Many communities have a youth center for teens. If you are not aware of one at your community, check around and find out if it exists. If there is one, it can be a source of recreational entertainment for both teen and parent.

♦ **Explore:** Go to the youth center one day or evening and check things out. Go there together (parent and teen), if possible, and explore all that the facility has to offer. You may even want to call ahead and make an appointment with the director or one of the leaders and get an official tour so that you can be made aware of all the options available.

♦ **Get involved:** Once you know the activities available at the center, begin to get involved. Make sure to get to know the director and youth leaders in the process. These are people who care about you and your family and want to help however they can.

♦ **Volunteer:** One way to be able to spend more fun time together would be for the parent to volunteer to help at the youth center. Ask the director what you could help with.

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**How will this activity promote the parent-teen relationship?**

Teens need a certain amount of freedom and independence from parents; facilitating their involvement in the youth center will allow them to make their own friends and have their own time away from home and parents and, in the end, will strengthen the parent-teen bond by the parent showing the teen their willingness to let them have some freedom.

Parents who get involved as volunteers at a youth center can show their teen how much they care by being a part of making their center activities successful.

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**Don’t get discouraged . . .**

If, after visiting the youth center, you find that the facilities do not have what you were looking for, try to focus on the positives. Be thankful for what they DO have and try to use it to have fun. You may even be able to contribute some good ideas along the way to help expand the program and the facilities. BE PART OF THE SOLUTION for making your youth center effective in helping your family. Parents also could join or start a Youth Center Parent Advisory Board.