

Runaway Prevention Tips For Parents

Pay Attention – Listen when your children are talking with you. Don't just nod your head while you're watching television, reading the paper, or using your computer. Don't just pretend to listen to them. Kids know the difference!

Give Respect - Acknowledge and support your child's struggle to grow to maturity.

Understand Your Child - Try to sympathize with what your kids are going through. Look at life – at least occasionally – from their point of view. Remember that when you were their age, your ideas seemed to make sense to you.

Don't Lecture -- Everyone hates to be lectured, especially teenagers. We all respond more favorably to clear information and direction, when we know that the questions we ask will be answered and respected.

Don't Label - Useless labels will only confuse the real issues that you wish to address.

Discuss Feelings - Talk about what it feels like to be a parent. Share with your child the things you need from him. Encourage him to talk about his feelings, too. When parents share their feelings, children know it's safe to share their own.

Create Responsibility - Give your child choices, not orders. Help her to understand the consequences of her actions. When punishments need to be administered, try asking her what she thinks would be appropriate. Make sure the punishment fits the "crime" and is consistent with other actions you've taken.

Administer Positive Praise - Describe your child's positive and negative behavior and how it affects others. Be specific and give praise to reward good behavior. Positive behavior acknowledged is positive behavior repeated. Try to praise your child than you criticize.

Stop Hassling - Asking too many questions often shuts off information. Give your child the opportunity to volunteer her thoughts and feelings, while you show a sincere interest, without probing.

Don't Always Give The Answers - You want your children to be able to find their own answers or solutions to problems. You can help this by not giving them the answers all the time. Instead, discuss options. Play "what if" to help them develop problem-solving skills.

Use Team Work - Work together with your child to lay out the problems and find mutually agreeable solutions.