



Defiant Teens

My teenager has been breaking a lot of house rules lately. Some of the things she does feel like normal teenage behavior, but other time it feels excessive. How do I know when my daughter has crossed the line?

As teenagers enter the driving years, their behavior often changes. This is usually related to an adolescent's desire to develop her own identity as well as her own independence. Peers start to become more important than parents, and the ability to drive creates a new found freedom and opportunity to push the boundaries of household rules. When gauging the seriousness of your rule breaking teen's behavior consider the following guidelines to help you determine when your child has crossed the line.

1. Failure to comply with a request in a REASONABLE amount of time.
What is reasonable? A minute or less! Yes, your child should respond to most requests almost instantaneously, especially simple ones. Don't necessarily expect your kids to always do what you ask, but they should acknowledge your comments and provide some type of acceptable response.
2. Failure to keep doing what has been requested until the task has been finished.
Many teenagers don't follow through. They do the minimum, leave the job half finished, or take too long to respond adding stress and anxiety to a parent's life. If you have clarified expectations and your teen still insists on underperforming, the situation is serious.
3. Failure to follow through on previously taught rules.
As parents we have expectations of our offspring such as keep their rooms clean, go to school, and be respectful to adults. Kids get this. If, however, at every turn, you child is continually breaking the life taught rules—it is a problem.

The point at which a teenager's troubles become serious varies from family to family, and it is your job as a parent to determine what is acceptable. However, when you feel like you get no rest from the situation, your child has crossed the line and it is time to consult a professional.