

Teenagers

Aboriginal Parent Easy Guide



Parenting SA

The teenage years can be an exciting time of change for children. It can be a rollercoaster as they experiment, learn new things and work out who they are and their place in the world.

In the pre-teen and teenage years:

- > children's bodies and emotions change quickly
- > they want to 'fit in' with their friends
- > they test limits and take risks – but the part of the brain that helps them predict what will happen, is still developing. They may do silly and dangerous things
- > there can be a lot going on with family, school, friends or work
- > there may be bullying or racism.

Teenagers need:

- > good relationships with family
- > a trusted adult they can really talk to
- > good role models
- > help to make good decisions and deal with problems
- > chances to practice being responsible
- > support when someone passes away
- > help to be healthy and safe
- > to feel connected to culture and community.



A loving family can help teenagers deal with the ups and downs of life.

Even when children think they are a 'big man' or 'big woman', they still need your guidance, love and support.



Government of
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Helping parents be their best

Parents are important to teenagers, even if it doesn't always seem that way.

Teenagers need you to:

- > be someone they can trust and rely on.
Only make promises you can keep
- > really listen to them.

Talk with them about:

- > how they are feeling
- > treating people with respect
- > being responsible
- > taking risks
- > staying safe and healthy.

As they get older make sure they have good information about drugs and alcohol, mental health, safe sex and contraception. If they don't want to talk with you about these things, make sure they have another trusted adult to talk to – Uncle, Aunty, other family member or friend.

Try to:

- > know what's going on in their life
- > help them have friends, interests and activities
- > praise and celebrate their successes.

If there is bullying or racism, tell teenagers:

- > the problem is with the other person – not them
- > to stay calm and not put themselves in danger – talk about safe ways of handling things
- > to come to you or another trusted adult for help.

You are a role model for your children. Let them see you making positive choices in your own life.



Help teenagers to eat well and not have too much junk food. They need to be active and not spend too much time watching TV and other screens.

Teenagers' sleep

Teenagers often sleep late in the morning and have trouble getting up for school. Changes in hormones mean they get tired later at night and tend to sleep in. It helps to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends, to have regular exercise and limit caffeine. A 20 minute nap also helps. Turn off computer games and phones, and relax before bed.

Teenage behaviour

It's OK to have rules about teenagers' behaviour. It keeps them safe as they become more responsible. Rules could be about:

- > how they treat others
- > helping around the house
- > keeping school and work commitments
- > where they go and who they spend time with
- > what time they come home
- > letting you know where they are.

Agree on rules together and what will happen if they are broken. Keep consequences reasonable and short.

Arguments

There can be arguments when teenagers push limits. Try to:

- > stay calm – don't shout back
- > listen to their point of view
- > tell them why you think things are important, such as respect, caring for others and sharing responsibilities – try not to lecture.

When things calm down talk about what went wrong and what else you both could have done. Help them deal with any issues and find help if they need it.

All families argue at times but violence or abuse is never OK. If your child is violent towards you or others, get help. If you are in immediate danger call the police on 000.

If there is anger or violence:

- > don't retaliate – it makes things worse
- > be clear you do not allow violence or abuse
- > keep yourself and others safe. If there is immediate danger, call the police on 000.

When to get help for your child

Most teenagers cope with support from family and friends. Your child may need extra help if they:

- > feel low much of the time
- > lack energy or motivation
- > are angry a lot
- > lash out or are violent to people or pets
- > feel worthless or guilty
- > self-harm or talk about suicide
- > are using drugs or alcohol.

Your doctor or Aboriginal health service is a good place to start.



Tell children you love them even if you don't like what they do.

Services

Helplines

Kids Helpline: Phone 1800 551 800, 24 hours
Telephone and web counselling for young people aged 12–25 years www.kidshelpline.com.au

Beyond Blue: Phone 1300 224 696, 24 hours
Speak to a mental health professional about how you feel no matter how big or small the problem
www.beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline: Phone 13 11 14, 24 hours
Crisis support and suicide prevention www.lifeline.org.au

Parent Helpline: 1300 364 100
For advice on child health and parenting

Youth services

Metropolitan Youth Health: MY Health

9am–5pm, Mon to Fri
Free, confidential health services and support for young people 12–25 years
Elizabeth: Phone 8255 3477
Christies Beach: Phone 8326 6053
Angle Park: Phone 8243 5637

Reach Out: For information on sex, relationships, drugs and other issues for teenagers www.au.reachout.com

Sexual health

SHine SA, Karrarrinthe Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Centre, Woodville:

Phone 1300 794 584
To see a doctor about sexual health matters and for information on sexual health and relationships – or just drop in every second Wednesday 10am–4.00pm. SHine also has clinics at Davoren Park, Hillcrest, Oaklands Park and Noarlunga.
Phone 1300 794 584 to make an appointment
www.shinesa.org.au

Mental health

Youth Mental Health Service, Mental Health Triage:

Phone 13 14 65, 24 hours
Mental health service for young people aged 16–25 years

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

8.45am–5pm, Mon to Fri
Free counselling services for children 0–15 years who are having difficulties with emotions, behaviour or the social areas of life. You can contact CAMHS to talk about a referral to the service. These are usually made through a doctor or other health professional. Talk to your doctor or health worker about the kind of help your child might need.

www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/divisions/mentalhealth/index.html

Western Region

> Port Adelaide Phone 8341 1222

Eastern Region

> Paradise Phone 8207 8999

Northern Region

> Elizabeth Phone 8252 0133

Southern Region

> Marion Phone 7425 8600
> Onkaparinga Phone 8326 1234

Southern Country Services

For information about a service near you
Phone 8326 1234 or 8391 3922

Northern Country Services

For information about a service near you
Phone 1800 819 089

Headspace: The National Youth Mental Health Foundation provides health advice, support and information to young people aged 12–25 years www.headspace.org.au

Drugs and alcohol

Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA):

Phone 1300 131 340
Free, confidential counselling and information

Violence

Domestic Violence Crisis Line: Phone 1800 800 098, 24 hours. If you are concerned for your safety or in urgent need of assistance. You can be connected with Aboriginal specific support services if you wish

Mentoring

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Australia:

Phone 1300 463 686
Matching adults with disadvantaged young people 7–17 years
www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org.au

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME):

Mentoring for Aboriginal high school and university students
www.aime mentoring.com/about/aime

Panyappi Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program:

Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth and Family Services (Families SA) Phone 8414 8900
Youth mentoring and crime prevention program for children and young people 10–18 years

Parenting

Parenting SA: For more Parent Easy Guides
www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Child and Youth Health: For information on young people's health and parenting www.cyh.com

Raising Children Network: For parenting information
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Parenting SA

A partnership between the Department for Education and the Women's and Children's Health Network.

Phone (08) 8303 1660 • www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Parent Easy Guides are free in South Australia.

Important: This information is not intended to replace advice from a qualified practitioner.

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