

9 Ways to Support Your Teen

By Bobbi DePorter

For many years at SuperCamp, parents would ask us if we could start a program for them, to help them learn what their child is learning at SuperCamp. A few years ago we started Parent Weekend, an intensive three-day parent program that coincides with the final three days of a 10-day Junior Forum or Senior Forum at the same location. The parents who attend love it, including graduating with their children on the final day.

In addition to exposing parents to many of the learning and life skills their sons and daughters discover at SuperCamp, we also talk with parents about how they can support their children at home. Here are nine great tips we share with parents of Senior Forum students, also known as “teens”:

1. **Really listen.** Don't try to listen while doing something else. Put your chores aside so your teen knows you are paying attention.
2. **Take the long view.** Remember, minor mishaps aren't major catastrophes. All incidents provide opportunities to practice good communication. Often, categorizing incidents according to their importance will help keep responses and consequences appropriate. Choose only the most important issues to evoke the strongest consequences.
3. **Make time for being together.** Find activities you enjoy doing together and pursue them. If your invitation gets turned down, keep trying!
4. **Tolerate differences.** View your teenager as an individual distinct from you. However, this doesn't mean you can't state your opinion if you disagree.
5. **Respect your teen's privacy.** Just because he/she wants to keep their door locked, doesn't mean he/she is doing anything you wouldn't approve of. But if a behavior is worrying you, speak up!
6. **State facts instead of opinions when you praise or discuss problems.** Ask your teen to demonstrate “Open the Front Door” – a communication tool we use at SuperCamp.
O - is an objective *observation* about the situation.
T - is a *thought* or opinion about what you observed.
F - is a *feeling* you had about what you observed.
D - is what you want, your *desire* or outcome of the situation.
Practicing this together is great for keeping the doors open!
7. **Ask your teen about his/her learning style.** Knowing there are differences goes a long way toward explaining why we have problems understanding and communicating with some people and not with others. When you know what cues he/she picks up on most easily (visual, auditory or kinesthetic), you can take steps to help him/her learn faster and more easily.
8. **Support a positive attitude about learning.** Create a positive study environment that includes appropriate reference materials, music and reminders that he/she is intelligent (like old report cards, awards, notes from teachers). It is also helpful to demonstrate your own positive feelings about learning.
9. **Celebrate success!** Positive feedback goes a long way to encourage repeat behavior. Each accomplishment by a family member deserves acknowledgement, whether verbal



or by means of a special treat, like a trip to the movies, a special dessert, or posting on the bulletin board.

About the Author:

Bobbi DePorter, teen motivation and accelerated learning expert, has changed the lives of over five million kids through her SuperCamp and Quantum Learning school programs. SuperCamp is a learning and life skills summer program with more than 56,000 graduates in the U.S., Europe, Asia and Latin America. Quantum Learning is an accelerated learning-based teaching and learning methodology that has helped improve thousands of schools and districts across the nation. Bobbi is the author of more than a dozen books, including *The Seven Biggest Teen Problems and how to turn them into Strengths (An Insider's Look at What Works with Teens)*. For more information, visit <http://www.SuperCamp.com> and <http://www.QLN.com>. Contact Bobbi at bdeporter@qln.com.