

TALKING BACK: Ten Things Teens Want Parents to Know About TEEN PREGNANCY

Teens hear advice on all kinds of issues from their parents, teachers, and other adults in their lives. But they don't often get asked to offer it.

Over the past year the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy has been asking teens from all over the country a fairly simple question: If you could give your parents and other adults advice on how to help you and your friends avoid pregnancy, what would it be? The following ten tips represent the major themes they heard from teens. You may want to check out their web site at

<http://www.teenpregnancy.org>

- #1 Show us why teen pregnancy is such a bad idea.** For instance, let us hear directly from teen mothers and fathers about how hard it has been for them.
- #2 Talk to us honestly about love, sex, and relationships.** Just because we're young doesn't mean that we can't fall in love or be interested in sex. These feelings are very real and powerful to us. Help us handle the feelings in a safe way.
- #3 Telling us not to have sex is not enough.** Explain why you feel that way, and ask us what we think. Tell us how you felt as a teen. Listen to us and take our opinions seriously.
- #4 Whether we're having sex or not we need to be prepared.** We need to know how to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- #5 If we ask about sex or birth control, don't assume we are already having sex.** We may just be curious, or we may just want to talk with someone we trust. Don't think that giving us information about sex and birth control will encourage us to have sex.

- #6 Pay attention to us before we get into trouble.** Programs for teen moms and dads are great, but we all need encouragement, attention, and support. Reward us for doing the right thing, even when it seems like no big thing.
- #7 Sometimes, all it takes to not have sex is not to have the opportunity.** If you can't be home with us after school, make sure we have something to do that we really like, where there are other kids and some adults who are comfortable with kids our age.
- #8 We really care what you think, even if we don't always act like it.** When we don't end up doing exactly what you tell us to do, don't think you have failed to reach us.
- #9 Show us what good responsible relationships look like.** We're influenced by what you do and by what you say. If you demonstrate sharing, communication, and responsibility in your own relationships, we will be more likely to follow your example.
- #10 We hate The Talk as much as you do.** Instead, start talking with us about sex and responsibility when we're young and keep the conversation going as we grow older.

Source: The National Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy; www.teenpregnancy.org

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