

Connecting as a form of prevention

Blog Post

Adolescence is a time of self-discovery. As children mature into young adults, they often begin to crave independence and spend more time away from home as they search for their own identity. This is normal teen behavior, but it does not mean that they need their parents any less. Your child still needs to feel connected and close to you in order to feel safe and prepared to confront the difficulties that come with adolescence.

A CDC study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that family and school support for youth protects against multiple health risks into adulthood. The study used data from middle and high school students and found that youth who experienced higher levels of connectedness as a teen, both at school and at home, were associated with as much as a 66% lower risk in areas of mental health, violence, sexual risks, and substance use. This data is backed up by the 2017 Colorado Healthy Kids Survey (HKCS 2017). According to HKCS 2017, youth who have an adult to go to for help with a problem are 30% less likely to use marijuana. Additionally, youth who think their teachers notice they are doing a good job are 28% less likely to use marijuana.

Being encouraging, accepting and involved parents is key to building a positive relationship with your child. It is about being available and responsive to your child's needs. Below are some tips on how to build and maintain a close relationship with your child as they enter their teen years.

- **Have meals together as a family.** Research has found that teens who eat meals with their family are more likely to get good grades and less likely to engage in risky behaviors like vaping, drinking, drug abuse and sexual activity. Learn more at <https://www.casafamilyday.org/>.
- **Set boundaries.** Calmly and firmly set boundaries for your child. It is normal for your teen to push back on boundaries; however having rules and limitations in place lets your child know that you care about them. They also help your child feel safe and supported- even if they fight you on them.
- **Be respectful.** Demonstrate that you value your child and place him or her in high esteem. Show them that their opinions are significant even if you do not always agree with them.
- **Let them speak,** and stay connected. It is easy to "half listen" to someone as your mind wanders to other things or you get pulled into your phone. It is important to disconnect and stay present as your child talks to you.
- **Show them you care.** Above all else, show your child how much you love them and want them to succeed.

Newsletter

Research shows that youth who feel connected to their parents and other adults in their lives are less likely to engage in risky behavior. As children mature into young adults, they often begin to crave independence and spend more time away from home as they search for their own identity. This is normal teen behavior, but it does not mean that they need their parents any less. Learn more [HERE](#) and read our tips on how to stay connected with your teen.

Social Media

A CDC study published by the American Academy of Pediatric suggests that family and school support for youth protects against multiple health risks into adulthood. Learn more about how to support your child. <http://denverrap.org/?p=3105>

Check out our tips on how to stay connected with your teen as they search for independence. <http://denverrap.org/?p=3105>