

Connecting with your...

Pre-teen: 10 to 12 years old

At this age, their social world is growing and your relationship with your pre-teen may change. They are becoming more concerned about their status among their peers and want more independence. Their access to, and use of, social media increases at this age. This is also a time when mental health concerns may become evident. The pre-teen stage is a great opportunity to use strategies that will strengthen your relationship. This is key to preventing behaviour problems and supporting their mental health and well-being.

Attachment is the deep and lasting connection that children form with their main caregiver, usually their parent. Healthy attachment occurs gradually over time through day to day interactions between parent and child. Your parent-child relationship will influence their development, learning, feelings and other close relationships throughout their life.



Emotional and Social Changes:

- more attention to friendships and peer relationships
- increased influence of social media
- experience more peer pressure

Thinking and Communication Changes:

- increase in attention span
- able to understand others point of view
- increase in questioning or challenging parent rules and authority

Pre-teens are more aware of their bodies as puberty approaches and they may become self-conscious. It is also common for them to talk back, disagree and challenge you, so having clear rules and expectations will help them get through this stage of life. They also need your help to guide their decision making and help them make positive choices. Pre-teens understand consequences and have the ability to reason and are able to handle more responsibility.

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Positive parenting tips:

These tips can help you support your child's growth and development. Choose ones that will fit with your family's routine and cultural practices.

- Listen and talk about your child's thoughts and feelings. Accept their emotions and help them manage emotions in a positive way.
- Talk with them about the normal physical and emotional changes of puberty.
- Be aware of your pre-teen's friend group, their whereabouts, and activities. Be consistent with rules, expectations, and consequences when rules are broken.
- Engage with your pre-teen by communicating and connecting with them about life, their interests, and aspirations.
- Spend quality one-on-one time with them. Do something special that you both enjoy. For example: having breakfast together, reading together or going for a walk.
- Help them develop a sense of responsibility—involve them in household tasks like cleaning and cooking, and teach them how to manage money (saving their allowance and spending wisely).
- When it comes to school, be intentional about checking in with them, and their teachers, about their strengths and areas for growth. Focus on their progress, effort, critical thinking, independence, and the fun of learning. Doing this can result in better academic performance, higher self-esteem and positive mental health.
- Adapt your parenting practices around reinforcement and discipline. Let them know your expectations about their personal safety and what you expect from their behaviour, even when adults are not present.
- Tell your child you love them and praise them daily.
- Hug and kiss your child – physical comfort is still very important to your child's development.



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

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Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/PositiveParenting

Dial 311 (within regional limits)



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.