



# Your Money

## Taming The Cost Of Teens

by John Addison

(NAPSA)—Family time is priceless—but today's teens still cost about a thousand dollars a month. It may seem hard to believe, but if you consider braces, clothes and gadgets, you can probably see how costs begin to mount.



**Addison**

Fortunately, there are ways to curtail the cost of having teens. Try these ideas:

### **New Clothes**

Instead of battling with your teen over designer duds, offer a “matching funds” program: You decide how much you’re willing to pay for an item and your teen foots the difference. Or go with a lump sum plan: Figure out how much you’d spend on your teen in a semester or quarter and give your child that amount of cash. When it’s gone, it’s gone (this could even teach your teen a little fiscal responsibility).

### **The Extra In Extracurricular**

Football uniforms, equipment, band gear and other extracurricular activity costs can add up. Some requests may be reasonable but some might not be. If your teen develops a sudden interest that you suspect may be fleeting, suggest that he pitches in 20 percent of the activity’s cost from his allowance or paycheck.

### **Curtail College Prep**

College application fees can run \$16 to \$75 per school, the S.A.T.

costs \$41.50 and prep courses can run you into the hundreds. Use the Web to narrow down the list of campuses your teen visits and applies to. Then squeeze some visits into your next family vacation to help limit extra travel costs.

### **Contain College Costs**

Tuition is up at many schools, but there are still costs you can control. For instance, a survey found that after tuition, fees, and room and board, the biggest college expense was car upkeep. Save a bundle by allowing your teen to walk or buy a bus pass. Also, save by shopping for textbooks online and have your teen use prepaid cell phones.

### **The Big Picture**

Although your teens may pressure you to keep up with the Joneses, it’s your job to remember what’s really important: saving for their college education. Don’t let today’s trends compromise their future. The guidance of a financial professional can often be helpful when developing a college savings plan.

For example, the financial professionals at Primerica have created a guide that shows you how to take control of your financial life. To get a copy of “How Money Works,” write to Primerica, 3120 Breckinridge Blvd., Duluth, GA 30099, ATTN: Corporate Relations, or call (770) 564-6329. For more information, visit [www.primerica.com](http://www.primerica.com).

*John Addison is co-CEO of Primerica, a subsidiary of Citigroup, Inc.*