

College or Career? Making the Choice

Tenth-grade is a time to begin setting directions for the future. If your child is college-bound, he or she should be taking college preparatory courses. For instance, algebra and geometry questions will show up in Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs) required for college admission.

For students who will choose a career path, this is also the year to begin exploring choices.

Many school systems offer a range of career technical courses. Typically, students enroll in classes during their junior or senior years. Notes one guidance counselor, "Many of these



programs prepare a student to graduate with the skills to begin a rewarding career."

Among the one-and two-year programs offered by school systems in some localities are these: auto body repair, automotive technician, business data processing, carpentry, computer network administration, cosmetology, dental careers, drafting and design, electricity, electronics, emergency medical technician, food service occupations, landscaping, law enforcement, licensed practical nursing, machine shop, masonry, nursing assistant, radio production, television production and welding. Offerings vary according to the skill requirements called for in a locality's work force.

Visit Colleges On Family Trips

When you're planning family vacations, why not add an informal visit to one or more nearby colleges or universities that might interest your tenth-grader?

One guidance counselor recommends that students begin visiting colleges early in their high school years. "I'm uneasy when I hear a student has definitely chosen a college which he or she has never visited," she says. "A student needs to 'connect' with a school and feel at home there for a successful college career."

How to plan mini-vacations and visits to area colleges? Start with a current map of the state you'll vacation in, and select an area you want to visit. Then find out what schools are located there or nearby. You might want to contact a school in advance and find out if a special event, performance or sports activity is going on during your visit.

By planning your vacations to include stops at nearby colleges and universities, you'll help your tenth-grader begin to catch the excitement of campus life. He or she will also start the process of deciding "Is college for me?" and choosing the schools to consider.

Check These Out!

Public libraries have many books, tapes and videos about parenting and child development. Use your library card to check out these and other excellent resources. Invite your young student along to check out books or tapes, too.

For special resources related to parent education and support in your community, contact local social services, schools, hospitals, libraries or United Way.

Discuss what you read with your emerging young adult. Ask your teen's opinion. A book can be a path to closer communication between you and your child.

Teens under the influence: the truth about kids, alcohol, and other drugs— how to recognize the problem and what to do about it / Katherine Ketcham and Nicholas A. Pace. (B)

Uncommon sense for parents with teenagers / Michael Riera. (B)

"Don't stop loving me": a reassuring guide for mothers of adolescent daughters / Ann F. Caron. (B)

Choosing the right college, the whole truth about America's top schools / produced by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) (B)

The top 100: the fastest growing careers for the 21st century. (B)

Prodigal sons and material girls: how not to be your child's atm / Nathan Dungan. (B)

How to get a job if you're a teenager / Cindy Pervola & Debby Hobgood. (B)

(B) book

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Healthy Stages

10TH GRADE

Tips for Parents of Tenth-Graders. *Healthy Stages* is a free, once-a-year newsletter. It is designed to reach you during your child's current grade in school. Every effort has been made to pack its short articles with helpful facts. We suggest you keep *Healthy Stages* around for the entire school year. Put it in a folder with other important information about your child. Refer to

it from time to time. Its articles may help you deal with a problem or try a new approach in parenting.

We hope you look forward to all that this year brings. And we hope you'll turn to *Healthy Stages* often. We want to help you make this school year one that both you and your child will remember with joy.



