



# Understanding and Managing the Teenage Years

## Student and Family Support Services

## The Teenage Years

The teenage years can often be a very tense and difficult period for both adult and child and this is a time when parents can feel at their most helpless. Research shows that the earlier parents and carers talk to and engage with their teenagers, the more likely young people are going to be able to make sensible decisions and choices for themselves.

## The Teen Brain

Until recently it was assumed that there was little further development in the brain after the end of childhood. However we now know that the brain continues to change and develop all through adolescence. In fact, there is more change in the brain during adolescence than at any other time in human development apart from the first three years of life. This means that the teenage years are a critical period. What happens during this period has major implications for later development. Of course the brain does not develop in isolation. The brain and the environment interact, each influencing the other.

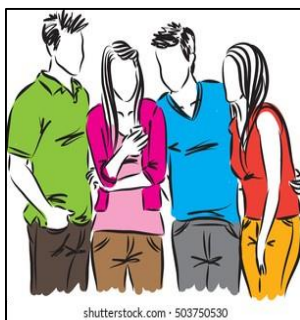
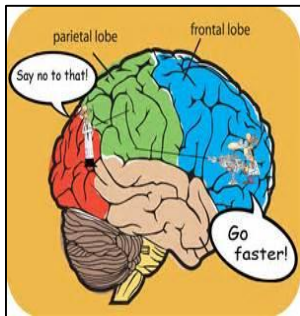
If adults can make allowances for the fact that teenagers are experiencing a major upheaval and readjustment of their brains, this will make relationships easier and contribute to well-being. A good balance of hormones is essential in good brain development. If the young person experiences too much anxiety or stress the hormone balance will hinder this fundamental process. There is no way to avoid some degree of anxiety and stress, but adults are important to keep this to a reasonable level.

## What Teenagers Need from Adults

Teens are still in need of care and attention. Don't let them fool you - they still need their parents around to offer support and guidance. Teenagers also need privacy. They constantly worry about their looks, their bodies, and the strange feelings and thoughts they are experiencing. Give them space and don't take it personally if they prefer not to talk to you. Teenagers also still need clear and consistent boundaries. Make and agree boundaries with your teen and make it clear that they are to keep everyone safe. Boundaries actually make them feel safe and secure despite their responses to them.

Teenagers need to be different. They need to show to the world that they are growing up and are no longer an extension of the adult around them. This might mean being awkward or stropky and doing things you probably wouldn't like. Part of this is the brain's change and the risk taking aspect of the brain growing faster.

Teenagers need to be listened to. Listen and show them that their ideas and opinions matter, even if you disagree with them. Compromise is key so it is important we try to negotiate something that's fair to both the adult and the young person, and then let them take responsibility for their own decisions. It is also important that teenagers still need their parents to be 'the parent' and let them know what the rules and boundaries are.





**Are you still in charge, or is it time for a change?** Many parents realise that the kind of discipline you used when they were younger doesn't seem to work anymore. It's often tempting to try and be their friend but they still need you to be the parent and let them know what the rules and boundaries are. But it is essential for your teenager to be able to work out what being a young adult means for them so this will inevitably lead to some clashes with you.

## **The Teen Years are a STAGE**

### **S—Significance**

The Significance of parents is key and parents matter, despite teenagers sending the opposite message. Without your support young people will be lost. Teenagers need love, to be valued and they need to know they matter.

### **T—Two Way Communication**

Communication involves both talking and listening. Young people will want to talk, but in a way that feels safe and secure FOR THEM. Avoid interrogation and show respect for their views. Remember—don't expect your teenager to talk at exactly the times that are good for you.

### **A—Authority**

The way you exercise your authority is central to everything else in your relationship with your child. You can be more or less demanding in your expectations and in the boundaries and limits that you set, but ensure your child knows what they are. Authoritative parenting is where you are loving and caring, as well as being firm in setting appropriate boundaries.

### **G—Generation Gap**

You may judge your teenager based on your own experiences rather than by the circumstances of today's generation. The idea of what is normal may be different. You can still have a good relationship even though you may not have the same ideas about things. The more you can be open to another point of view, the better your relationship with your teenager will be.

### **E—Emotion**

You will experience many emotions in your relationship with your teenager—angry, sad, rejected, upset, worried. It is also important to recognise that your teenager will be experiencing their own emotions many of them new or confusing. Recognise and acknowledge your own feelings and the easier it will be to have a warm relationship with your teenager.

## **Talking to Teenagers**

Listening and talking openly to your teenager about the risks and challenges they will come up against can help reduce the risks that they face in their day-to-day life. Don't try to force conversation. It's a good idea to keep an open mind and accept that talking about difficult issues might be tricky for you both. Let them know that you understand the pressures teenagers face can be difficult. Give them practical ways to help them stay safe so they don't have to learn through their mistakes. Help them say 'no' to pressure. Help them see that they can have a mind of their own. Don't expect instant solutions. Let them know you are there to talk and don't try to solve everything with one conversation. Help them understand what your worries are too particularly when setting boundaries. Finally, positive messages help, your behaviour will influence them most.



# Student and Family Support Services

## *Useful Sources of Information*

Kings Langley is the Lead School for the delivery of family support services in Dacorum. As part of this provision Gade and Kings Langley Schools Family Support are able to provide families with a range of support services.



- ❖ **Parent Support Services**—We have a team of Family Support workers who are available to work in school and with parents at home. Our support workers can work with families on any range of issues and will provide practical advice, guidance and support
- ❖ **Pupil Support Services**—Our Partnership has Pupil Support workers who are available to work with children in school to support them with their behaviour, emotional wellbeing and how to overcome difficulties they may be facing.
- ❖ **SEND Support**—Our Partnership has a specialist Family Support worker who works with families of children with SEND. We will support parents in school and with parents at home, will provide practical advice, guidance and support on all aspects of SEND.

### **Service Information**

<https://www.kls.herts.sch.uk/student-wellbeing/student-and-family-services/>

[www.gadeschoolsfamilysupport.co.uk](http://www.gadeschoolsfamilysupport.co.uk)

### **Hertfordshire Parenting Providers**

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst>

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

### **The Teen Brain**

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Schools-and-education/Childcare-and-advice-for-parents/Parents-and-family-support/My-teens-brain/My-teen-brain.aspx>

<http://www.jcoleman.co.uk/myteenbrain>

### **National Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing**

<https://www.hertsmindnetworkcyp.org/>

<https://www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk/>

[www.healthforteens.co.uk](http://www.healthforteens.co.uk)

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

[www.youngminds.co.uk](http://www.youngminds.co.uk)

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

School Nursing Service Chat Line: 07480 635050

