



# Setting Rules and Expectations

Balancing teens' growing independence with the need to protect their safety can be challenging for all parents and caregivers. These challenges are often magnified for foster parents, who may face additional monitoring requirements and short time frames to get to know the youth in their care. Despite these challenges, it is vital that foster caregivers effectively supervise and monitor while providing teens space to explore.

*“They are doing so much to protect you that they are putting you in a bubble that in itself is counterproductive. Because protection itself should also allow that person to explore who they are.”*

*- Alumnus of Foster Care*



## FOCUS ON BUILDING A TRUSTING FOUNDATION FOR CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HEALTHY CHOICES

- Take an interest in your teen's life, friendships and relationships
- Get to know your teen's friends and dating partners and their families
- Make sure your teen knows how to get ahold of you at all times
- Communicate clearly about rules and expectations, including for technology use
- Listen to your teen's perspective about rules and offer room for negotiation where safe and appropriate



## RESOURCES

This [CDC Talking with Your Teens About Sex factsheet](#) provides tips for parents and caregivers to have ongoing conversations with young people about sex, including topics to discuss and strategies for starting conversations.

This [CDC Monitoring Your Teen's Activities factsheet](#) describes strategies for sharing expectations with teens about their behavior, understanding where teens are and what they are doing, and responding to challenges.

This [cell phone contract template](#) is a tool to have an open dialogue and set clear rules and expectations with your teen about cell phone or other technology use.