

PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Adolescence is one of the most exciting times in a person's life because there is such rapid brain development. Talking with teens about situations they can expect to face (themselves or as a friend) will help better prepare them.



Peer Pressure

As teens spend more time with their friends, they have more opportunities to define their own values. They will, with practice, learn the art of saying no to someone while remaining friends. Ask your child, "What would you do in this situation?" This may be a low-stakes manner to build their "saying no" muscle. Our children will face peer pressure and need to firmly say no and remove themselves from an uncomfortable or dangerous situation. Helping our children understand how their choices may impact their lives will help them make a better decision.

Driving

Proactively building their driving skills will help your anxiety and give your child much needed coaching and practice. Find a time to practice when you *both* are calm. Give them driving lessons yourself every few months. Proactively building their driving skills will help your anxiety and give your child much needed coaching and practice. Have specific conversations around driving safety as a passenger. Give them a way to have an "out" and to stand firm to their safety beliefs.

Mental Health

Our mental health is as important as our physical health. We should all be on the lookout for signs of depression, anxiety, and warning signs related to [suicide](#). (Call 1-800-273-8255 for immediate help.) Find support for your child when you notice things such as complaints of physical pain, increased irritability, avoiding or numbing feelings, and social isolation. Encourage your child to talk with others - family members, friends, and school counselors. Model how to talk about feelings - positive and negative - letting your child know that all of their feelings are okay.

“Conscious parenting is not about being perfect, it's about being aware. Aware of what your kids need from you to reach more of their full potential.” Alex Urbina

Eating Disorders

If you suspect your teen is dealing with an eating disorder, seek out help from an experienced therapist and talk with your pediatrician about connecting with a dietician. Help your teen develop a positive body image. Model this by accepting your own body. Speak positively of your body and others'. Instead of focusing on looks, comment on what your body can do or about the person's actions. It is not a family's fault if a child develops an eating disorder. Our children are raised in a society that values a body ideal that is not always healthy.

Sex Education

Instead of having “The Talk,” try multiple conversations about puberty, sex, and birth control and start these conversations early in childhood when you are comfortable doing so. Offer your child information, including values and consequences, and about options they will face. Talk about the many different ways of engaging in sexual behavior. Sometimes, teens think that their choices (consent, expectations, protection, enjoyment) are different for intercourse than for other types of behavior. Prepare for various scenarios they might encounter. Offer helpful books and websites that your kids can refer to later.

WEBSITES FOR ADULTS:

[Healthy Children](#)
[Parent and Teen](#)
[Positive Sexuality](#)
[Teen Years Explained](#)

BOOKS FOR ADULTS:

[Boys and Sex](#) by Orenstein
[Girls and Sex](#) by Orenstein
[Exploitation](#) by Pierce
[Ten Talks Parents Must Have with Their Children About Sex and Character](#) by Dr. Schwartz and Cappello
[Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood](#) by Dr. Damour

BOOKS FOR TEENS:

[Girling Up: How to Be Strong, Smart and Spectacular](#) by Dr. Bialik
[Queer: The Ultimate LGBT Guide for Teens](#) by Belge and Bieschke
[Scorpions](#) by Myers
[Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens](#) by Biegel
[This One Summer](#) by Tamaki

WEBSITES FOR TEENS:

[Scarleteen](#) Sex Ed for teens
[Young Men's Health](#)
[Center for Young Women's Health](#)

