**Teenage factsheet**

As your child becomes older and becomes an adolescent your Teen now need you to parent them differently, as a parent this is hard and can be extremely challenging the following information is a guide to help aid you at this challenging time.

The period between childhood and young adulthood is

a period of rapid change, these changes can affect them – physically, emotionally, and socially.

The biggest change is within the Brain.

**The Teenage brain**

The main change is that unused connections in the thinking and processing part of your child’s brain (called the grey matter) are ‘pruned’ away. At the same time, other connections are strengthened. This is the brain’s way of becoming more efficient.

The Brain continues to develop throughout their twenties, fully maturing at approximately 25 yrs.

**Based on the stage of their brain development, adolescents are more likely to:**

Act on impulse

Misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions

Get into accidents of all kinds

Get involved in fights

Engage in dangerous or risky behaviour

Girls tend to be more anxious due to online social networks.

Not consider the consequences of their actions.

**Teenagers explained**

“[https](file:///C:\Users\Elaine_Scott\Documents\https)[://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dISmdb5zfiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dISmdb5zfiQ)”

**Physical changes**

For girls, you might start to see early physical changes from about 10 or 11 years, but they might start as young as 8 years or as old as 13 years.

For boys changes usually start around 11 or 12 years, but they might start as young as 9 years or as old as 14 years.

Children going through puberty need more sleep than they did before puberty started.

**Emotional changes**

**Moods and feelings**

Your teens moods will be unpredictable with emotional ups and downs.

This happens because their brains learning how to control and express their emotions.

**Sensitivity to others**

With maturity teens will become better at understanding other emotions but may misread facial expressions and body language.

**Self-consciousness**  
Teenage self-esteem is often affected by appearance – or by how teenagers think they look. As your child develops, she might feel self-conscious about her physical appearance. They might also compare her body with those of friends and peers.

**Social changes**

**Identity**

Teenagers are finding their own identity and trying out new experiences

and friendships. This can be influenced by family and friends.

**Independence**

Your teenager will be seeking more independence as they head towards adulthood.

**Responsibility**

Might be keen for more responsibility, this should be encouraged and supported for example with jobs around the house.  
**New experiences**

Teenagers will want to try new experiences (some risky) and this is testing their limits and abilities and will push any boundaries you have in place.

**It is important that they can express themselves.**

Because of the teenage brain development, they might not always think through any consequences.

**Values**

They will develop stronger individual morals and values.

Start to question more things.

Aware that they are responsible for their own actions.

**Influences**

Friends will influence their decisions on appearance, behaviour etc.

**Decision-making**

Teens will act without thinking as their decision-making skills are still developing.

They are learning that their actions have consequences.

**Media**  
The internet, mobile phones and social media can influence how your child communicates with friends and learns about the world.

This can be positive and negative and should be monitored.

**Sexual identity**

Teenagers might start to have romantic relationships; these are not always intimate but experimental.

**LGBT**

<https://www.derbyshirelgbt.org.uk/services-for-you/>

**Boredom**

Feeling bored usually happens when nothing in your environment captures your interest or attention.

Boredom might start with your mind, but it can quickly affect your body and emotions too. For example, you might feel restless or fatigued and your mood can plummet.

**Boredom can lead to:**

Eating something, even though you aren’t hungry.

Phone a person you don’t like that much, just to have someone to talk to.

Act in a potentially dangerous way. For example: overtake a slow driver even if it's not completely safe because driving behind them is boring.

**Get to know yourself and your favourite ways to avoid boredom**.

* **Boredom busters** - try new and different, spending time with people.
* **Be Prepared:** Life is full of delays, so have a variety of activities on hand. Don't leave things to chance and hope there will be a good movie to watch or that you will be sitting next to someone entertaining.
* **Balance:** It is good to have a self-awareness that you don’t like feeling bored and so you can do what is in your power to avoid it. However, don’t become too fearful of being bored that you will do anything to avoid it. This is how accidents happen. If you are bored, it is empowering to know you can sit with it for a few moments. Meditation and exercise are two daily habits that help you to endure unexpected boring parts of your day.

