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Love and Logic®

Have a Plan For Dealing With Peer Pressure

Parents Don't Have to Be Left In the Dark When Kids Walk Out the Door

The challenges of adolescence can be harder for parents to deal with than for their kids.

According to research from the Love and Logic® Institute, 87 percent of American adults believe children and teens are influenced as much or more by their peers than a generation ago. How can concerned parents know if their children are ready to deal with the intense pressure they face to participate in unhealthy behavior?

Parents usually try to talk to their teenager about their concerns. But talking may only make the situation worse. Betty's daughter, Rachel, wants to go to a party. Mom isn't sure her daughter is ready to handle the peer pressure she is sure to face. Rachel tells Betty she's being overprotective.

"You're just treating me like a baby. How can I help it if some kids bring drugs or beer to the party? But you don't have to worry about me. I can handle it. I'm not a baby, you know. So what if I'm only 14? I'm a very mature 14-year-old. You can't keep treating me like I'm a baby."

Parents can use a simple Love and Logic® technique called "What's Your Plan?" to avoid this argument and add to their peace of mind when teenagers claim they are ready to handle peer pressure and mom or dad simply aren't sure.

Betty should begin by asking her daughter, "What's your plan if your friends want you to drink or do drugs with them? I'll know you're ready to handle these kinds of situations once you have a good plan."

"I'm Not Ready" Indicators

1. **"Oh, mom. You know I don't do stuff like that. I'm a good kid."** Beware! This youngster has not developed a plan for handling peer pressure and is trying to say what is expected.

2. **"Don't you trust me? Why can't you just trust me?"** Uh oh! This is probably a manipulative statement designed to put the parent on the defensive. Many kids learn at an early age that defensive parents are more likely to give in.

3. **"Oh, mom. I just do what you told me. I just say "No."** Watch out! Most teens and even many adults are not comfortable saying "No" to a good friend. This kid is not ready.

4. **"I'll just tell them doing drugs is stupid."** A teenager probably is not going to say this. It is very rare for a child to risk his or her standing in the peer group with this kind of statement. This statement usually is made only to impress the parent.

"I'm Ready" Indicator

A teenager who is ready to handle the pressure usually indicates a well thought out plan. For example:

"You know, Mom, if a kid wants me to try drugs, I'll tell him I like him and want to do things with him, but drugs really aren't my thing. And then I'll thank him and suggest something else we could do."

I met a teenager who told me he actually looks forward to being offered drugs or alcohol. "I've got this great routine," he laughed. "I tell them I've got a big time problem with my parents. They just aren't very "with

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it." If they knew I tried anything, they'd take all of my college money and put me in a rehab program even if I didn't need one. They're so unreasonable I can't take a chance. But thanks anyway."

This teen has a plan and his odds for successfully dealing with peer pressure are much higher than someone without a plan.

Parents can help their kids develop a plan to handle peer pressure. Once it's in place, parents should practice with their teenagers. Have fun with some surprise "dry run" practice sessions: "Hey dude, I've got some really good stuff. Want some?"

In the event a youngster hesitates, say, "Uh oh. Not ready for the next party. I hope the next practice session goes better for you."

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Jim Fay is one of America's most sought-after presenters and authors in the area of parenting and school discipline. His background includes 31 years as a teacher and administrator, over three decades as a professional consultant, and many years as the parent of three children. Jim's sense of humor and infectious spirit have made his interviews, audios, videos, and books popular with educators and parents as well as the national news media. Jim has discovered that fun stories are the most powerful way of helping people learn. He often comments, "People seem to learn best when they giggle." You will find this delightful quality in many of our Love and Logic products.

People who are really successful implementing this skill purchased Parenting Teens with Love and Logic

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