



## HOPE Newsletter - Issue 75

### Solutions to Parents' Biggest Summer Gripes

Summer break can be filled with new opportunities and lots of fun for many families. But summer also can exaggerate irritations that parents and teens have with one another as they spend more time together. Don't let these problems ruin the whole break! Here are some of the most common complaints parents have about teens over the summer and some possible solutions:

#### **Unemployed**

Many parents feel that summer is the perfect opportunity for their teen to take on a part-time job. They want them to earn their own money, be engaged in constructive activity, and learn responsibility and workplace skills. However, many teens simply do not want to find a job. There are three possible causes for this:

**Anxiety.** Some teens are nervous about getting and keeping a job. They may need your support to help them overcome their uncertainty.

**Solution:** If this is the case with your teen, please review our previous blog, "[How Teens Can Get that First Job](#)" to learn how you can teach your teen the skills they need to be able to work.

**Lack of motivation.** If your teen would rather hang out with their friends all day than punch a timeclock, you will have to make getting a job seem more attractive.

**Solution:** Be sure to point out all of the benefits of employment to your teen. If they still don't seem motivated, make sure that you don't give your teen all the privileges he/she wants over the summer, such as paying for trips to the movies, eating out, buying clothes, or anything else that your teen wants. Your teen will become more motivated to earn money if they don't get to do the things they want otherwise.

**Isolation.** Some teens are not able to work because they are in a rural area and don't have access to transportation.

**Solution:** If this is the case with your teen, you will either need to provide them a transportation method or let go of the idea that they will work this summer. An alternative to a traditional job can be for your teen to help a neighbor (or you) with landscaping, babysitting, etc. for a small fee. This can still provide them with valuable skills such as being on time, responsibility, and money management.

### **Sleepy**

With less commitments during the summer, teens love to sleep in late! Adolescents still need 9 to 10 hours of sleep each night, but they also want to stay up late to do fun things during the summer. This results in a later and later sleep cycle.

**Solution:** Allow your teen the joy of being able to sleep in later than a school day, but set a limit on how late that is. Create a rule that everyone in the house needs to be out of bed by a certain time, probably no more than two hours later than during the school year. If your teen won't get out of bed, make sure you have consequences in place. But, also be flexible on days where your teen stayed out late for a special occasion.

### **Lazy**

Getting teens to perform chores is an ongoing battle for most families. Teens often forget their domestic responsibilities because chores are simply not a priority for them. This is normal, but parents still can't allow them to slide without any contributions to the family.

**Solution:** Chores are a great way for teens to develop a good work ethic and behave responsibly. Meet with your teen and come to an agreement on which chores they need to do, a deadline for doing the chores, and a consequence for not getting the chores done. Be specific. If your teen does not meet the deadline, you must follow through with the consequence that you both agreed to. When not getting chores done starts to get in the way of their priorities (hanging out with friends, spending time on technology, etc.), they will become more motivated.

### **Withdrawn**

Many parents feel hurt by their teen's lack of excitement to spend family time together. However, as teens grow, spending more time with peers becomes an important part of their normal development. And, activities that they find interesting are not always embraced by the other family members.

**Solution:** You may have to insist that your teen spend some time with the rest of the family, but that doesn't mean that it has to be miserable. Instead, call a family meeting at the beginning of the summer and brainstorm ideas for family activities. They could be

as simple as roasting marshmallows or as elaborate as taking a big family vacation. Once you have a large list, prioritize the list in order of importance, so that the activities that everyone is most interested in are at the top of the list. When your teen has had input into the activities, you may find them to be an enjoyable and enthusiastic participant.

### **Risky**

One thing all parents should know about summer is that it can be a risky time. Teens who are bored, have a lot of downtime, or have less supervision run a higher risk of falling into the wrong pastimes. Incidences of first-time cigarette, marijuana or alcohol use for underage kids spike significantly during the summer months. Juvenile crime also increases. Bored teens become easy targets for gang membership.

**Solution:** Parents should consider getting their teen involved with local youth programs, sports programs, summer camp, academic enrichment, internships, fun classes, volunteer opportunities, or a part-time job.

#### **TOWNSHIP OF NUTLEY**

1 Kennedy Drive - Nutley, New Jersey 07110 - (973) 284-4951

Website: [www.nutleynj.org](http://www.nutleynj.org) - Facebook: [www.facebook.com/nutleynjgovernment](https://www.facebook.com/nutleynjgovernment)