

7 Mistakes You Should Let Your Teens Make

An enormous slide and a determined toddler is not the sort of combination every parent is hoping for on their first trip to the park.

You watch your child teeter up the ladder, push through the chaos of older kids, and plop down at the top of the slide. You wait with a nervous smile and open arms at the bottom, hoping nothing will go wrong—and a moment later, you're cradling your child once again.

But what about when your child grows into a teenager and the slide turns into a math test? It's tough to know at what point you ought to step away and let your teenager make decisions that may have painful consequences. But a little bit of pain can be a good teacher.

Here are seven mistakes you may want to allow your kids to make:

1. Let them fail a test. If your son chooses to disregard your advice to turn off the movie and study, don't be afraid to let him fail a test. Sometimes it takes one bad grade to wake him up to the importance of studying so he'll do well on future tests.

2. Let them run low on gas. Your daughter spent more than she should have at the mall and is left without money to fill up her car with gas. Let her learn. It will teach her how to handle money more wisely.

3. Let them forget their practice equipment. When your son rushes out the door and forgets his practice jersey for football, don't offer to drive all the way up to the field and bring it to him. Let him explain to the coach that it was his

own fault he wasn't prepared, and let him experience the consequences from the coach.

4. Let them leave their homework at home. So your son leaves his homework in a stack of messy papers on the floor instead of in his backpack. Let him learn a lesson in responsibility instead of taking the homework to his school.

5. Let them forget their lunch. If your daughter has too much on her mind to remember to grab her lunch off the counter in the morning, let her figure out a solution at school. Don't take it to her.

6. Let them wear dirty socks. So your son never brought down his laundry basket last night when you asked him to. When it's 7 a.m. and he's running around the house asking you why he has no clean socks, tell him to grab a dirty pair out of the laundry and make it work. Next time, he will obey right away if he wants to avoid more smelly socks.

7. Let them miss a target. A week ago, you told your daughter she had to clean her room if she wanted to go a concert Friday night. If she's ready to walk out the door that night with her room still a disaster, don't go back on your word. No clean room, no concert.

Can you think of any other mistakes you should let your kids make? If so, please share them below.

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