



Parents: How To Help Your Children Navigate Adolescence (source [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.HealthyChildren.org))

Children and their parents often struggle with changing dynamics of family relationships during adolescence. But parents are still a critical support throughout this time.

The adolescent years can feel like riding a roller coaster. By maintaining positive and respectful parent-child relationships during this period, your family can (try to) enjoy the ride!

Here are some things you can do:

- **Help your child anticipate changes in his or her body.**

Learn about puberty and explain what's ahead. Reassure them that physical changes and emerging sexuality is part of normal, healthy development. Leave room for questions and allow children to ask them at their own pace. Talk to your pediatrician when needed!

- **Start early conversations about other important topics.**

Maintain open communication about healthy relationships, sex, sexuality, consent, and safety (such as how to prevent sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy, and substance use). Starting these conversations during early adolescence will help build a good framework for discussions later.

- **Keep conversations with your child positive.**

Point out strengths. Celebrate successes.

- **Be supportive and set clear limits with high (but reasonable) expectations.**

Communicate clear, reasonable expectations for curfews, school engagement, media use, and behavior, for example. At the same time, gradually expanding opportunities for more independence over time as your child takes on responsibility. Youth with parents that aim for this balance have been shown to have lower rates of depression and drug use.

- **Discuss risky behaviors (such as sexual activity and substance use) and their consequences.**

Be sure to set a positive example yourself. This can help teens consider or rehearse decision-making ahead of time and prepare for when situations arise.



- **Honor independence and individuality.**

This is all part of moving into early adulthood. Always remind your child you are there to help when needed.