SUPPORT YOUR CHILD’S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
As a parent of a young teen, you are beginning to see your child become a young 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 communicate and connect 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

Promoting Your Child’s Social and Emotional Development
A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF TWELVE TO FIFTEEN YEAR-OLDS

BUILDING HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS
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<th>12 TO 15 YEAR-OLDS</th>
<th>EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL</th>
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| WHAT TO EXPECT    | • Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes  
|                   | • Focus on themselves; waiver between self-assured and lack of confidence  
|                   | • Experience more moodiness  
|                   | • Show more interest in and influence by peer group  
|                   | • Express less affection toward parents; sometimes rude or short-tempered  
|                   | • Feel stress from more challenging school work  
|                   | • Develop eating problems  
|                   | • Experience sadness or depression—grades can suffer, potential for alcohol/drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and other problems | • Have more ability for complex thought  
|                   | • Be better able to express feelings through talking  
|                   | • Develop a stronger sense of right and wrong |

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| • Be honest and direct with your teen when talking about sensitive subjects such as drugs, drinking, smoking, and sex | • Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes  
| • Meet and get to know your teen’s friends | • Focus on themselves; waiver between self-assured and lack of confidence  
| • Show an interest in your teen’s school life | • Experience more moodiness  
| • Help your teen make healthy choices while encouraging him to make his own decisions | • Show more interest in and influence by peer group  
| • Respect your teen’s opinions and take into account her thoughts and feelings—it is important that s/he knows you are listening to her | • Express less affection toward parents; sometimes rude or short-tempered  
| • When there is a conflict, be clear about goals and expectations (like getting good grades, keeping things clean, and showing respect), but allow your teen input on how to reach those goals (like when and how to study or clean) | • Feel stress from more challenging school work  
| • 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 | • Develop eating problems  
| • Help your child set his own goals—encourage him to think about skills and abilities he would like to have and about how to develop them | • Experience sadness or depression—grades can suffer, potential for alcohol/drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and other problems  
| • Make clear rules and stick to them—talk with your child about what you expect (behavior) when no adults are present; If you provide reasons for rules, it will help your child to know what to do in most situations | • Have more ability for complex thought  
| • 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 | • Be better able to express feelings through talking  
| • Help your child set his own goals—encourage him to think about skills and abilities he would like to have and about how to develop them | • Develop a stronger sense of right and wrong |

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| • Make sure your teen wears a seatbelt—motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 12 to 14 year-olds | • Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes  
| • Your teen should wear a helmet when riding a bike, a skateboard or using skates, riding on a motorcycle, snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, or playing contact sports—traumatic brain injuries from these types of activities are common and can be prevented | • Focus on themselves; waiver between self-assured and lack of confidence  
| • 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 | • Experience more moodiness  
| • Talk with your teen about the importance of having friends who are interested in positive activities—encourage her to avoid peers who pressure her to make unhealthy choices | • Show more interest in and influence by peer group  
| • 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 | • Express less affection toward parents; sometimes rude or short-tempered  
| • Set clear rules for your teen when she is home alone—having friends at the house, how to handle situations that can be dangerous (emergencies, fire, drugs, sex, etc), completing homework or household tasks | • Feel stress from more challenging school work  
| • Encourage your teen to be physically active—join a team, participate in an individual sport or help with household tasks | • Develop eating problems  
| • Keep television sets and computers out of your teen’s bedroom | • Experience sadness or depression—grades can suffer, potential for alcohol/drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and other problems  
| • Meal time is very important for families—eating together helps teens make better choices about the foods they eat, promotes healthy weight, and gives your family members time to talk with each other | • Have more ability for complex thought  
| • Children today are exposed, through the media and their peers, to many issues dealing with violence, sexuality, and substance abuse—discuss these issues openly with your children to share concerns or correct misconceptions—you may need to set limits to ensure children will be exposed to certain issues only when they are ready | • Be better able to express feelings through talking  
| • Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience | • Develop a stronger sense of right and wrong |

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| It is important to take care of yourself, too. Talk to your doctor if you: | • Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes  
| • Feel tired, depressed, worried or overwhelmed, and these feelings don’t go away | • Focus on themselves; waiver between self-assured and lack of confidence  
| • Don’t enjoy spending time with your child | • Experience more moodiness  
| • Are having a hard time with your own emotions and relationships | • Show more interest in and influence by peer group  
| • Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience | • Express less affection toward parents; sometimes rude or short-tempered  
| | • Feel stress from more challenging school work | • Have more ability for complex thought  
| | | • Develop eating problems  
| | | • Experience sadness or depression—grades can suffer, potential for alcohol/drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and other problems  
| | | • Have more ability for complex thought  
| | | • Be better able to express feelings through talking  
| | | • Develop a stronger sense of right and wrong |