

Connecting with your...

Young Teen: 13 to 15 years old

At this age, teens are trying to find their own identity, establish values and find their place in society. They become better at hiding their emotions and may begin to spend less time with their parents. They might face peer pressure to drink alcohol, smoke, vape or use drugs, and have sex. They are also at greater risk for negative effects of poor mental health (like anxiety or depression). Young teens begin to make more of their own choices about friends, sports, studying, and school. As they become more independent, with their own personality and interests, they still need to know they can count on you for love, guidance and support.

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:

- experience more moodiness
- more concern about body image, looks, and clothes
- more interest in, and influence by peer groups

Thinking and Communication Changes:

- more ability for complex thought
- better able to express feelings through talking
- stronger sense of right and wrong

Your support, guidance and encouragement are especially needed during the pre-teen years.

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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.

- Choose activities to connect with your teen that consider their likes, dislikes and personality.
- Be aware and accepting of your teen's emotions. Teach them how to navigate their emotions. Be careful not to dismiss their emotions by comparing how they're feeling to your feelings, ignoring them or punishing them for expressing their emotions.
- Know who their friends are and welcome them in your home.
- Monitor their use of social media and the internet to ensure their personal safety. Help them learn potential risks of sharing too much information online, and guide them in setting boundaries in their online activities.
- Always be ready to listen. Show empathy by trying to understand what life is like for them. Get to know their friends and show interest in what is going on in their lives.
- 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 appropriate consequences for unwanted behaviour and maintain boundaries, rules and expectations (like curfew).
- Create opportunities to make the family bond stronger (for example, special meals, game or movie nights).
- Give them more responsibility to show you trust them.
- Comforting, physical touch, praise and saying "I love you" remain important throughout the teen years.



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.

