiled from *Partnership for a Drug Free America* website

Teach healthy eating habits

Childhood is the time to instill lifelong eating and exercise habits that contribute to good health. JoAnn Hatter, a child nutrition expert with the American Dietetic Association, says nutrition profoundly affects children's ability to learn, develop and stay healthy. She offers these ideas for fostering good nutrition habits in children.

* Be patient: If a child doesn't accept a new food the first time offer it later.

* Be a planner: Most young children need a snack or two in addition to three regular meals a day. Use the Food Guide Pyramid as a

guide for meals and snacks.

* Be a good role model: Children reflect parents' attitudes toward food. Try new foods and new ways for preparing them. Involve your children in food preparation.

* Be adventurous: Have a "new food night" each week. Have your child choose a new food to try.

* Be creative: Encourage your child to invent a new snack or sandwich from three or four healthful ingredients. Use color, texture, size and variety when thinking up new food ideas.

—Compiled by Brooke Baldwin

Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.



This program fully funded by:

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