**Sleep**

[**Teenagers**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/basics/adolescence) need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep every night to be at their best, but many falls short of getting that amount consistently. Lack of sleep can affect attention, mood, and daily functioning in any teen

**sleep problems that are particularly common in teens include**:

Short sleep time

Trouble falling asleep

Daytime sleepiness

For more information you can contact- **Sleepcouncil.org.uk**

**What do teenagers need**

Acceptance Time support Love praise good role model

Boundaries Incentives new experiences Trust Respect

Independence exercise understanding belonging truth friends Basic needs to be met sensitivity Privacy

Teenagers need to be parented differently to when they were younger, they need all the things that are above as well as to feel included in decision making, they are more likely to want to make changes.

**Having regular Family discussions**

**Why it Is important**

To improve communication

For the Teenager to feel valued and have their voice heard

Taking ownership of their actions

For a calmer household

To all discuss boundaries, incentives, and consequences.

**Suggestions on how to come together**

Live in the here and now

Keep calm

Anticipate pitfalls

Focus on the positive

Listen to your teen

Give your teen choices

Ditch power struggles

Stand your ground on important topics but try to compromise where possible.

Choose your battles

Set rules and Boundaries as a family

Consequences and Incentives

**Why are consequences important**

**Teenagers need to know that there will be a consequence for their unacceptable behaviour**

Shows them you are not happy with the behaviour

Helps to teach them right from wrong

Gives them rules to work with

Shows you mean business

Need to be reasonable

Need to fit the crime

**Ideas for consequences.**

Additional chores

Allowances rejoiced

Phone/gadgets taken away

Cheaper personal products i.e., deodorant or hair gel

Getting Grounded.

**Ideas for rewards/Incentives**

* Quality time with you
* Positive comments

Car time–them having the car/you take them

Special meal- Pizza or them being allowed to cook

Extended curfew

Extended computer time

Friend over- sleep over

A hug

**Risky and experimental behaviours**

It’s normal for teenagers to want new experiences.

Too much control will restrict their identity, no control will allow too much freedom and no boundaries

Failing and learning from mistakes is vital as teenagers search and experiment to find their own identity.

Also, the parts of the teenage brain that handle planning and impulse control don’t completely mature until about age 25.

This means teenagers are sometimes more likely to make quick decisions without always thinking through the consequences, especially if your teenager is impulsive.

Sometimes teenagers make decisions because of peer pressure.

**Violent behaviours**

**If your child is showing early signs of violent behaviour, it can help to:**

Give them a clear message that the behaviour is not OK.

Let them know that you’re willing to talk with them and work things out together when they have calmed down.

**When they are calm then...**

Let them know that that there will be consequences for their behaviour. As agreed beforehand.

Make sure your own behaviour is respectful, and that you’re managing your own emotions and modelling self-control.

**Why are they behaving in this way?**

May be struggling with their feelings

As a reaction to something that they are going through

Are there deeper emotional and mental health issues that need exploring?

Are they suffering from depression, anxiety or even harming themselves?

family breakdown, bullying or substance misuse?

**It is important to keep in mind that no child wants to behave in this way and frighten the people they love, but it may have got out of control and they may be struggling on how to manage their feelings.**

It can be hard to know how to talk to your child about the risks of watching online porn.

**Sexting/ Sexual activity**

* Education
* Open dialogue/Communication
* Link Schools-teaching/training
* Consequences
* Acceptance-

Contraception /Advice

GP

C card school -Register

Sexual health clinics

**Why children watch porn online**

It’s normal for young people to be curious about [sex and relationships](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/) and sometimes they may search online for information or answers to questions they have. They may also do this if they’re worried or embarrassed about asking their parents or guardians.

Some of the reasons children and young people watch or search for porn online include:

* + to learn about sex and sexual identity
  + for sexual arousal and pleasure
  + curiosity
  + for "a laugh"
  + break the rules
  + to be disgusted
  + to "freak out" their friends
  + peer or relationship pressure.

