



How does a Teen Earn Privileges?

In general, as teens move through the recovery process, it is important for them to earn privileges back. As adolescents regain parental trust, they will show the maturity and sobriety needed to handle certain responsibilities and rewards. Earning privileges is also a motivation to continue living a sober lifestyle.

Families have different rules coming into treatment. Depending on the previous rules, your child may never gain back the type of freedom he once had. All children need structure. While adolescents work to earn privileges, parents need to ensure that they are [supervising](#) all their children, including teens.

Trust and Privileges

Discussions about privileges and trust can be difficult to have. Teens are often very passionate about having more freedom, and parents are usually equally concerned with protecting their teens. It is also easy for those in early recovery to be overly confident in their ability to avoid their triggers. Parents and clinicians all want to work together to help teens prevent a relapse.

Many families have found it useful to create a [contract](#) with their teens. This helps to make sure that everyone is on the same page. In a calm moment, you can help your child make a list of privileges she would like to regain. You can then set up goals which would allow them to earn back each privilege. Teens need to understand that to earn privileges, they need to work their program,

earn back your trust, and show responsibility.

For Teens in Recovery

It is important to help support teens in recovery avoid People, Places, and Things (PPT) that might trigger use. Ideally, the first privileges they earn back would be ones that are less likely to trigger use. Additionally, as they earn privileges, parents will want to continue to monitor their child's recovery and their use of the car, phone, etc. to ensure they are being used responsibly.

You may also be able to return some privileges with restrictions. For example, your child may get his phone back, but you might delete all the contacts of his using friends and monitor the phone to ensure they do not return. A teen may have to earn the privilege of a [smart](#) phone. They may not be able to go to parties, if that is where they were getting high, until further along in the recovery process. Eventually, you may allow your child to attend a party, but he may need to text you every 15 or 30 minutes to make sure he is following his sobriety plan.