



Preparing for Adolescence

When your child was a newborn, coping with short nights of sleep, dirty diapers and crying spells may have hampered your ability to marvel at the incredible little person before you. When she was a turbocharged and at times defiant toddler, the nonstop effort required to keep her (and your home) safe and sound may not have given you much time to appreciate her rapidly developing abilities.

Similarly, when your adolescent experiences normal growing pains and emotional turbulence (and possibly a crisis or two) during the coming years, it may be all too easy to lose sight of a number of very encouraging and gratifying developments.

Yes, there will be a lot of problems to solve, arriving in all shapes and sizes (often when you least expect them). You will need to guide, monitor and sometimes intervene to keep the cultural wolves a respectable distance from your teenager's door. You may have to put out some fires or even an occasional four-alarm blaze.

Hopefully, through it all you will be able to recognize and appreciate in your adolescent many of the positive attributes that are common in this age-group. How and when these qualities will be expressed will vary with each individual, but be on the lookout for them — and be sure to express your appreciation when they show up:

- Energy and enthusiasm
- Idealism
- Concern for the needs of others — often coupled with a willingness to offer help in ways that adults might find risky or "unrealistic"
- A desire for meaningful relationships
- A sense of humor that can be witty and insightful
- A concern for fairness and justice
- An interest in other cultures and countries
- Development of new skills in athletics, the arts, crafts, the use of tools, writing and speaking — often with extraordinary achievements

- Curiosity — not only about the way things work in the world but why
- Willingness to commit to worthwhile causes and to back up that commitment with specific actions
- Ability (and attention span) to appreciate sophisticated music, drama, films and artwork
- A deep desire for a relationship with God and a willingness to make a lifelong commitment to serve Him

Despite the relatively few years separating one generation from the next, most adults seem to have amnesia about their own adolescence. Parents who have already "been there, done that" may have difficulty recalling how they felt and thought between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. As you read through the stages of adolescent development in this article series, try to recall what you were experiencing during those years. Whether your effort brings fond memories, a lot of pain or merely a sigh of relief that you don't have to go through that again, you will connect more smoothly with your teenager(s) if you can remember what it's like to walk a mile in their sneakers.

Adapted from focusonthefamily.com



RELATED SCRIPTURE

"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish (Matthew 18:12-14).

Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire (Proverbs 29:17).

[An overseer] must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a

manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) (1 Timothy 3:4-5).

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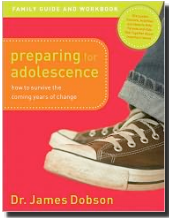
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Wednesdays @ 6:15 - Wendy Taylor - Little TreeHouse

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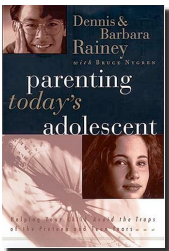
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Preparing for Adolescence: How to Survive the Coming Years of Change

James Dobson, PhD
ISBN 978-0830738267

What do you say to an adolescent who's getting ready to enter those turbulent teenage years? Dr. James Dobson, one of America's leading family psychologists, knows how to speak directly and sincerely to today's adolescents about the topics that trouble them most. Topics include avoiding feelings of inferiority, handling peer pressure, drug abuse, puberty, sexual development, menstruation, masturbation, romantic love, overcoming discouragement, sound decision-making and handling independence.



Parenting Today's Adolescent: Helping Your Child Avoid The Traps Of The Preteen And Teen Years

Dennis Rainey
ISBN 978-0785265108

Normally confident moms and dads grow weak-kneed when their children enter—gasp!—puberty. Barbara and Dennis Rainey, parents of six teenage or older children, map out the unfamiliar, demanding landscape of both pre-adolescence (ages 10-12), as well as the teen years that follow. "Preadolescence is when convictions are shaped; adolescence is when convictions are tested," they advise parents. In *Parenting Today's Adolescent* the Raineys help children and parents build a satisfying relationship while forging a vision for a productive, God-honoring life-before, during, and after adolescence.