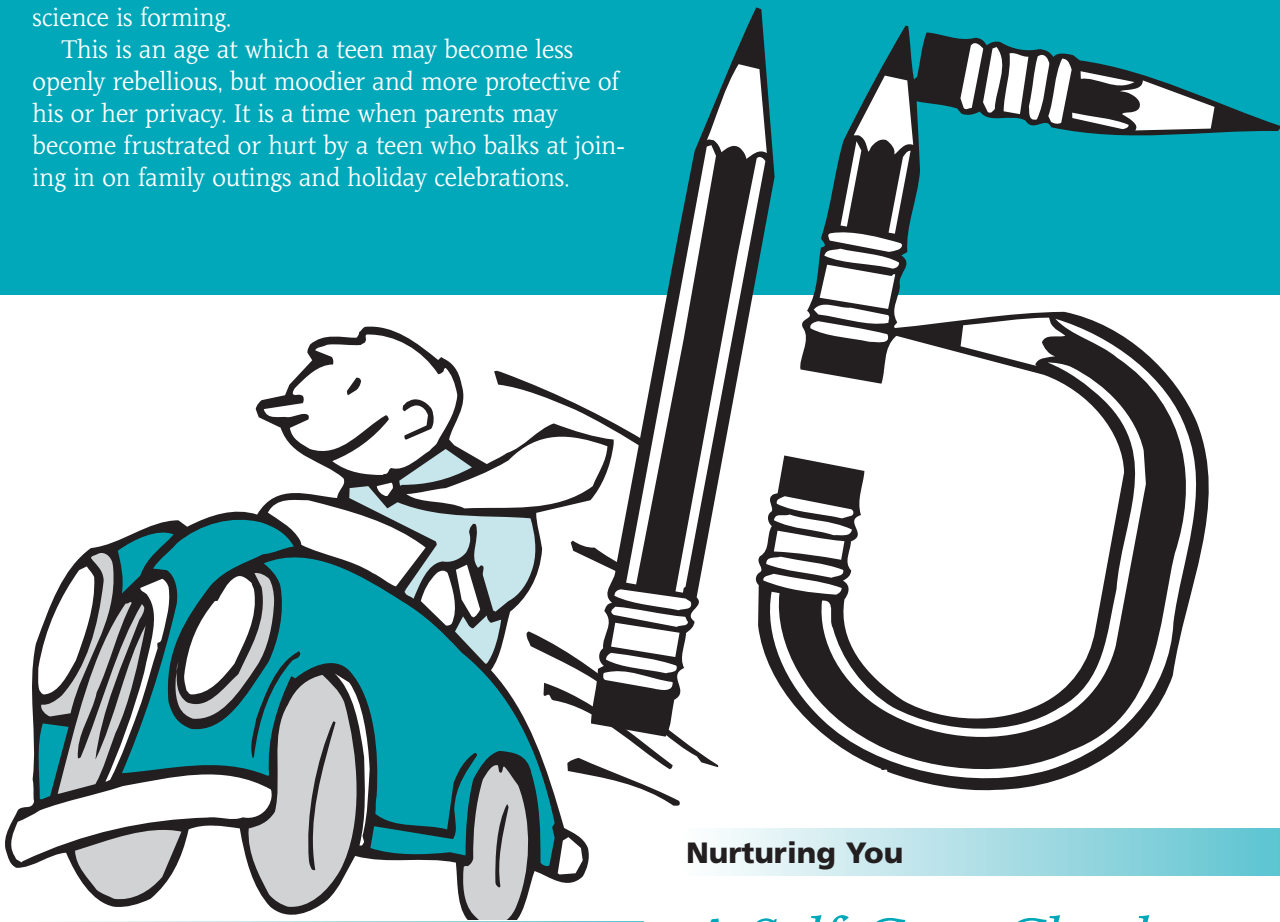
15: Easier To Live With, Harder Decisions

Middle adolescence is a time when many youngsters, at around 15, undergo a “settling down and settling in” period. Puberty is well underway. Boys in particular may experience a real growth spurt, gaining in strength, weight and height.

By now, most 15-year-olds of both sexes are getting accustomed to their newly maturing bodies. Their thinking skills are maturing too. Cognitive and reflective abilities are growing. The teen is less self absorbed. Friendships are more stable. And now, an adult conscience is forming.

This is an age at which a teen may become less openly rebellious, but moodier and more protective of his or her privacy. It is a time when parents may become frustrated or hurt by a teen who balks at joining in on family outings and holiday celebrations.

In spite of this, a fifteen-year-old needs more than ever to know he or she is loved. Sometimes a hug, with no words at all, is the best possible way to tell your youngster, “I understand and I care.” Gestures of physical warmth between parents and children are an important form of communication. So are verbal encouragements such as, “Good Job!” “I’m proud of you.” Even when teens brush off a parent’s hugs and compliments, they get the message: “I’m loved.”



Nurturing Your Teen

Safe, Sane Approaches to Driving Concerns

Most parents don't need to be reminded that their child will soon be eligible to drive. Your teen will keep you posted!

