

Prevent Your Teen From Shoplifting

According to the National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, 25 million people in our country shoplift. This is one in 11 people. Twenty-five percent of shoplifters who are caught are juveniles. They rarely think about getting caught or a criminal record.



Most teens do not steal out of need or greed. They feel pressure from friends to shoplift and lack maturity and skills to handle this pressure. They want to fit in with a certain crowd, so they steal the in-crowd status items that they cannot afford.

Teens have poor impulse control. Under pressure, teens often act on the spur of the moment and later regret this action.

Some teens steal for the thrill of “getting away with it.” They want *the high* they feel from doing something illegal and not getting caught—not the item. It is easy for teens to become addicted to this feeling. Stealing becomes a habit.

These teens think that stores can afford the loss of stolen items. They also believe they will not get caught. However, store managers and police watch for and punish shoplifters. A teen who steals:

- Might be arrested and handcuffed in the store,
- May have to pay damages and face charges for theft,

- May be banned from stores or even an entire mall, or
 - May end up with a criminal record.
- Parents can help prevent their teen from shoplifting or stealing.
- Watch for signs that your teen is involved with a negative peer group.
 - Question your teen more closely if he says a friend gave him a gift.
 - Listen carefully to your teen’s conversations. If she mentions shoplifting, take time to discuss what you heard.
 - Talk to your teen about shoplifting. Explain the consequences with the law and at home if he is caught stealing.
 - Be sensitive to your teen’s need to “fit in.” Help her earn money for a special item.
 - Discuss peer pressure. Talk about taking risks and getting involved in illegal activities. Help your teen focus on long term results of illegal behavior.
 - Encourage positive peer relationships. Help her find groups that share her interests such as sports, music, and art or church groups.
 - Be a good role model. Discuss moral values with your kids every chance you get.

Teens listen to their parents. They also make mistakes. A parent’s role is to teach, guide and support.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. , 7 days a week.