

Connecting with your...

Teen: 16 to 18 years old

At this age, the part of the brain responsible for organization, making decisions, solving problems, regulating emotions and planning for the future, is still developing!

Your teens must navigate their emerging identities and make important decisions about their future. They are trying to find their own identity, establish their own values and set of beliefs, and find their place in society. This is an important time to prepare your teen for more independence and responsibility. You play an important role in your teen being confident, resilient, and ready for adulthood.

Attachment is the deep and lasting connection that children form with their main caregiver, usually their parent. Healthy attachment occurs gradually over time through day to day interactions between parent and child. Your parent-teen relationship will influence their development, learning, feelings and other close relationships throughout their life.



Emotional and Social Changes:

- deeper capacity for caring and sharing and for developing more intimate relationships
- more independence from parents
- more interest in romantic relationships and sexuality

Thinking and Communication Changes:

- more concern about school, work and their future plans
- better able to express their reasons for their own choices, and what they think is right or wrong

Your teen is gearing up for their future and needs your parental support and guidance as they prepare to launch into adulthood.

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Positive parenting tips:

These tips can help you support your child's growth and development. Choose ones that will fit with your family's routine and cultural practices.

- Help them prepare for adulthood by allowing them to safely explore the world around them and learn from their choices.
- Allow them the time to solve problems on their own, as long as their safety is not at risk. This can show them that you believe in them, and it can help them feel more confident in making future decisions.
- Offer to support them in setting goals for their future.
- Help them navigate employment and role model good work ethic.
- Always be ready to listen with empathy, love, and support. Get to know the adult your teen is becoming as they share about their life and aspirations.
- Support their mental health by helping them develop life skills and appropriate coping skills, which will give them confidence for the future.
- Be consistent with what is expected, the rules, and consequences to their actions. When teens realize their actions have consequences, they learn to make better choices. Teens who can make wise choices learn to trust their ability to control their lives and future.
- Help them understand their personal responsibility for their future. Remind them that they are in control of the choices and consequences (good or bad) in their lives.
- Create opportunities to make the family bond stronger (for example, special meals, game or movie nights).
- Comforting, physical touch, praise and saying "I love you" remain important throughout the teen years.



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/PositiveParenting

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

