

# TIPS FOR PARENTING DURING ADOLESCENCE

- **Educate yourself** - Read books about adolescence. Think back on your own. Remember your struggles with acne or your embarrassment at developing early - or late. Expect some mood changes in your typically sunny child, and be prepared for more conflict as they find their way as an individual. Parents who know what's coming can cope with it better. And the more you know, the better you can prepare your child.
- **Talk to your child early enough** - Answer the early questions about bodies, such as the differences between boys and girls and where babies come from. Don't overload you child with information - just answer their questions honestly.
- **Inform your adolescent - and stay informed.** - Adolescence is often a time of experimentation, and sometimes that experimentation includes risky behaviors. Don't avoid the subjects of risky relationships and drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; discussing these things openly with your child before he or she is exposed to them increases the chance that your child will act responsibly when the time comes.
- **Know your child's friends, and parents of those friends** - Regular communication between the parents of adolescents can go a long way toward creating a safe environment for all the children in a peer group. Parents can help each other keep track of kids' activities without making the kids feel that they are being watched.
- **Respect privacy** - When you are in the business of building a brand-new young adult, some privacy becomes that young adult's right. If there are warning signs of trouble, then you might want to invade your child's privacy until you get to the heart of the problem, but otherwise - relax. All children, adolescent or not, need parental supervision, and you have the right to know where you child will be and what he'll be doing. Just don't expect the details to be included, and don't expect to be invited along.
- **Make appropriate rules** - Bedtime for an adolescent should be age-appropriate, just as it was when your child was a baby. Reward you child for being trustworthy. Does your child keep to a 10PM curfew? Move it to 10:30 PM. Must an adolescent always go along on family outings? You decide what your expectations are, and don't be insulted when your growing child doesn't always want to be with you anymore. Think back. You probably felt the same about your mom and dad.