

Pre-teen Parent Inventory

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There has been much research conducted on what constitutes effective love and guidance for children. Below is an inventory of attitude and action items that can help you assess and develop your skills.

Please print this inventory before scoring. Give your attitude, words and behaviours a score between 1 and 5.

Score the following from 1 to 5:

1= never 2= seldom 3= sometimes 4= most of the time 5= always

Pre-adolescent Development

1. I realize that my child is going through great physical, intellectual, and psychological changes.
2. I do not take my child's mood swings personally.
3. I assist my child in exploring and understanding those mood changes.
4. I help my child explore changing beliefs and values.
5. I encourage my child to consider the thoughts and opinions of others.
6. I have access to books on puberty that are readily available for my child's reading.
7. I am available for a follow-up talk.
8. I do not make an issue of eating, weight or physical size or shape.
9. I model good eating and exercise habits.

Score:

Communication

1. Daily I communicate love and appreciation.
2. I speak respectfully and clearly using "I" statements.
3. I share my feelings openly.
4. I tell what I will and will not do.
5. My body posture matches my words.
6. My tone of voice is congruent with my words.
7. I avoid name-calling, sarcasm, lecturing, judging, put downs, yelling, advising, moralizing, catastrophizing, blaming and pleading.
8. I make my expectations clear; treatment of siblings, teachers, peers and property
9. I ask for my child's opinion and thinking on matters from "what shall we have to dinner" to the situation in Iraq.
10. I engage in conversations focused on my child's interests and opinions as often as I start conversations focused on my concerns or interest.
11. I share an appropriate amount of private information with my child.
12. I do not pry with multiple questions into my child's life.
13. I listen attentively.
14. I seek to understand my child's point of view and feelings before asking to be

heard.

I use open ended questions to support effective problem solving.

Score:

Self Esteem and Emotions

1. I expect my child to have mood swings in this stage and I do not take them personally.
 2. I accept that my child is going through great physical, intellectual, and psychological changes, all of which affect her emotions.
 3. I openly listen to the expression of all feelings.
 4. I accept that anger outbursts may be part of this challenging time of transition.
 5. I help my child understand the challenge of intense feelings that arise.
- I avoid taking personally my child's criticism of my actions and choices.

Score:

Family Life

1. I listen to my child's feelings of jealousy, frustrations and disappointments about siblings without taking sides.
2. I put limits on sibling aggressiveness.
3. We have regular discussions (family meetings or some other forum) to deal with grievances, solve problems and plan meaningful activities.
4. Chores have an element of choice.
5. I am sensitive to creating meaningful rituals and celebrations for our family life.
6. Rules are clear and evaluated regularly.
7. I actively support my child's interests.
8. I acknowledge that at this age my child requires more alone time and privacy.
9. I accept that my child will increasingly take steps to distance from me.
10. I understand that my child wants to spend increasingly more time with peers.
11. I create connection to my child's friends' parents and check periodically on "gang" activities.
12. I do not take personally my child's embarrassment of me in particular situations.
13. I accept my child's need for personal privacy and need to separate from me.
14. We have family rituals and celebrations that will continue and I am open to new ones as my child matures.

Score:

Discipline

1. My child understands the consequences for most behaviour choices.
2. I keep my end of the consequence agreement and calmly carry through.
3. I encourage and acknowledge honesty and other appropriate behaviour.
4. I make it safe for my child to give me honest information.
5. Expectations of my child are age and ability appropriate.
6. We have clear limits around movies, music, video games and TV watching.

7. We have clear limits around the use of profanity.
8. Because of the culture we live in I do not make a big deal out of the occasional profanity.
9. I speak respectfully, assertively and model expressing my feelings.

Score:

Responsibility and Independence

1. I provide appropriate supervision for my child.
2. I make sure that my child has the skills and accepts appropriate responsibility before giving my permission for child minding,
3. I assure that my child has adequate supervision.
4. Whenever possible I do not leave my child home regularly after school.
5. I minimize the time my child is Home Alone.
6. If my child is *Home Alone* I have put a plan in place that provides safety and connection.
7. My child has some money available to learn the responsibilities around spending.
8. I realize that even at this age my child needs reminders about manners.
9. I compromise around a messy room, arrange for a periodic clean up and know that it is not a big deal in the big picture.
10. I avoid doing for my child what my child can do for him/herself.
11. I do not get into conflict about chores. I work out an agreement.
12. I accept that typically family pets become a parent's responsibility.
13. I have taught my child how to greet guests, shake hands, answer the phone and take messages.
14. I model good manners.
15. I have taught constructive problem solving skills. I ask "What are you going to try first?" to support the idea that my child owns the problem and has several possible solutions available.

Score:

Peers

1. Because we have strong family values and connection, I feel comfortable having my child choose his or her own friends.
2. I can listen patiently to "All the other kids can."
3. I decide what permissions my child can maturely handle.
4. I expect my child to spend more time on the phone at this stage and am willing to make a workable arrangement.
5. I have accepted that my child may dress in ways that challenge my taste.

Score:

Sex, Drugs and other Transitional Issues

1. When appropriate I introduce the subject of sex with my child.
2. I am comfortable and ready to talk about healthy relationships, intercourse, reproduction, ejaculation, masturbation, menstruation, body parts such as penis and vagina, and sexually transmitted diseases.

3. I encourage “dates” in a group.
4. I am ready to talk about drinking, smoking and drugs with accurate information.

Score:

How to use the above scores:

- **Scores 4 and 5:** For each item that scored a 4 or 5 congratulate yourself and keep up your awareness, support and guidance.
- **Score of 3:** For each item that scored a 3 consider how you might increase your knowledge or frequency of parental connection.
- **Scores of 1 and 2:**
 1. Circle each item that scored 1 or 2.
 2. Beside each circled item write what you will do to improve this score. To change your belief and/or habit you might read a parent education book, take a class or reach out to community supports.
 3. Celebrate that you are committed to improving your performance as a teen’s parent.

Note: Consider inviting your pre-teen to also score the above items. Then engage in a discussion about the items you agree, disagree and would like to modify.

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