

PARENTING GUIDE

HELPFUL IDEAS ON RAISING YOUR CHILD

This free guide is presented to you by the
New London Community & Campus Coalition,
Child and Family Agency, and
United Community & Family Services



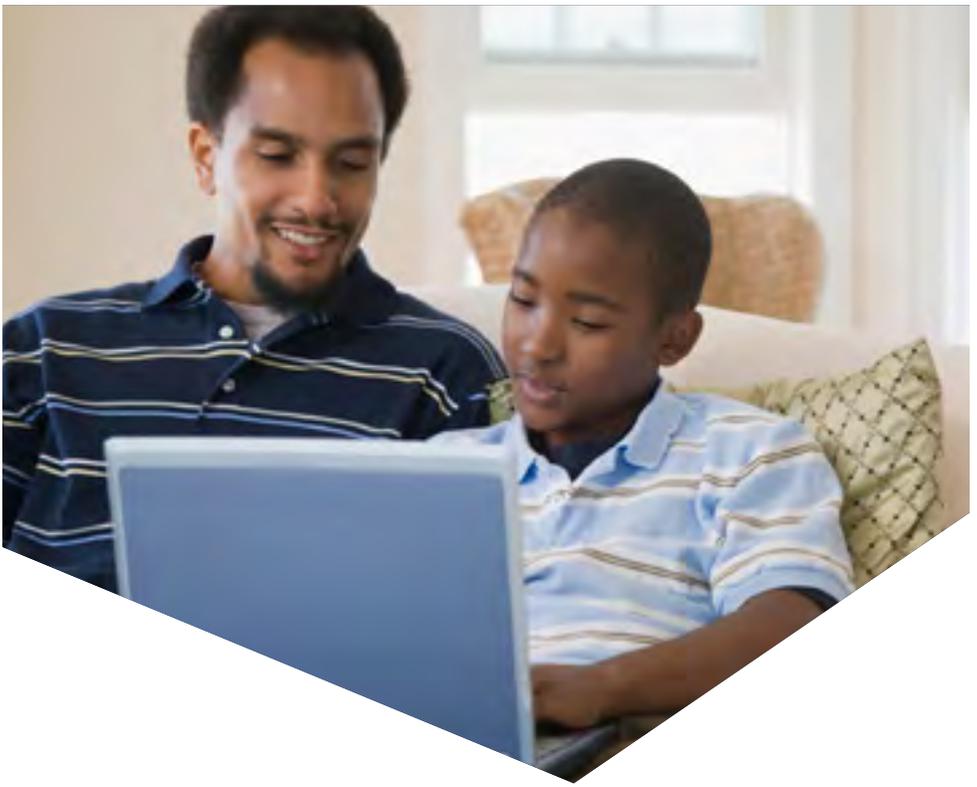
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Setting Limits	4
Parent Monitoring	5
Communication.....	6
Goal Setting.....	7
Compromise.....	7
Giving Back.....	8
Connecting With Other Parents	8
What if	9
Disrespect/Attitude	10
Doing Poorly in School	11
Depression	12
Body Image	13
Bullying	14
Drug Use.....	15-16
Gangs.....	17
Rewards.....	18

SETTING LIMITS

Builds structure, trust, shows you care; must be balanced to fit your teen

- Work together on creating rules and consequences that are reasonable for the both of you. Let your teen have a say.
- Communicate the limits. These are things like:
 - When to do homework.
 - What she/he can/can't do after school.
 - When and how long to use the phone.
 - When they need to be home on weeknights/weekends.
- Take time to cool off before addressing mistakes. Remain calm and enforce consequences.
- Be consistent and fair.
- Thank your child when they follow the rules and do something right.



PARENT MONITORING

Knowing where your child is, your child's friends and friends' parents, and planned activities

- Ask where your child is going to be; Set limits on times to be home; and have your child check in via a phone call. If your child's plans change, have them call and ask permission. Develop a "24 hr. permission" rule in which the child should ask 24 hrs. in advance to attend an event, after-school activity, or friend's house.
- Make sure an adult is present and there are no substances present.
- Get to know your child's friends and parents. Will they keep your child safe in a supportive manner? What kinds of things do your child's friends like and how do they behave?



COMMUNICATION

Things to do when talking to your child

- Be present
- Show understanding
- Listen with respect
- Be interested
- Be positive/non-combative
- Give encouragement/ Talk about your child's successes



GOAL SETTING

- Discuss your child's strengths and dreams with him or her. Talk about different activities and achievements that you can work on together.

COMPROMISE

- Develop plans together. Discuss and develop rules and consequences that work for both of you.
- Make a judgment call on your child's mistakes that you can let go of and more serious ones that require discipline.
- Implement a three strikes policy for lesser mistakes and discuss ways to improve behavior. Other mistakes will need more timely discipline and immediate discussion.

