



SUPPORT YOUR TEEN'S SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLNESS

As a parent of a teen, you are beginning to see your child become an adult. These are critical years that will affect both their current and future health at home, in school and in life.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your child's social and emotional development affects every part of his or her life. Children who develop good social and emotional skills:

- Make and keep friends
- Understand and express emotions
- Are ready for school
- Think clearly and learn new things

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your love and attention are as important as food and a place to live. When you connect and communicate with your child and praise good behavior, you're supporting your child's social and emotional development — and building a foundation for a lifetime of success.

INSIDE YOU'LL LEARN ABOUT:

- Social and emotional milestones for your child
- How to support your child's social and emotional development
- When to be concerned
- Where to go for help

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

- Changes in behavior or mood— restlessness, nervousness, paranoia, irritability, defensiveness, or lack of interest in appearance or activities.
- Changes in friends— switching friends and being reluctant to introduce you to new friends.
- Problems at school or at home— poor attendance, drop in grades, or rebelling against rules.
- Changes in sleep or appetite.

HOW TO GET HELP

If you have concerns, talk to your doctor. Your pediatrician or family doctor can provide health information, developmental and medical health screenings and referrals.

OMH CUSTOMER RELATIONS:
800-597-8481

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OMH FIELD OFFICE:

Central New York Field Office	(315) 426-3930
Hudson River Field Office	(845) 454-8229
Long Island Field Office	(631) 761-2886
NYC Field Office	(212) 330-1650
Western New York Field Office	(716) 533-4075



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Promoting Your Child's Social and Emotional Development

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF FIFTEEN TO EIGHTEEN YEAR-OLDS



**BUILDING HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS
FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS**

15 TO 18 YEAR-OLDS	EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	THINKING AND LEARNING
<p>WHAT TO EXPECT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more interest in the opposite sex • Go through less conflict with parents • Show more independence from parents • Have a deeper capacity for caring and sharing and for developing more meaningful relationships • Spend less time with parents and more time with friends • Experience sadness or depression—grades can suffer, potential for alcohol/drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and other problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more defined work habits • Show more concern about future school and work plans • Be better able to give reasons for their own choices, including about what is right or wrong
<p>WHAT YOU CAN DO: POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your teen about concerns and watch for any behavior changes • Ask if she has experienced suicidal thoughts, sadness or depression—seek professional help if necessary • Show interest in your teen’s school and extracurricular interests/activities and encourage him to get involved in sports, music, theater, art • Encourage your teen to volunteer in your community • Compliment your teen and celebrate her efforts and accomplishments • Show your teen affection • Spend time together doing things you both enjoy • Respect your teen’s opinion—listen without down playing concerns • Respect your teen’s need for privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your teen to develop solutions to problems or conflicts and learn to make good decisions—be available for advice and support • Encourage your teen to make good decisions about what she posts on social media and the amount of time she spends on these activities—monitoring your child’s online presence is important for her safety • If your teen works, use the opportunity to talk about expectations, responsibilities, and other ways of behaving respectfully in a public setting • Talk with your teen and help him plan ahead for difficult or uncomfortable situations and discuss what he can do if he is in a group and someone is using drugs or under pressure to have sex, or is offered a ride by someone who has been drinking • Encourage your teen to get enough sleep and exercise, and to eat healthy, balanced meals
<p>HOW TO STAY HEALTHY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your teen about the dangers of driving and how to be safe on the road— www.cdc.gov/parentsarethekey/ has steps that can help—motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teens • Remind your teen to wear a helmet when riding a bike, motorcycle, or all-terrain vehicle or while playing any contact sport • Talk with your teen about suicide and pay attention to warning signs—suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth 15 to 24 years old • Talk with your teen about the dangers of drugs, drinking, smoking, and risky sexual activity—share your thoughts and feelings and listen, answer questions honestly and directly • Discuss with your teen the importance of choosing friends who do not act in dangerous or unhealthy ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know where your teen is and whether an adult is present—make a clear plan that your teen needs to call to check in—make sure you know where he is going to be and when he will be home • Make sure your teen gets 1 hour or more of physical activity each day • Keep television sets and computers out of your teen’s bedroom • Encourage your teen to have meals with the family—eating together will help your teen make better choices about the foods she eats, promote healthy weight, give family members time to talk with each other—she is also more likely to get better grades and less likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs, and also less likely to get into fights, think about suicide, or engage in sexual activity

YOUR CHILD DEPENDS ON YOU

It is important to take care of yourself, too. Talk to your doctor if you:

- Feel tired, depressed, worried or overwhelmed, and these feelings don’t go away
- Don’t enjoy spending time with your child
- Are having a hard time with your own emotions and relationships
- Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience

