

Your teen needs you

Your teenager still needs you. Sometimes it's easy to forget that while being an adult has all sorts of stresses and strains, being a teenager isn't always that great either. First of all, they are at a difficult age when they're no longer seen either as children or as adults. Secondly, their hormones are racing, they're under pressure from friends and the media to keep up, and their schoolwork is more important now than ever. These are just some of the issues that lead to the mood swings and emotional outbursts that we commonly associate with teenagers, and can be worth remembering when handling problems and difficult situations with your teen.

Teenagers need love

Despite the cool and distant image, they are still in need of care and attention. Don't let them fool you they still need their parents around to offer support and guidance.

Teenagers need privacy

They constantly worry about their looks, their bodies, and the strange feelings and thoughts they are experiencing. Whether it's lack of self-confidence or just a curiosity about the way their bodies are developing, they need time to sort out things for themselves. Give them space and don't take it personally if they prefer not to talk to you.

Teenagers need to be different

They need to show to the world that they're growing up and are no longer an extension of you. This might mean being awkward or stropky and doing things you probably wouldn't like, such as getting a piercing or a tattoo.

Teenagers need boundaries

They may kick up a fuss about being old enough to look after themselves, but the truth is that teenagers don't always make the right choices and they know this as well as you do. Setting out some ground rules makes it clear that they're being looked after and despite the fuss that they make about being in charge of their own lives, the boundaries actually make them feel safe and secure.

Teenagers need to be listened to

Sometimes they think you're not giving them a chance to make their case. If you want teenagers to listen to then you should try to make the effort to listen as well. Show them that their ideas and opinions matter, even if you disagree with them and every now and then, try to negotiate something that's fair to you both and then let them take responsibility for their own decisions.

Finding ways to speak to your teenager...

- Arrange a “movie ” night
- “pamper” night.
- Researching the internet together This will also give you an opportunity to talk about internet safety if you feel it is appropriate.
- Take it in turns to cook a meal. Give your teens a change to show you what they can do in the kitchen and take a back seat and chill out. Don't worry about the mess, you can all tidy up together afterwards.
- If you have a “gamer” in the house, how about renting a game that you can all play together. Teens often find it hilarious to see how shockingly bad their parents are at gaming!
- Try an outside activity – go for a bike ride or walk the dog together. Football is another great activity to try!
- If your teen wants to get creative help them decorate their bedroom. It doesn't need to be expensive – just a lick of paint can work wonders but give them the reins to choose what they want to do and remember that you are only there to help!

It's easy for parents to feel “redundant” when parenting teens, but it's important to remember that they still need you – just in a different way.

Teens still need boundaries and you are entitled to have house rules and compromise can work wonders when trying to negotiate with them.

Reflect back on your own teenage years from time to time to remind them that you were also a teenager once and may have been through similar experiences. Ensure they know your door is always open if anything is troubling them.