

TIP CARD FOR DADS OF PRE-TEENS (AGES 10-12)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



HVRF
HEALTHY MARRIAGE & RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD



DID YOU KNOW?

Parenting pre-teens can be a challenge, but they still need you!



The pre-teen years are a time of transition and change, and maturity levels vary greatly.

GIRLS AT THIS AGE GROW AND MATURE FASTER THAN BOYS.

- Puberty, and the physical changes that come with it, can begin anywhere from **8-12** for girls and **9-14** for boys.
- Body image and eating problems sometimes start around this age.
- Kids who lack social and emotional maturity may struggle with loneliness and isolation -- and may become targets for bullies.

PRE-TEENS MAY BEGIN TO:



Question parental authority and become more independent from their family.



Experiment with risky behaviors such as drinking, smoking, or self-harm.

- Maintaining connection with your pre-teen, and providing support and security at home, is particularly important during these years.
- When fathers provide positive support during the pre-teen years, their children are more likely to have **positive self-esteem in their teen years**.
- Children who feel good about themselves are more able to resist negative peer pressure and make better choices for themselves.

REFERENCES

- Aha PARENTING
<https://bit.ly/2HwSqbP>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://bit.ly/2vlfmTe>
- Very Well Family
<https://bit.ly/2w0FHZB>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

TALK ABOUT NORMAL PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHANGES OF PUBERTY.



- They should expect hair growth in the genital area and under the arms.
- They may develop body odor and oily skin as their sweat glands get more active.
- Emphasize exercising to stay healthy and build strong bones, rather than to lose weight or look better.

HELP THEM DEVELOP A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS.



- Involve them in household tasks like cleaning and cooking.
- Talk about saving and spending money wisely.
- Talk about what to do when others are not kind or are disrespectful.
- Help them set their own goals.

STAY CONNECTED AND BE AVAILABLE.



- Spend time with them to maintain a bond and provide support.
- Meet the families of their friends.
- Go to school events, meet their teachers.
- Be affectionate and honest with them.
- Practice talking without lecturing.

THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE WATCHING ON TV AND HOW THEY USE THEIR PHONES OR TABLETS.



- Watch shows with them and talk about what they are seeing.
- Talk about safe use of social media.
- Decide how much screen time is appropriate and establish clear rules for smartphone use.
- Limit your own TV watching and cell phone usage to model safe behavior.

NRFC RESOURCES

- Webinar (2013) Working with Dads: Encouraging and Supporting Father Involvement from Birth through Adolescence <https://bit.ly/2t0Fy8t>

OTHER RESOURCES

- Know Bullying <https://bit.ly/2YupHvI>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Positive Parenting Tips <https://bit.ly/2HI9HG1>
- Safe Kids <https://bit.ly/2LMNJ3i>

