

Dad Detective: Do You Know Who Your Kids Are Hanging Around With?

Description



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When our kids are younger, keeping on top of their friendships is as easy as turning up at the school gates and [arranging a few playdates](#). But, as any parent of slightly older children or teens knows, this level of oversight into your child's life and social habits certainly doesn't last. Instead, they start shutting you out (both literally and figuratively) before you know it, and just like that, you realize that you don't have the first clue about who they're hanging out with, or what influence those people are having.

This is the most common cause of the notorious "bad crowd" that so many teens find themselves in and, while most realize that these aren't people they want to be spending time with, some don't come out of the situation so easily. Rather, mistakes made to impress those bad apples, or even just guilt by association, could leave your child making terrible life choices, or even requiring [defense lawyers](#) for crimes that they've committed in the name of impressing those unknown friends. This is any parent's worst nightmare, and not knowing either way can leave you entirely powerless.

Luckily, while you can't dictate who your kids socialize with as they grow, it is possible to keep some level of control, and making sure that you know precisely who they're hanging out with is key. By this, we don't mean that you dig and snoop to find information that your child isn't willing to give you (that's not going to help anyone.) Rather, there are some less-invasive, but equally efficient, ways to get a grasp on even an older child's friendships group. And, we're going to consider them here.

Arrange group activities they can't resist

In a general sense, your child will probably do everything they can to keep their friends away from you at this age. After all, this is the time where they're learning about independence, and friendship vs home life can come to mean two very different things.

Unfortunately, this segmented lifestyle approach leaves you entirely out of the loop, with no real idea if your child is surrounding themselves with positive influences or not. But, how exactly can you get an in-point without digging so hard that you cause those walls to grow ever more?

In large part, you should find that facilitating activities that your kids and their friends can't resist is the best thing here. Namely, offering your taxi services to events like music concerts can see you with a car filled with your child's mysterious mates, just like that. Equally, allowing sleepovers, paying for movies, and or even [taking them to amusement parks](#) can provide you with an invaluable in-point that gives you at least a glimmer of this hidden social group, while keeping things fun and making you look like a "cool dad" at the same time.



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Chat to the parents

Asking for the contact numbers of your child's friends will probably get you laughed out the door, and definitely isn't going to help you to understand who they're with or what they're doing at any given time. Still, when your child starts spending more time out of the house, potentially making mischief, it's invaluable to have a point of contact that you can check in with if your [fatherly concerns](#) are on overdrive.

In many instances, getting friendly with the parents is your best chance at achieving this, and is something that you can achieve even if you don't know your child's friends as well as you might like. After all, even for teenagers, it's not out of the question to ask to talk to their friend's parents if they're staying over/going somewhere together. What's more, your teen is less likely to see this as an invasion because they still get to keep their actual friends well away.

Luckily, in the vast majority of cases, you can tell a lot about a child and their values simply from speaking to their parents, so if you get warm vibes during a parental phone call, you can rest that bit easier. Whatâ€™s more, having even this peripheral point of contact can help you to phone around if youâ€™re ever worried or struggling to make contact with your child, and the parents can then ask their children all-important questions, etc.

Talk to your child

If thereâ€™s one thing slightly older kids and teens like talking about, itâ€™s their friends. After all, at this age, friendships groups are tighter than ever, and social life is everything. So, while your child might not be forthcoming about providing you with information, you should find that engaging them in this topic finally [gets them to open up](#) at least a little.

The main thing here is to keep things general. After all, you donâ€™t crucially need to know names, addresses, ages, but you do need to gather a general idea of who your child is spending time with, and what they do when they meet up.

Leading questions like, â€œDo you and your mates like [enter activity here]?â€™ or â€œOh, do you do that with your friends?â€™ could get things going, providing you with at least some peace of mind that, whoever your child is spending time with, they arenâ€™t the mysterious, dark presence that they have been until now.



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A final word

Getting to grips with friendship groups can be undeniably challenging, especially as your child reaches their teen years, but there are ways to get a glimmer into that private life for peace of mind, or awareness of any issues.

Do note, however, that banning all contact as soon as you sniff a â€œbad crowdâ€™ is definitely not the way to go about things. If you do start noticing worrying signs, such as non-communicative parents or a worrying conversation during one of those tailored group trips, then simply know to keep an eye out,

and continue steering your child in the right direction in the hopes that, no matter who theyâ€™re spending time with, they never forget the difference between right and wrong.

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