



Parenting styles and youth smoking

By Lawrence Kutner, Ph.D.

Each of us has a parenting style that changes a bit with different situations and as our children get older. The approach that you use most of the time can influence whether your children smoke.^{1,2}

Research suggests that your children are less likely to smoke if you:³

- Are sensitive to your children's needs as they grow older. (For example, teenagers need to find ways to demonstrate their independence.)
- Spend time explaining the reasons for most of your rules and decisions. (For example, chores are shared around the home because that's one way that family members help each other out.)
- Have high expectations for their behavior. (For example, finish homework every day.)

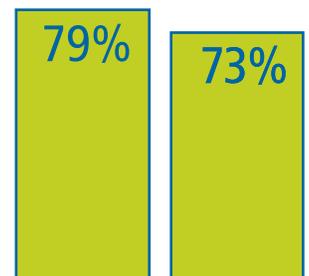
If you do these things, which show your respect for your children, they will likely pay more attention to your opinions and values when it comes to important issues such as tobacco and alcohol use. This also keeps the lines of communication open between you.

One thing that helps is understanding what behaviors are normal at different stages of childhood and adolescence. Don't just rely on what you remember from your own youth. Take the time to talk to other parents, read some articles or books, look at some websites on child development, or even take a parenting course. If you understand how your child is thinking at different ages, you'll be able to communicate more effectively.

➤ See back page for tips ➤

One Reason Given by Kids For Not Smoking⁴

"My parents don't approve"



11-14 year-olds 15-17 year-olds

Source: Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention (2005). Teenage Attitudes and Behavior Study-2004 Results

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Tips for Parents

- Remember that *rebellion can be a sign of growth*. Let teens speak their minds, even if you disagree with them. If you listen to them, they're more likely to listen to you, too, especially about important issues such as not smoking.
- Encourage teens to demonstrate their maturity in healthy ways, such as by becoming involved with sports, music, theater or a part-time job. Help them see that *tobacco use is not a part of growing up*.
- Talk to them about both the short-term and the long-term consequences of their behaviors. Remember that when it comes to smoking, *teenagers are usually much more concerned about short-term consequences* (smelly clothes, bad breath, having less spending money) than they are about long-term risks (heart disease, cancer, lung disease and other health problems).
- Take advantage of natural opportunities** to talk about not smoking, such as when you're offered a non-smoking table at a restaurant or see a "no smoking" sign in a building.
- Share your reasons if you're a nonsmoker; talk about the downsides if you're a smoker. Listen to their thoughts on the topic, and let them help guide the discussions. If you use these natural opportunities, you can **reinforce your message as they grow older**, and become more aware of their opinions as they mature.

Talk to your kids about not smoking. They'll listen.

Resources for Parents from Philip Morris USA

For more information, please visit the Parent Resource Center at www.philipmorrisusa.com where you'll find tools and tips from child development experts to help you talk to your kids about not smoking.

You can also download copies of resources in the *Raising Kids Who Don't Smoke* series, including:

- Raising kids who don't smoke*
- Peer pressure & smoking*
- Could your kid be smoking?*
- Educando a los niños para que no fumen*
- ¿Podría su hijo estar fumando?*

as well as more parent Tip Sheets like this one.



Additional Resources

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Office of the Surgeon General

www.surgeongeneral.gov

The NYU Child Study Center (parenting styles)

www.aboutourkids.org

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (adolescent development and smoking prevention)

www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/develop.htm

www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/develop2.htm

www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/68.htm

Note: Website addresses and content are subject to change. This Tip Sheet contains citations to a number of third-party information sources. The inclusion of these sources and websites in no way indicates their endorsement, support or approval of the contents of this Tip Sheet or the policies and positions of Philip Morris USA and its Youth Smoking Prevention department.

This Tip Sheet was created for parents on behalf of Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention by K&O Communications in conjunction with an expert advisory board. As the manufacturer of a product intended for adults who smoke that has serious health effects, Philip Morris USA is committed to helping prevent kids from smoking cigarettes. We have a dedicated Youth Smoking Prevention department that supports positive youth development programs, produces advertising for parents and conducts research to help prevent youth smoking.

References:

- Jackson, C., Bee-Gates, D., and Hendricksen, L. (1994). Authoritative parenting, child competencies, and initiation of cigarette smoking. *Health Education Quarterly*, 21(1), 103-116.
- Cohen, D.A., Richardson, J., and LeBree, L. (1994). Parenting behaviors and the onset of smoking and alcohol use: A longitudinal study. *Pediatrics*, 94(3), 368-75.
- Jackson, C. (2002). Perceived legitimacy of parental authority and tobacco and alcohol use during early adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 31, 425-32.
- Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention (2005). *Teenage Attitudes and Behavior Study - 2004 Results*. Scale: Percent responding 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, where 5="agree completely"; 1="do not agree at all". Asked of kids who have reported that they have not smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days.