A learner's permit allows your child to operate a motor vehicle with a licensed driver seated beside him or her. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in training teens to be alert, safe and responsible drivers. When your child has passed the state Division of Motor Vehicles written test, he or she will receive a learner's permit. Here are some considerations to keep in mind:

- ♥ Use driving practice to motivate. Give your teen guidelines for schoolwork and household responsibilities which, if met, earn the privilege of driving practice with you.
- ♥ Be a good driving role model. Show courtesy on the road. Follow all rules of the road. Honor speed limits. Your Driver-to-be will learn from your example.
- ♥ Driving privileges and responsibilities: Work out in advance whether your teen should be responsible for part of the expenses. Insurance, gas, and maintenance costs add up.
- ♥ Forbid drinking and drug use while driving. The life of your child and the lives of others may hang in the balance. Make it clear that your child must never drink or use drugs and drive, and must never ride with a drinking or drug-using driver.
- ♥ Know your responsibilities. In some states, parents of teens under 18 are empowered to take a license from their child, or to direct the state licensing agency to cancel the license for a certain period. Check what the rules are in your state. And inform your teen also that a judge can suspend a license for truancy, alcohol or drug offenses, and delinquency and curfew violations.

Nurturing You

A Self-Care Checkup

Parenting a teen isn't an easy job. One of the best advantages you can bring to the task is your own good health. Here are some suggestions from the American Council on Science and Health, offered by its president, Dr. Elizabeth M. Whelan, in **Bottom Line** magazine. Among her “keys to good health” are these:

- ♥ Don't smoke. It's the country's leading cause of premature death and disease.
- ♥ Use alcohol responsibly. Excessive use causes deadly accidents and numerous health problems.
- ♥ Wear your seat belt every time you drive. If everyone did, accidents could drop 65% and deaths 50%.
- ♥ Put a new battery in your smoke detector. Working smoke detectors could reduce the death toll from home fires by 40%.
- ♥ Avoid overexposure to sun. It causes both skin cancer and premature wrinkling. If you'll be in the sun, wear sun screen with an SPF rating of 15 or higher.
- ♥ Maintain your weight at no more than 20% above weight chart allowances. You'll reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes and other conditions.
- ♥ Eat a variety of healthy foods. Include plenty of grains, fruits and vegetables. Cut down on fats. Keep plenty of quick and healthy snacks available for you and your family.
- ♥ Eat together as a family whenever possible. Both you and your teen will eat better and it also promotes good communication.
- ♥ Exercise every day. Yes, it's hard to fit it into our busy lives, but even a 20-minute daily walk can lessen tension and improve health.
- ♥ Have regular blood pressure and cholesterol checks. At least once a year is recommended. If they're high, carefully follow your doctor's directions to reduce them.

Remember, too, that taking care of yourself includes having fun in life and keeping your stress level in check! By making your own self-care and good health a top priority, you'll be better able to meet the challenges and enjoy the pleasures of parenting. And you'll be giving your teen a role model to follow for life!

“In Trouble? My Child?”



By tenth grade, your child is living in an increasingly grown-up world with many risks and temptations.

Studies have shown that one way to forecast whether a child will use drugs or alcohol is the extent to which the child believes his or her parent will tolerate it. Every parent needs to practice “zero tolerance,” insisting that all drugs, alcohol included, are absolutely off-limits.

Parents should also watch for signs that a child may be getting involved in substance abuse. The following are by no means all the possible symptoms. And a child could show one or two without the problem being substance abuse. Symptoms include:

- ♥ Seeing your child drunk
- ♥ Having alcohol or medications disappear from the house
- ♥ Finding hidden drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia
- ♥ Child loses interest in former activities
- ♥ Changes in health or physical appearance
- ♥ Personality changes
- ♥ Grades drop or school is missed
- ♥ Money or valuable items disappear from the house
- ♥ Child has unexplained money
- ♥ Driving violations
- ♥ Law breaking or police trouble of any kind

If you find out or strongly suspect your child is using drugs or alcohol, contact a mental health professional with experience in teen substance abuse. For referrals, call your doctor, medical center or social services agency.

This article was prepared from an interview with Spencer D. Marcus, M.D., psychiatrist.



Health Matters

Mental Health Issues and the Family Tree

Modern science has mounting evidence that our children inherit much more from us than physical characteristics. Just as your son may seem to be “a carbon copy of his Uncle Jim,” or your daughter may look “exactly like her grandmother at that age,” children can inherit tendencies both to succeed and to experience certain types of problems.

In raising a teenager, it can be important to know your family health history. Among conditions that research has identified as potentially inheritable are these:

- ♥ Alcoholism
- ♥ Drug abuse
- ♥ Violent behavior
- ♥ Depression
- ♥ Compulsive gambling

There are positive advantages to letting a young person know about family problems that may be passed on. Being aware of genetic links doesn't mean any of us is destined to have the problem. Instead, it empowers us to make healthy choices and to practice the moderation that can prevent a potential problem.

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