



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 14 to 18

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Responsibility**

Responsibility is the value that enables us to take care of ourselves, our families, our friends, and the greater community. Being responsible means that others can rely on us to do what we've promised. For kids, taking responsibility may mean doing something difficult or tedious, like studying for a test or doing family chores when they'd rather go out with friends. Or it could take moral strength--such as saying no to drugs. Ultimately, being responsible benefits us all--in terms of health, relationships, work, and building a better world.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Gradually prepare your teens for independence by allowing them to set their own goals and to take the reins.

To parents, teenagers may seem to shirk their responsibilities. It helps to understand that teenagers face competing demands, and that they are trying, in their own way, to juggle responsibilities. For instance, a girl running up the phone bill may feel a responsibility to be supportive to her friend on the other end of the line.

At this age, kids are starting to make decisions about college and careers that have a lifelong impact--their grades and activities can affect what doors will be open to them. Money and social concerns are also primary. It can be difficult for parents to focus and channel children's energies in a responsible direction, but there are a number of great ways to try.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **As your teen learns to drive, make using the family car contingent on upholding certain family responsibilities.** Driving is a milestone parents dread and most kids look forward to as a step toward freedom--and it often brings with it an upsurge in responsible behavior, as teens realize the life-and-death power they now possess. It also enlarges the scope of chores that teens can be asked to do--such as picking up a younger sibling or going to the store.
- ✓ **Teach your child basic life skills,** such as grocery shopping, cooking, budgeting, doing laundry, and other household tasks.
- ✓ **Look for ways to let your teens know you find them trustworthy.** If they break a rule, tell them, "We need to find a way for you to earn back our trust."

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

responsibilityproject.com/familyvalues

Get Next Month's Value @ beliefnet.com/values