

# When a Teen Cheats: Passing Phase or Doomed Destiny?

## Tuning In

What if a friend is cheating off your teen? Here's what you might recommend. Before the next test, suggest that your teen offer to help his friend study. If the offer is denied, then the next morning, encourage your teen to say: "I'm sorry. I worked really hard on this, and I'm worried we'll get caught if we keep coming up with the same answers." Your teen may feel this solution is nerdy, but by suggesting it, you're conveying that he has the right to protect his work. While saying negative things about your teen's friends is always risky, you may want to point out that in this particular case, his friend is using him: "He's really put you in a tough position, saying you're not a true friend if you don't let him copy off you...That doesn't sound right to me." Your teen may come to view his friend in a different light.

"My child a cheater?" No parent wants to think that way. While occasionally trading homework and notes seems to be part of the fabric of teen school life, a consistent pattern of [copying](#) or [cheating](#) on tests may be a cry for help. Cheating may not always signify dishonesty or laziness; it may have to do with insecurity, peer pressure, a quest for perfection, and the desire to please.

If your teen is accused of cheating, you need to get her back on track. If a teacher has notified you of the problem, set up an appointment and see if you can learn anything more about the situation. Is this the first time this has happened? (Maybe she just fell asleep while she was supposed to be studying for the quiz.) How will the school handle the situation? (If they're doling out punishment, that should affect how you handle the situation at home.) Is your child in a class or program that's too difficult for her? Is there pressure among her peers in the class? What does the teacher think might have led to the cheating?

Talk to your teen about what led her to this point. If you can find out why it happened, you may be able to correct the situation without ever raising your voice.

- Try to reduce grade pressure ("You'd better bring home an A") or any need she must feel to "measure up"; stress that you value her for who she is, not for her chemistry grade.
- Check out her [homework](#) organization and her [time management](#) system. She wouldn't cheat if she knew the answers, so any help you can provide (possibly including getting a tutor) can make a big difference.
- All throughout childhood and into the teen years, do what you can to model honesty and integrity. If Uncle Joe brags about cheating on his tax return, discuss that with your children. When a cashier gives you too much change, make a point

of giving it back. If your kids see you as someone who's consistently honest, they're not going to go down the wrong path.

This information was compiled by <http://life.familyeducation.com/teen/high-school/48438.html>