

ADVICE COLUMN
**IF YOU DON'T KNOW
... ASK!**

DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy believes that parents/child communication is an important factor in helping young people. This advice column is written for adults by teens who are members of DC Campaign's Youth Leadership Task Force, a group of teens, 14-18, from across the city who learn leadership and advocacy skills and gives DC Campaign their perspective on issues that affect teens.

The Youth Leadership Task Force of DC Campaign invites your questions and encourages you to talk to your children whether they are six or 16 and keep talking. Please send your questions to jfourth@teenpregnancydc.org. In the subject line, please put Advice Column.

Q: Why do my daughter and her friends all try to dress like boys? They wear sports bras underneath baggy t-shirts, cover their heads with baseball caps or do-rags and wear loose fitting pants along with tennis shoes. I don't get it.

A: Sometimes girls dress like boys to hide their bodies from members of the opposite sex who whistle and say nasty things to them when they're walking down the street.

Is your daughter starved for your attention? She may be doing this just to make you notice her. Now would be a good time to talk to your daughter and her friends about their clothing choices. You may be surprised at what you learn. She may be just making a fashion statement. A lot of parents are just as worried when their daughters wear short skirts, tight tops and high heel shoes all the time.

Q: I am a single parent of one. My son just turned 12 and girls are already calling him on the telephone at all hours. He brags about how many girls he has. I don't like his attitude but I don't know what do about it. Do you think he needs a man to talk to him about how to treat young ladies?

A: You have to set limits for your son, and you have to make the rules in your house. Tell him when he's allowed to use the phone and when he isn't.

Does he hear you talking about other people in a disrespectful way? If not, then he is learning it somewhere else and you need to find out where and why he thinks it is all right. A positive older male influence would be helpful. It might be a good idea to ask his father or your male relatives or other men you trust to be more involved in your son's life. But you can help him learn how to treat people, too. Use every chance you get to listen to what's going on with him and to tell him what you want for him and expect from him. He won't know if you don't tell him. ■

DC Campaign is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to cut the District's teen pregnancy rate in half by 2005. For more information about DC Campaign, visit www.teenpregnancydc.org.

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