

## Living With Your Teenager

---



Being parents of teenagers is not for the faint hearted. Teenagers are dealing with challenging issues. “Being aware of these issues will help parents survive and enjoy these years,” says Mary L. Hughes, an Iowa State University Extension family life field specialist.

Mrs. Hughes reminds parents of the many developmental changes and needs of teenagers.

- Need for independence
- Need to establish own authority
- Need for privacy
- Changes in emotions
- Rapid physical growth
- Changes in hormones
- Maturing body
- Greater importance of peers

These changes and needs are usually played out in what we often term “typical teen behavior”. For example, a teenager tries to become independent or establish his/her own authority by sassing you, staying out too late, questioning your values or not doing chores. This is a challenging time for parents. How do you provide support and guidance while allowing your teen to slowly take control of his/her own life? It’s a question many parents of teenagers struggle with as they try to maintain a loving parent-child relationship through this time of frequently difficult interactions.

“Raising teenagers can be stressful,” Mrs. Hughes assures. “And, at the same time, it can be an exciting experience. You get to watch your child mature, become more responsible, establish relationships, explore careers, and start to realize his/her potential.” Knowing what to expect makes parenting easier. Ask at the local county extension office for the newly revised publication series – *Living with your teenager*. The publications can also be accessed online at: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/>:

- *Understanding Emotional Changes* (PM944a) – Learn what causes increased emotionality in your teenager and how to deal with it.
- *The Changing Parent-Child Relationship* (PM944b) – Learn about the struggles between parents and teenagers, along with the helpful attitudes and expectations that will ease parent/teen conflicts.
- *Understanding Changes in Thinking* (PM944c) – Learn about the way your teenager thinks about him/herself and about values you are teaching to your child.
- *Understanding Physical Changes* (PM944d) – Learn about the changes in your teenager’s body and how to prepare him/her for these changes. This may help you support your child through this difficult time.

Youth are making difficult and far-reaching decisions about relationships, lifestyles, employment, and education during the teen years. Parents can offer support, be role models, provide information, and keep communication open and flowing. The reward for the hard work of the teen years comes with the positive and secure parent-adult child relationship that develops and sustains you both through the coming years. +