### **Building positive family relationships with teenagers: tips**

Many people think that families become less important to children as they move into the teenage years. But your children need as much family´s support as they had it when they were younger.

It’s true that family relationships change during adolescence. When your children were young, your role was to nurture and guide them. Now you might be finding that your relationship with your children is becoming more equal.

Most young people and their families have some ups and downs during these years, but things usually improve by late adolescence as children become more mature. And family relationships tend to stay strong right through.

For teenagers, parents and families are a source of care and emotional support. Families give teenagers practical, financial and material help. And most teenagers still want to spend time with their families, sharing ideas and having fun.

It’s normal for teenagers to be moody or seem uncommunicative, but they still need you. Your children still love you and want you to be involved in their lives, even though at times their attitude, behaviour or body language might seem to say they don’t.

Supportive and close family relationships protect your children from [risky behaviour](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/risktaking_teenagers.html) like [alcohol and other drug use](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/alcohol_and_other_drugs.html), and problems like [depression](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/depression_teenagers.html). Your support and interest in what your children are doing at school can boost their desire to do well academically too.

Strong family relationships can go a long way towards helping your children grow into well-adjusted, considerate and caring adults.

The ordinary, everyday things that families do together can help build and sustain strong relationships with teenagers. These tips might help you and your family:

* **Family meals:** Regular family meals are a great chance for everyone to chat about their day, or about interesting stuff that’s going on or coming up. If you encourage everyone to have a say, no-one will feel they’re being put on the spot to talk. Also, many families find that meals are more enjoyable when the TV isn’t invited and when mobile phones and tablets are switched off!
* **Family outings:** Try setting aside time for fun family outings – you could all take turns choosing activities. A relaxing holiday or weekend away together as a family can also build togetherness.
* **One-on-one time:** One-on-one time with your child gives you the chance to [stay connected](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/staying_connected_teenagers.html) and enjoy each other’s company. It can also be a chance to share thoughts and feelings. If you can, try to find opportunities for each parent to have this time with your child.
* **Celebrate your children’s accomplishments:** Celebrating your children’s accomplishments, sharing their disappointments, and supporting their hobbies helps your children know you’re interested in them. You don’t have to make a big deal of this – sometimes it’s just a matter of showing up to watch your children play sport or music, or giving them a lift to extracurricular activities.
* **Family traditions:** Family traditions, [routines](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/family_routines_how_and_why_they_work.html/context/312) and [rituals](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/rituals_and_how_they_work.html/context/312) can help you and your children set aside regular dates and special times. For example, you might have a movie night together, a favourite meal or cooking session on a particular night, a family games afternoon or an evening walk together.
* **Household responsibilities:** Agreed household responsibilities give children and teenagers the sense that they’re making an important contribution to family life. These could be things like chores, shopping or helping older or younger members of the family.
* **Family rules:** Agreed-on [rules](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/family_rules.html), limits and consequences give teenagers a sense of security, structure and predictability. They help your children know what standards apply in your family, and what will happen if they push the boundaries.
* **Family meetings:** Family meetings can help to [solve problems](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/problem_solving_teenagers.html). They give everyone a chance to be heard and be part of working out a solution.
* **Extra support:** If you feel that your family really isn’t connecting, you might find a family counsellor or other [family support service](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/teen_family_services.html) helpful.

Source: <http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/family_relationships_teenagers.html>