



GCAPP PARENT TOOLKIT:

Emotional Wellness & the Adolescent Years

SET EXPECTATIONS WHILE RESPECTING INDEPENDENCE

Teens need **clear expectations and limits**. Be upfront about your values, like honesty, respect, and self-control, and hold them to those standards. But also allow **space** for your teen to develop their **own identity and opinions**. Finding this balance is key to a healthy relationship.

SHIFT THE FOCUS TO THE POSITIVE

It's easy to get caught up in correcting behavior or pointing out mistakes but too much criticism can hurt your relationship and your teen's self-esteem.

Remember:

- Their brain is still developing until around age 25.
- They're learning how to regulate emotions, solve problems, and make healthy decisions.
- They need you to model how to do those things not just tell them.

Give frequent, specific, and meaningful praise. Acknowledge their efforts, values, and character. This not only boosts their confidence but reinforces the behaviors and values that matter most in your family

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Your teen still needs you even if they don't always act like it. By offering love, guidance and a safe emotional space, you're helping them build the emotional wellness they need for adulthood.

Source: familydoctor.org



GEORGIA CAMPAIGN FOR
ADOLESCENT POWER & POTENTIAL
Education • Prevention • Action
For Adolescent Health

Adolescence is a time of major transition emotionally, physically, and socially. As teens begin to step into adulthood, they often crave independence while still relying on their parents for support. This push-pull can create tension and confusion, both for teens and for parents.

At the same time, teens are juggling a wide range of internal and external pressures, including:

- Fitting in at school and among peers
- Navigating social media and seeking validation online
- Managing friendships and romantic relationships
- Performing well in school and maintaining good grades
- Excelling in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, youth councils)
- Balancing family roles (as an older or younger sibling, for example)
- Working part-time jobs or preparing for the future

It's a lot, and it's no surprise that teens may sometimes feel overwhelmed. That's why **emotional wellness** during this period is so important. And **you**, as their parent or caregiver, play a crucial role in helping them stay grounded, confident, and emotionally secure.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR TEEN'S EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

COMMUNICATE YOUR LOVE CONSISTENTLY

The single most powerful thing you can do is let your child know they are loved. Teens form their self-image largely based on how the adults in their lives treat them. Make sure they know you see them, value them, and believe in them.

BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM

- Praise their efforts be specific! Instead of just "Good job," try: "I'm really proud of how you helped your brother today. That showed kindness and maturity."
- Spend quality time with them doing things they enjoy.
- Celebrate their strengths, no matter how big or small. Support Them Emotionally
- Be someone they can talk to. Stay calm and listen without judgment.
- Help them identify and understand their emotions.
- Validate their experiences. Even if they seem small to you, they're big to your teen.
- Be a consistent, safe, and trustworthy presence.

BE AN "ASKABLE" ADULT

Create a relationship where your teen feels comfortable coming to you with questions, even the hard ones.

- Be patient and open.
- Stay respectful, honest, and calm even when the topic is uncomfortable.
- Help them identify other trusted adults they can talk to as well.

PROVIDE SAFETY & SECURITY

- Offer unconditional love.
- Keep routines and boundaries in place they create a sense of security.
- Make sure home feels like a safe, judgment-free space.

TEACH RESILIENCE

Help your teen manage stress and navigate change.

- Encourage problem-solving and reflection after setbacks.
- Remind them that failure is a part of growth and they can bounce back.