

Renew Family Ties in the New Year



As this year marks the beginning of change in the country, why not make some changes in your home? Take this opportunity to renew your relationships, reconnect with your family, and reinforce rules and expectations for your children. In this new year there are even more ways to understand and connect with your teens.

You can open the lines of communication both online and offline. In today's world of Internet connectedness and social networking, it's easy to lose your teen in cyberspace. But you can use this tool to your advantage by reading up on popular social networking and surfing sites like Facebook, YouTube, and MTV.com. It's always important to make the most of "real" face time, though, so be sure to communicate with your teen and make the most of every minute you have together.

Learn how to [start a conversation](#).

Mind the Gap (the "Generation Gap," that is!)

Most parents pride themselves on having an open, solid relationship with their children, but teens tell a different story. When it comes to drugs and alcohol, 80 percent of parents believe that neither alcohol nor marijuana is usually available at parties their teens attend. But 50 percent of teen partygoers report attending parties where alcohol, drugs, or both are available. [1] Get up to speed on today's youth culture and learn what's really going on in your teen's world.

Take the [pop-culture quiz](#) and test your knowledge.

[1] The National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XI: Teens and Parents. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. August 2006.

Follow these simple tips to help build a better relationship with your teens:

1. Learn to listen.

Let your teens do half of the talking and listen closely to details about what their friends do after school and what's cool, what's not, and why.

2. Ask questions.

Find out what pressures they face day-to-day. Keep an open mind and encourage them to feel comfortable telling you about their problems.

3. Reinforce rules and expectations.

Take this time to remind your teen about your expectations concerning drug use and online activity.

More tips on [parenting today's teens](#).

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And check out our comprehensive package of materials, quizzes, guides, and advice on [opening the lines of communication.](#)



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