## Working teens and setting priorities

The teenage years are a perfect time to start working and often this starts with a summer job. Work experience can offer many valuable lessons for teens and gives them a sense of accomplishment. They develop skills they will need to become successful in the adult workforce such as how to balance time, manage money, and work with others.

Getting a summer job can improve your teen's self-esteem and self-worth. It can help your teen act responsibly,

cooperate, and have the confidence to try new things.



Assist them with a job search. School counsellors, family friends, and other types of community networking can be excellent resources. Make sure that when your teen accepts a job, there will be enough time to fulfill academic, social, and family obligations. Is this a part-time job that can be continued when school begins again? Prepare them for the length of time they could be working and, if possible, help them consider ways to continue working when the summer is over.

Stress the importance of finding a balance. Help your teen set priorities and help them understand the need to schedule enough rest, eat nourishing foods, and getting regular physical activity while balancing their work schedule. This is a life-long skill and can be encouraged by parents.

Help your teen manage money. Have your teen watch and learn how you pay household bills, which demonstrates the need to budget for everyday expenses. Start a bank account with your teen to help them learn how to manage personal finances.

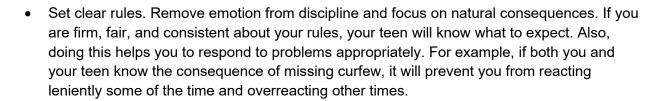
## Remember – your teen still needs you!

Parenting a teenager can be both challenging and rewarding. Many teens have conflicting feelings about growing up and aren't yet able to gracefully manage these emotions. They can be inconsistent with their affections, argumentative, and at times even hurtful. As your teen struggles with becoming independent, it is natural for them to detach from you at times. Remember that your teen still needs



you. Although your teen may not ever let on, your unconditional love and guidance are important and valued. The following suggestions may help you communicate with and support your teenager during a time of uncertainty and change.

- Stay connected. Go to your teen's activities.
   This tells teens that they are important and opens the door to communication.
- Give your teen responsibilities. Assign jobs
  around the house, such as caring for younger siblings, cooking one night a week, making
  lunch, and other responsibilities. Trusting your teen with regular duties helps build selfconfidence and promotes a sense of accomplishment. A part-time summer job can help
  with this, too!



- Accept that your way isn't the only way. Recognize that your teen will likely approach tasks
  or situations differently than you. For example, your teen may do homework with a headset
  on while lying on the floor of an extremely messy room. You may view this as an
  undisciplined and chaotic environment that makes it impossible to concentrate. But focus
  on the outcomes. If your teen is doing well, accept that these methods work.
- Be flexible. Teens want and need boundaries with limits that fit their age and development.
  As your teen matures, change rules as appropriate to reward responsible behaviour. Also,
  realize that being fair sometimes means agreeing to bend the rules. Teens are less likely to
  resent a parent who discusses situations rationally and in an adult manner. Sometimes
  finding a compromise with your teenager is the most effective solution.
- Believe in your teen. Recognize that we all go through difficult phases. Although some
  teens struggle, most teens manage common challenges without major problems. Many
  teens develop a sense that they are not living up to an idealized view of how they should
  be. Accept that your teen is not perfect and will inevitably make some mistakes. Let your
  teen know your love is unconditional.
- Help your teen set goals. Teens learn how to think strategically when parents encourage them to set goals and help them develop a plan to reach them.
- Listen. It sounds so simple, but it is one communication skill that parents often have the most trouble with. Be sensitive to and alert for cues that your teen needs to talk. Don't be



quick to offer advice—give it only if requested. Sometimes teens just need someone to listen to them. They often can find the right answers by themselves.

Set an example. Strive to model your own beliefs and values in your behaviours so that
your child can emulate not only what you say but also what you do. To encourage
community involvement, for example, you could volunteer together with your child. As your
teen nears adulthood, they will pay more and more attention to your actions.

## Wellness Articles

Alberta Health Services encourages all Albertans to live a healthy life. These weekly Wellness Articles are created by a team of healthcare professionals from AHS in collaboration with provincial healthcare experts in Alberta and content from myhealth.alberta.ca.

Our experts ensure this information is factual, current, and written for Albertans.

From stress-relief strategies to finding balance within your life, these Wellness Articles cover a variety of different topics designed to inspire and educate Albertans on creating a positive and healthy lifestyle.

We welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Please credit Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: **rebecca.johnson2@ahs.ca**. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