GIVING BACK

- Teach your child about volunteering and helping others. You can have them learn to give back by helping out with relatives, family friends, at senior centers and food banks.

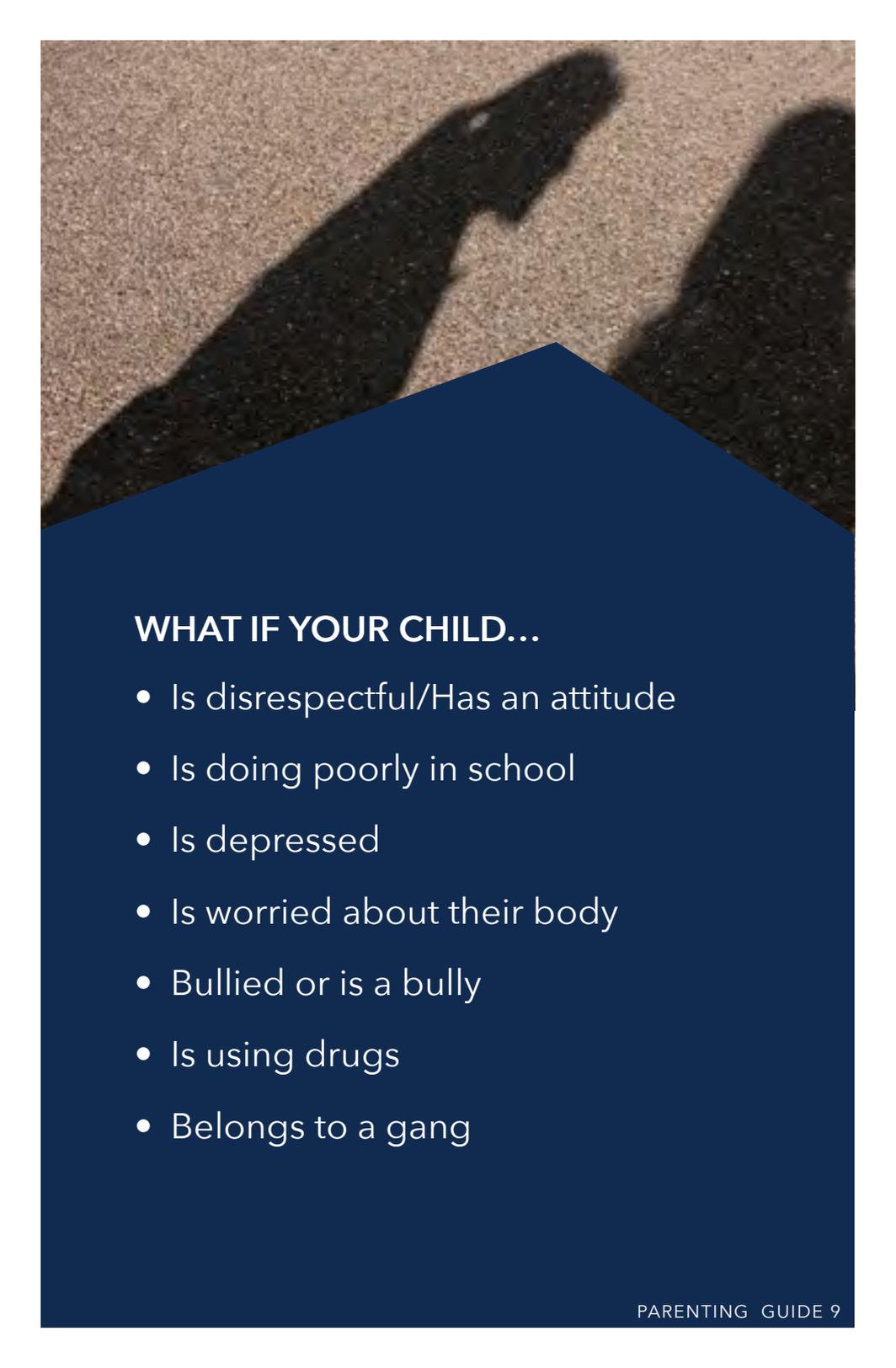
CONNECTING WITH OTHER PARENTS

- Chat with other parents on Facebook
- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/New-London-Community-Campus-Coalition-NLCCC>
- <https://www.facebook.com/parentingallis>

Check out the articles on these websites:

- <http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/plti.htm>
- <http://www.ftnys.org/training/pep-training/>





WHAT IF YOUR CHILD...

