

The Five Basics of Parenting Adolescents*

I. Love and Connect

Teens need parents to develop and maintain a relationship with them that offers support and acceptance, while accommodating and affirming the teen's increasing maturity.

Strategies for Parents	
Watch for moments	when you feel and can express genuine affection, respect, and appreciation for your teen.
Acknowledge the good times	made possible by your teen's personality and growth.
Expect increased criticism	and debate, and strengthen your skills for discussing ideas and disagreements in ways that respect both your teen's opinions and your own.
Spend time just listening	to your teen's thoughts and feelings about her or his fears, concerns, interests, ideas, perspectives, activities, jobs, schoolwork, and relationships.
Treat each teen as a unique individual	distinct from siblings, stereotypes, his or her past, or your own past.
Appreciate and acknowledge	each teen's new areas of interest, skills, strengths, and accomplishments, as well as the positive aspects of adolescence generally, such as its passion, vitality, humor, and deepening intellectual thought.
Provide meaningful roles	for your teen in the family, ones that are genuinely useful and important to the family's well-being.
Spend time together	one on one and as a family, continuing some familiar family routines, while also taking advantage of ways in which new activities, such as community volunteering, can offer new ways to connect.

Key Message for Parents:
Most things about their world are changing. Don't let your love be one of them.

* See *The Five Basics of Parenting Adolescents*, pages 47–64, for details and references.