

Q: Dear Chief Jenks, I recently had a problem with my 16 year old. He told me that he was going to a school event that evening. I always let him go to school events and he left the house at about 6pm. He returned home at about midnight and smelled like cigar smoke. I began to suspect that he was lying to me about the school event and when I checked the schedule @ Anna high school I saw that there was no sporting event scheduled for the time he was out. I suspect that he was doing things that he is not supposed to and I want to get him tested for marijuana. What can I do? Worried.....Oak Hollow

Take your child to your medical provider and get a blood/urine test for the illegal substances you suspect he is consuming within 3-5 days of the event. I regularly hear from parents who are having trouble with their teen and of course, I have to talk to parents whose teens have gotten our attention. Many of these parents deny any wrong-doing by their teen and some even go so far as to blame the police for taking notice of their teen's activities (even when they are illegal). In this case, you doubt your child's story without him getting caught doing anything. I am sorry to tell you that your instincts are probably right, but the test should tell.

I tell parents all of the time that your children require supervision, even into their teens. Never assume that you know someone well enough to exclude him or her from engaging in questionable or illegal activity, even if that someone is one of your children. Remember, our children are no different than adults when it comes to lying:

- They may lie when faced with consequences (or a variety of other reasons including a need for independence).
- They may lie when they want to do something they know you will not approve of. Teens want to establish an identity that is independent of their parents' knowledge and authority. Withholding details about their lives is a way for them to gain this.
- Teens also lie to protect themselves from parental reaction, teacher reaction, and any authority figure's reaction. Think back when we were teens. Did you tell your parents about everything you did? When they asked you, did you ever lie to them about minor stuff just to avoid the conflict?

You are not alone with these "what do I do" parental feelings. I have four children: one married college grad, one in the USAF, one in college and one still at home. I always wanted to trust them and when I did, most of the time they did not disappoint. But some times, they did disappoint me to the point that I had to discipline them.

Remember, the more you limit someone's bad choices, the less they are to make them. Keeping your teen @ home is like practicing abstinence: It works every time it is tried! Please do not make this assumption (I have heard from a lot from

parents), “We moved to the country and we didn’t think we needed to watch our kids as much.” If a child escapes trouble when a parent believes this myth, it is just blind luck.

Reminder: Outdoor Storm Sirens Tested (weather permitting)

First Wednesday of the month @ 12 noon.

***Phone numbers: Dial 911 in an emergency.** To have a police officer sent to you in a non-emergency, call 972-547-5350. During normal business hours, the APD number is 972-924-2848.

If you have a question or comment, please email: kjenks@annatexas.gov