Children and young people watch porn or sexually explicit content are at greater risk of developing:

* + unrealistic attitudes about sex and consent
  + more negative attitudes about roles and identities in relationships
  + unrealistic expectations of body image and performance.

If your Teen is watching porn talk to them about healthy relationships, explain that the porn is not real, Talk about peer pressure, Consent, and porn addition.

Cup of tea- Consent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLWS4-kU>

www.nspcc.org.uk › keeping-children-safe › online-safety › inappropriate-...

**Self-Harm**

**There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. And once they start, it can become a compulsion.**

It is Important to spot it as soon as possible and do everything you can to help.

It is usually not a suicide attempt or a cry for attention.

It can often be a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions.

It’s a way of coping.

**Smoking/Vaping**

**Smoking**

Nicotine is highly addictive and can:

slow brain development in teens and affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood

increase the risk of other types of [addiction](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/addictions.html) later in life

Tar-health concerns

**Vaping-**

Vaping is the inhaling of a vapor created by an electronic cigarette (**e-cigarette**) or another vaping device.

Vaping puts nicotine into the body. **E-cigarettes also:**

irritate the lungs may cause serious lung damage and even death

can lead to [smoking cigarettes](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/smoking.html) and other forms of tobacco use

Some people use e-cigarettes to vape [marijuana](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/marijuana.html), THC oil, and other dangerous chemicals. Besides irritating the lungs, these drugs also affect how someone thinks, acts, and feels.

**Cannabis & ADHD medication**

**How can it affect:**

Worsen executive function and working memory.

Can cancel out the benefits of the ADHD medication

Can increase anxiety / Depression

Can make symptoms worse

Can reduce coordination

Can decrease motivation

Can lead to memory problems

Can lead to learning difficulties, especially in developing brain

Can contribute to onset of schizophrenia

ADHD medication may not be prescribed

**Alcohol Use**

* Social Pressure
* Family culture-Role Model
* Drinking links?
* Experimental/pushing boundaries
* Invincibility and immortality

What would you do if you smelled alcohol/child came home drunk?

**Gangs**

**What is a gang?**

**A group may be classed as a gang if it:**

Has a name

Has a defined territory

Uses a specific colour, particularly in clothing

Uses specific hand gestures or signs

Uses symbols shown in tattoos or graffiti (tags)

**Learn how to recognise if your child is part of a gang**

A group of young people is not necessarily a gang. Teens often find safety in numbers through staying with a particular group of friends, and usually like to avoid trouble. Knowing what a gang is and how it is classified can be useful for parents who are worried about their child.

**Child at Risk of Exploitation**

CRE previously known as Child Sexual Exploitation but now includes criminal activity, such as drug running (County Lines)

All children can be exploited either online or face to face. Be aware of who your children are talking to and which Apps and social media sites they use.

Telephone 101 operation Liberty to report any concerns, however small you may think they are.

**What to look out for:**

Withdrawing from the family

Loss of interest in school

Dropping positive activities like sports

Changes in behaviour reported by the school

Unexplained extra money or new possessions such as clothes, trainers, jewellery, computers / games, mobile phones

Staying out late without permission

Being increasingly secretive or vague about their whereabouts, activities, or friends

A new nickname

Dressing differently, perhaps in a particular style or colour

Unexplained physical injuries

Using tags or graffiti on books and possessions

Using hand signals or code to speak with friends

**Mental health awareness**

If your teenager has become withdrawn and excludes themselves from friends and family and they don’t want to discuss this with you, they can speak to the GP, school nurse or can self-refer or find support with: Talking Mental health Derbyshire, Young Minds, ChildLine, or student minds.

Families can self-refer into the Multi agency team.

Many of these support groups have online counsellors.

Be consistent with your rules and boundaries. Stay positive.

Lead by example.

**And Finally**

Reflect on what went well and why.

If you have a difficult day, stay strong and start afresh the next day.

References

* ADHD and Teens – Colleen Alexander-Roberts
* The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
* Raising Children Network (Australia) Limited.
* www.raisingchildren.net.au.
* CAMHS
* Photos from ADDITUDE
* Family Lives.
* Young Minds
* Relate