

How to Get Teens Interested in Prepping and Self Sustainability

Teens these days live in a different world than many of us did growing up. They are surrounded by technology, constantly in contact with friends, and exposed to ideas from all over the world at the click of a button. Though there are many positives associated with the technological advances taking place in the world today, there are also some real negatives.

Perhaps one of the most troubling of these negatives is that many teenagers these days are completely disconnected from foundational skills that are necessary for survival. Many don't have a strong grasp on where their food comes from, how to use tools to fix things, or what to do in an emergency. For thoughtful preppers, this lack of skills poses a significant safety risk to the entire group.

Building interest in prepping skills and self-sustainability is the first step to rectifying the situation. Finding ways to connect with teenagers may take some creativity. They may look at you like you're crazy if you try to teach them things for "survival purposes." Instead, try to subtly tie lessons in prepping to things they are interested in and care about.



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Gardening and a More Sustainable Planet

A core component of prepping is related to producing and storing your own food. [Gardening and canning](#) are profoundly practical ways to reduce your impact on the planet. Producing your own food has the compounding benefits of

- Shortening the number of miles food has to travel (by boat, airplane, or truck) from the field it was produced in to reach your plate.
- Reducing the need to use energy for heavy equipment to harvest and process food produced on large farms.
- Limiting or eliminating the chemicals used to produce and store food on a mass scale.
- Building back high-quality soils through composting waste products.
- Working with nature to capitalize on environmentally friendly strategies to increase yields and reduce pests.
- Reducing waste from single-use plastics and tin cans (assuming you preserve food using glass jars).
- Saving money on high-quality, local, healthy foods.

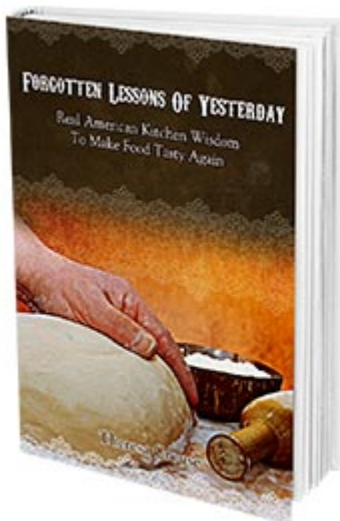
Gardening and food preservation are also two of the easiest prepping skills to get your children involved in from a young age. Young children can help with harvesting and pulling weeds, while teenagers can take on [managing certain aspects of the garden](#), determining which foods to grow, solving problems with pests or watering, and helping with food preservation. You may even encourage your teen to take this form of environmental activism a step further by introducing it at their school. More people are capable of surviving a disaster because they can grow their own food never hurts.

Driving and Emergency Response

Another avenue to try is something that most teenagers are deeply invested in: being able to drive. Driving means freedom and less reliance on parents. But it also means taking on greater responsibility and risk. Driving privileges can be a great means of introducing different prepping skills such as emergency response.

A condition of being allowed to drive should be that your teenager understands what to do in the event of a car accident. Make sure everyone is familiar with the car insurance policy and has a plan in the event of a car emergency. Important tasks your teenager could take on include things like learning basic car maintenance, preparing a first aid kit for the car and understanding how to use it, [stashing emergency car supplies](#) in the trunk, driving a manual transmission vehicle, and so on.

Teaching your teenager these skills as a condition of driving not only makes them more prepared for an emergency but also makes them better drivers in general. These conversations can also lead to other important prepper topics such as what they should do in other emergencies if they aren't at home.



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The Great Outdoors and Mental Health

Another opportunity to connect with your teen on prepper skills may come as a subtle learning experience. It involves spending time outdoors whether through a foraging trip, an overnight camping trip, or a week-long backpacking adventure. Spending time outdoors is [the ultimate opportunity for teens to learn survival skills](#) such as:

- Foraging for food
- Starting a fire
- Wilderness first aid
- Building a shelter
- Cooking over an open flame
- Water purification
- Navigating using a compass and map

But your teen may not initially be all that interested in the survival aspects of the trip. That's okay – they are still absorbing this information. What is more important to them might be making sure they get great photos or a story to share with their friends. You can cater to that and still have a great trip.

You may also be doing a service to your teen that neither of you initially realize. Research suggests that spending time outdoors can be a great way to improve both mental health and physical well-being. It is also an opportunity for your kids to disconnect from tech for a while. It may not be immediately obvious, but you are also giving them tools to survive the world they are currently living in.