



Setting Boundaries and Expectations

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website <https://thrive.psu.edu>, and sign up today!

Tips for boundaries to be effective:

- Make sure the rules, and consequences for breaking them, are understood by your teen.
- In rulemaking, be deliberate and do not act impulsively.
- Ask for your teenager's input when deciding new rules or adjusting old ones. Asking for their thoughts gives your teen increased confidence and a better understanding of why the rule exists.
- Stay firm with your rules, and keep to agreed-upon punishments.
- Model the behavior you want to see from your teen.
- Try not to fix every problem. Let your teen experience consequences that do not have a severe or long-term negative impact on their life and allow them to learn from the problem or mistake.
- Continually talk to your teen about what you expect from them.
- Make sure the established expectations are developmentally appropriate and it is possible for your child to meet those expectations. The table below will give you an idea of how to manage appropriate expectations with a teenager.

Realistic Expectations	Unrealistic Expectations
Grades are to be kept above a specified threshold	Grades are not to be below perfect
Chores are established and are to be done without being asked	Assuming your teenager knows what chores need to be done without them being identified
Putting a large amount of effort into being the best you can be at a given task	Being the best at a given task when compared to all peers
Alcohol and drugs are to be avoided	That your teenager will never be confronted with drugs or alcohol
Your teenager will act respectfully	Your teenager will not have their own thoughts and feelings about things
Your teenager will try their best to be responsible and stay out of trouble	That your teenager will never make mistakes and missteps
Your teenager will spend time with the family	That your teenager will spend all their free time with the family
Your teen will limit entertainment screen time to an agreed-upon limit	Your teenager will abstain from any sort of digital technology