



Fearing Teen Trouble This Summer? *The Top 10 Ways to Make it Through Safely and Sanelly*

By Dr. Jennifer Austin Leigh, author of *Laid or Loved? The Secrets Guys Wish You Knew About Being a Dream Girl Instead of a Just-In-His-Jeans Girl*

With our tanked economy, there aren't many summer jobs for teens. This means more teens at home and unsupervised this summer. Here are the top ten things you need to know to make it a safe, sane, happy summer with your teenaged daughter.

1. Start the conversation now about what each of you expects this summer. Remember to use excellent listening skills! Are your expectations on the same page or on different planets? (Does she expect an allowance and curfew increase and you're thinking of cutting back?) Try to get expectations aligned as much as possible.
2. Create a relationship contract. Go over details about behaviors, consequences, rules, rewards etc. contract should include how both of you are going to behave towards each other, how conflicts will get resolved and clear directions on what you'll do if conflict get's out of control.
3. Text. If you haven't learned how to text yet, learn now! Be ready to text your teen this summer to stay in touch. Teens answer more texts than they do phone calls or emails. You and your teen can create a Twitter account (www.twitter.com) and keep up with each other through tweets. It doesn't matter how you stay in touch, what matters is that you stay in touch.
4. Create a Facebook or Myspace account if your teen has one. Ask to "friend" them. If they decline, don't push. Do push to talk about responsible and respectful use of social networking sites. No posting nude pictures, no slamming other kids on walls or comments, etc. Ask what your teen would do if they got bullied. Make sure they know not to cyberbully.
5. Agree on a curfew before the last bell of class rings. Agree on consequences for breaking the rules. Remember that you don't want to become a nasty dictator, so if your daughter calls and says she will be late, ask why and thank her for letting you know. Pick your battles over curfew very carefully! Parents get upset over curfews and blow up at their teens which ruins their relationships. Use your head, keep your cool and talk things out peacefully.
6. You and your daughter need to talk about the Big 3 D's: Drugs,

Drinking, and Driving. If your daughter can drive, agree upon car use. Who can she drive? Where? When? If your daughter doesn't have her license but friends do, who is she allowed to ride with? When? Where? Drugs and drinking: get very clear about where you stand and what you expect. At the same time, look back on your own teen years. Did you ever drink or smoke pot? Teens are supposed to test the limits. Their brains are wired, literally, to take risks. But that doesn't mean you can't set up boundaries, and expectations. Just don't freak out if your teen steps over the line this summer. She might. Be ready. Think ahead as to how you will respond.

7. PLAY! I can't stress this enough. Teens still need to play just as much as they did when they were younger, but our culture doesn't respect or encourage play. A playful attitude at home can turn your home into an amazing refuge for you and your teen. Playing helps your teen's brain grow. Sorry, Guitar Hero isn't the kind of play I'm talking about. Nor is Grand Theft Auto. I'm talking about the kind of play that uses the imagination and puts kids into a state called "flow." If you need help becoming more playful or coming up with ideas for playing with your teen go to the play blog at www.drjennforgirls.com.
8. Start a family project and include your teen. Recession Gardens, family photo albums, volunteering, even yoga classes to calm the mind, or gym sessions to lose weight together can all be things your teen might enjoy doing with you. Find something you both will like and Sharpie it onto your calendar! Make sure you have special time with your daughter at least once a week.
9. Expect love to happen for your teen. Add long hot days, time together, and teen hormones and you have the perfect recipe for a summer crush or fling. It's what teens do. Have the conversation with your daughter about relationships. It's a new world out there. Things to know: teens often have sex a few times *then* decide if they want to be in a relationship. Some teen girls are performing oral sex with the same regard as saying hello. Some girls, I call them "hyenas" after the spotted hyena, are on the prowl for virgin guys to deflower. Or they are strong-arming guys for sex. Some girls are using drugs or drinking in order to have sex and not feel guilty or to just be braver to go after it. Time to check in with your daughter to find out her views on sex, love and respect. (Buy her a copy of my new book, *Laid or Loved? The Secrets Guys Wish You Knew About Being a Dream Girl Instead of a Just-In-His-Jeans Girl*.) If your daughter falls in love and gets dumped, remember she *really does* have a broken heart. Her brain is in withdrawals from all those lovey-dovey feel-good chemicals it used to bathe in.
10. Take care of YOU! A happy mom makes a happy household. It's been a long hard winter for most of us. Find ways to nourish your heart, soul

and body. Don't feel a moment's guilt for being selfish. Self-care is vital! If you have found an amazing way to keep your spirits up, or revitalize, make sure you share your ideas with your friends. We are all in this together!

For more ideas on understanding and developing a great relationship with your teen, visit www.drjennforgirls.com.

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