

Tips to Help Your Child Through Early Adolescence

1. Learn as much as you can about early adolescence. Good information can help you make good decisions. Find out what changes you can expect during these years. Learn about what goes on in your child's school.
2. Stay involved in your child's life, both inside and outside of school. A positive relationship with a parent or other adult is the best safeguard your child has as he grows and explores. Find new and different ways to stay involved that work well with your child.
3. Provide both unconditional love and appropriate limits to help your child thrive and feel safe.
4. Talk with your child often about what's most important to her. Include the tough and sensitive subjects. Listen to what she has to say. Connected children are generally happier and do better in school and in life.
5. Hold your child to high but realistic standards both in school and in life. Let him know that you expect him to work hard, cooperate with teachers and other students and do his best.
6. Show that you value education. Stay in touch with your child's teachers and school officials. Check to see that he gets to school on time, completes homework assignments successfully and is signed up for classes required for college.
7. Provide opportunities for your young teen to succeed. Help your child to discover and develop her strengths. Success produces confidence.
8. Monitor friendships. Get to know your child's friends and their parents. Talk with him about friends, friendship and about choices he makes when with friends.
9. Work with your child to become more aware of the media and how to use it appropriately. Discuss what TV and movies to watch and what computer games to play. Become aware of the music she listens to and the magazines she reads.
10. Model good behavior. The best way to raise a child who is loving, decent and respectful is to live the values and behavior you hope he will develop.
11. Be alert to major problems, such as drug use, depression or an eating disorder. If the problem is too big to handle alone, get help from some of the many resources available.
12. Hang in there when times are tough. Most youngsters weather the bumps of early adolescence successfully and grow into successful adults. You play a major role in making that happen.