

PARENTING TIPS FROM THE OPHELIA PROJECT

- ❖ “Practice makes permanent,” says Dr. Nixon. Teach your child how to have emotional control, to use reflective thinking and to use decision making skills. Walk your child through the steps of positive decision making. Teach them questions they should ask themselves before acting. For example, “What will happen if I choose to do this?” Help them consider the natural consequences of their choices. Help them process their decisions after they make them, in a non-judgmental way, “Did that decision work for you?” “Is there something you would do differently next time?”
- ❖ Participate in dialogue, not monologue. You ask the questions! Open ended questions are better than yes or no, for example, “Tell me more about that.”
- ❖ Empathize with them. “I can see that this is very upsetting for you.” “I am sorry this is difficult for you.”
- ❖ Remind them, “I’m on your side.”
- ❖ Work with your teen, don’t try to fix, manage or control everything.
- ❖ Create a pro-social environment at home. Set a positive example by not speaking badly about other people, be accountable for your own actions, model good communication skills by not humiliating, shouting or using demeaning language. Model calm and caring ways to resolve conflict.
- ❖ Establish positive, open communication with your child’s school.
- ❖ Be patient with your teen. This phase isn’t going to last forever.
- ❖ Find ways to have fun in your family with activities that your children enjoy.
- ❖ Establish a set of norms for your family and talk about why they matter.
- ❖ Help your child get involved in the community through volunteering, religious groups, clubs, etc. Sense of responsibility and having a connection to their community, helps to foster leadership.
- ❖ Acknowledge your child’s strengths and importance as an individual and let them know that’s okay to be their own person and to not conform to what everyone else is doing.
- ❖ Rather than saying, “you’re grounded for a month!” “you can’t use your cell phone for a month”, find a way to deal with it by having them help pay off the bill, telling them they have x amount of money. Discipline in a way that helps develop skills rather than punishments.
- ❖ Make sure your child has some responsibilities helping to maintain the household: laundry, meal-prep, etc...at the same time, they shouldn’t be responsible for everything.

