



## Parenting Tip: Dealing with Early Teenage Behavior Problems

By Kelly Nault

### Parenting Question

“My lovely, cheerful, ever-helpful 11-year-old daughter has recently turned into the troublemaker in my house.

I have 2 other girls, ages 7 and 9, who are also influenced by her behavior. Now, every meal seems like a battleground. The 11-year-old is usually making mean remarks and bossing everyone around. I try to be patient, but it's very difficult!! She is also prone to raising her voice and shouting at anything. Is this early teenage behavior problems and what can I do???? “

— Mom Trying to Cope with Early Teenage Behavior Problems

### Positive Parenting Tip from Family Counselor and Award Winning Parent Author Kelly Nault

Dear Mom Dealing with Early Teenage Behavior Problems:

When your lovely sweet daughter has suddenly transformed into a bossy troublemaker and brings down the entire family with the "adolescent blues", it is important to remember that neither you, nor any member of the household, needs to stand under her rain cloud. Here are a couple of ways to start experiencing sunny skies again:

1. **Encourage your child.** One of my counseling mentors is the late Dr. Dreikurs. He wisely stated that, "A misbehaving child is a discouraged child." Notice the things your daughter does that are helpful, the times that she is happy, and mention them to her. One of the best ways we can encourage children and teenagers is to have them contribute more to the household. Consider having her help out more. If she resists (and she might especially if she hasn't been doing much around the home), consider going on strike in a few areas of household upkeep until she helps out. My favorite gone-on-strike zone is making dinner: I refuse to no longer prepare our evening meal without a child helping (they can take turns). Dinner can be a great time when a family can come together to create a wonderful meal and share the joys and challenges of their day.
2. **Do your best to find out what's at the bottom of it!** Regardless if hormones play a part or not, it is important to find out what's going on for her. During a quiet time (when no one is around) tell your daughter you've noticed a change in her and that you can't imagine she is feeling very happy inside to be lashing out at the people she loves. Ask her if this is the case. If she says "No", then ask her what *is* going on and find out if there is any way you can support her. If she is unresponsive, remain positive. Tell her that, when she figures it out or wants to talk about it, you are there for her and that you trust she will

work it out.

3. **Don't stand for disrespect.** It is completely fair to ignore teenagers with aggressive behavior (either verbal or physical). Instead of screaming or raising your voice in response to an adolescent who is behaving inappropriately, reply in a calm voice and say something like, "I can see you're upset right now. When you're ready to talk about it or want a hug, come find me." Then leave the room. Don't get into screaming matches—you will likely lose.

The main key to parenting is to love and support your child, and to not allow early teenage behavior problems to affect you emotionally.

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at [www.UltimateParenting.com](http://www.UltimateParenting.com).

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