

Helping Teens Develop Healthy Attitudes about Money

How can adults help teens develop healthy attitudes and skills in using money?

- First, consider your own attitudes about money. What feelings have you carried into adulthood, based on your family's approach? Think about what practices you want your children to follow. Your own actions will help to reinforce what you are teaching. Are there some things you need to do differently in order to set a positive example?
- Involve your children in discussions and decisions about money. This will help them learn about real-life expenses. Let teens see how money is saved, contributed to charities and used in purchases. Let them see when you postpone a purchase in order to fit it in your budget.
- As teens mature, they can take on some of the responsibility for making household purchases, such as buying groceries. This provides an opportunity for youth to practice comparison shopping and to see how much it costs to buy food, clothing or other items they may have taken for granted.
- Make a habit of talking about TV commercials and printed ads with your child. Ask your child to point out the ways advertisers are trying to draw attention to a product to make it seem appealing. With practice, youth will be able to pick out what is misleading about a claim or sales pitch. This awareness helps kids avoid being overly swayed by ads.
- Teach skills such as how to write a check, keep financial records and fill out a deposit slip.
- Help teens set up a simple plan for managing their money (a budget). This should include how much to spend, how much to save and how much to share (contribute to charity). Encourage them to think about their long-term goals and values as they plan.
- Teens that have a regular income can learn about credit by taking out a short-term loan under close adult guidance. First, discuss how the money will be used, the length of the debt, the amount of interest and the consequences of not making payments on time.

- Make teens accountable for their behaviors. If they overspend, allow them to experience the consequences, such as not being able to go to the big game or concert if they have spent all their money and can't afford the ticket.

References:

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