- Is disrespectful/Has an attitude
- Is doing poorly in school
- Is depressed
- Is worried about their body
- Bullied or is a bully
- Is using drugs
- Belongs to a gang

DISRESPECT/ATTITUDE

- Encourage your child to talk and see what's going on in their life before assuming they are simply being difficult.
- Set firm rules and boundaries. Communicate with them clearly. Make sure to enforce these on a regular basis.
- Choose your battles. Set weekly goals and periodically correct behaviors. Model appropriate behavior and allow your child time to practice and/or redirect their behavior.
- Keep your child involved and busy with family and non-family activities.
- Call a doctor or mental health professional if your teen remains angry and defiant despite your best efforts.



DOING POORLY IN SCHOOL

- Homework Help: Stay calm and utilize your child's strengths (Some kids need breaks, some need tasks broken into smaller pieces, some need guidance). Check in with your child often. Have them complete homework tasks in increments. Allow 10-15 minute breaks. Provide incentives for completing homework (TV time, time outside, a snack).
- Discuss and agree upon a reward for good performance in school (movie night, go shopping, weekend activity).
- If your child is often in trouble, discuss each incident and identify triggers/ themes. What is it that your child can do to avoid these? Are there different ways to react?
- Talk to teachers and schedule a time to talk about what's going on in class.

DEPRESSION

- Watch for warning signs. These are not just bad moods, feeling down or feeling sad at times. Depression is a long-term state that can last weeks, months, or even longer. It is characterized by feelings of guilt/worthlessness, irritability, persistent sadness, inability to feel happiness/pleasure, and interferes with everyday functioning such as eating and sleeping.
- Offer love and support.
- Make sure your child stays active and eats healthy.
- Accept the situation; a child cannot just “snap out of it.”
- Refer your child to a doctor and/or mental health professional for help.



BODY IMAGE

- Teens' bodies are changing in many ways, and as their bodies change, so does their image of themselves.
- Teens' body images are influenced by media and by the opinions/comments of friends and family.
- It is important to help your teen like and accept him/herself the way they are by recognizing their strengths.
- If your teen wants to change aspects of their appearance, help them to set realistic goals.
- Help your teen identify self-esteem and body image issues which are growing too large to handle alone. Refer your teen to a physician or mental health professional if necessary.

BULLYING

- Model and enforce respectful behavior; avoid name-calling and don't allow your child to bad-mouth others.
- Monitor your child's friends and ask about other students in school and after-school activities.
- Monitor your child's Facebook and texting, yet maintain privacy.
- Ask about Facebook messages or texting in a broad approach. Discuss cyber-bullying and ways to avoid it. (*Delete inappropriate messages, apologize for misunderstandings, unfriend others who are cyber-bullying, provide positive feedback for friends and say "that's not true" to negative comments.*)



DRUG USE

Taking precautions and developing values with your child shows you care and love them. Have talks with your child about your values and your concern for their safety. This does not have to be done in one sitting, and can be done when you see something related on TV, in the news, or if your child brings up an event.

Monitor your child with these 5 steps:

1. Limit access to harmful substances. Lock up medications, cigarettes, alcohol, and other household cleaning chemicals.
2. Network with your child's friends and friends' parents. Talk about rules with other parents and make sure other parents will enforce them. Monitor your child's friends and ensure they are being supportive of your child's goals.
3. Reinforce and enforce rules/values of substances with your child. Make sure to remind your child of rules often and enforce consequences.

DRUGS Continued-

4. Check in often on the status of your child. Have them check in via phone call and make sure supervision is present at friends' houses, after school activities, and parties. Follow-up with adult supervision to make sure events are substance-free.
5. Make sure that your child is meeting curfew times and you are up to greet them after an event. Be willing to arrange for transportation to pick them up in case substances are present.

IF USING DRUGS

If you think your child is using or abusing substances:

- Watch for dramatic changes in friends, appearance, and behavior.
- Talk to your child about expectations, rules, and concerns.
- Seek help.



GANGS

- Talk about gangs and clarify your values.
- Get to know your child's friends and parents.
- Talk with your child about peer pressure (*"What's a good friend?"* or *"If you were a good friend you would..."*).
- Talk to your child about gangs and develop ways to avoid them by planning family time, setting limits, and getting your child involved with the community, extracurricular activities, and/or a mentor.
- Watch for signs of gang activity such as: Practicing hand signs, drastic changes in style, unusual interest in one or two colors or logos, confrontational behavior.



REWARDS

- A better family environment
- Safer environment for your children
- A better-educated child
- A healthy child
- An independent and self-sufficient adult child
- A long-lasting relationship with your child





SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

NEW LONDON COMMUNITY & FAMILY SERVICES



120 Broad Street,
New London, CT
www.mynlccc.org
860-442-1497



255 Hempstead Street,
New London, CT www.childandfamilyagency.org
860-443-2896



400 Bayonet Street, St. 103
New London, CT
www.ucfs.org
860-442-4319