

NEWSLETTER

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"When Did I Become Stupid?"

About the age of 10-12 your “baby” begins to display behaviors that make you believe they think you are stupid. Welcome to the adolescent development stage of life!



Gradually, your child may not want to hold your hand or receive hugs in public. They will seek greater privacy, and their reliance will shift from you toward their friends. The gestures appear; eye rolling, arm crossing, walking away in a “huff.” They challenge you more, you embarrass them in public and they are now overreacting to minor issues – good and bad. Although these changes can make you feel sad or frustrated – be confident that this is an exciting time of development and it is completely normal. Your child’s brain is now going through the most rapid change since their birth.

It is a time of poor impulse control, poor rational thinking, and extreme emotions. The two most notable parts of the brain responsible are (1) the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision making and impulse control and (2) the limbic system, which controls emotions and social interactions. Because the limbic system matures faster than the prefrontal cortex, a teenager’s behavior is often driven by their emotions - leading to noticeable drama.

SURVIVAL TIPS

- ▶ Ensure your adolescent is aware that their safety is your foremost priority and affirm your unwavering support for them.
- ▶ Pick your battles – always with your teen’s safety in mind – the pink hair can wash out.
- ▶ Allow natural consequences to occur; you do not always have to be the “heavy.”
- ▶ Do not punish your teens for the actions of their peers.
- ▶ Set clear expectations, rules, and boundaries – allowing your teen to have input. (grades, chores, curfews, etc)
- ▶ Allow your teen to solve their own problems; do not solve for them – you guide them.
- ▶ Talk openly about substance use/abuse – with focus on their safety.
- ▶ Support age-appropriate steps toward independence: overnight stays, dating, parties, volunteering, work, driving, and money management.
- ▶ When you show respect, others are likely to follow your lead. Adopt this practice between parent and teen.
- ▶ Listen more, lecture less.
- ▶ Your teens will make mistakes! Use them as teaching opportunities. Allow second chances to see if they learned from the mistake.
- ▶ Do not allow your fears to interfere with your teens trying new things.

The good news is that at about the age of 18 years old the prefrontal cortex and limbic system portions of the brain catch up to each other and begin growing at the same pace. Their brain reaches full maturity by the time they are in their mid-twenties. This is when you will be smart again! Good luck and enjoy the ride!



I am certified in facilitating Nurturing Parenting curriculum and I'd be honored to help you and your family with any issues occurring with the teen in your life. I'm here and ready to support your parent/teen relationship.