



## PARENT SERIES

### Tips for managing change.

-  **Give advanced warning.** Have a discussion something like, "The place where Mum works thinks she will be a bigger help if we move to another place. We are going to look for a new house in a place called Fremantle. Will you help us pick out the house?"
-  **Keep as much the same as possible.** During a big change, like adding a sibling to the family, moving, or changing routine try to keep as much the same as possible. For example, this is not the best time to also move your child from a crib to big bed.
-  **Answer all their questions.** Depending on your child's age, he may have a lot of questions. Do your best to answer them all, even if some are repeated many times.
-  **Expect that some regression may happen.** At times of change, children may regress to earlier behaviors. For example, a child who was toilet trained may revert back to having accidents. This is normal—strive for patience.
-  **Be accepting of grieving.** Your child may go through a process that looks a lot like grieving as she navigates new waters with a new routine, new house, sibling, teacher or school. Listen, don't be too quick to distract, and at the end, remind her of all the positives.
-  **Extra attention.** During times of change, a little extra attention will go a long way in helping children deal with stress.

How does that help your child deal with change? Extra attention and patience from you helps your child understand that although some aspects of life are changing, your love and care remains constant.

Reference: <https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/helping-children-deal-with-change-and-stress>

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### Tips for living with a teen.

Parents, here are some tips for looking after yourself as you navigate the sometimes treacherous waters of living with teenagers!

-  **Take the pressure off yourself!** Just as there are no perfect teenagers, there are no perfect parents. You will make mistakes and your teens can actually learn from them, if you are able to admit to these errors and move forward.
-  **Remember that conflict is normal and is a part of your family's development.** So try to see conflict as a means of learning and re-negotiating the relationship you have with your teen.
-  **When the conflict escalates, stress levels increase dramatically.** So call for time out to calm down and de-stress. Go for a drive, a walk or take a shower when you feel the situation isn't going anywhere and you're feeling uptight.
-  **Make time on a regular basis for fun and relaxation.** If you don't regularly "re-charge" your batteries", chances are you'll be no good to yourself or to your teenager.
-  **Be aware that on average, teenagers need more sleep.** Due to hormonal changes, teens need between 8-10 hours to sleep to function at their best. Sleep patterns shift towards later times, so it is only natural for them to sleep later at night and wake later in the morning.
-  **Allow your teenager space for themselves.** As teenagers are striving for independence as they are reaching adulthood, they may need more time alone.
-  **Talk to other parents of teenagers when you can.** It is often extremely rewarding and comforting to exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences with people in similar situations. This could be achieved by joining a parent support group or doing a parenting course.
-  **If you have a partner, make time for your relationship.** It's not only your relationship with your teenager that's important. So take time out together.
-  **Engage in your own self-care.** If relaxation and you have a distant association these days, explore what's on offer in your local community in relation to stress management, relaxation, meditation, yoga and exercise activities.

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### Tips for when being a parent of a small child.

- Perfect parents don't exist.** So get rid of this thought. Parenting is a developmental process. Parents grow and develop just like their children do.
- Be aware of what to expect from the different ages and stages.** To help make parenting easier, develop an understanding of what to expect from your child at the different ages and stages. When your expectations are realistic and relevant to your child's stage of development, it is easier to put routines into place and to establish the boundaries necessary for their growth and development.
- Implement routines.** Routines help both parents and children by providing structure. It is through routines that children learn what to expect in their lives and this helps them feel more secure.
- Set boundaries.** Boundaries are essential for children as they grow. They provide security for your child as they know what is expected of them, which includes their behaviour.
- Be consistent.** Children need consistency. Children become very confused and, therefore, unmanageable when their lives (including boundaries) keep changing.
- Play with your child.** You don't have to play with your child all the time, but you can get so much from having fun and playing together. This is a great time to talk together, to get to know each other and to simply enjoy each other's company.
- Listen to your child.** Listening is a very powerful parenting skill. By beginning this pattern in the early years you are setting in place an invaluable skill that is vital to the parent/child relationship. Practice listening to your child, even if he or she is only babbling.
- Build your child's self-esteem.** Healthy self-esteem is fundamentally important. Focus upon building your child's self-esteem by acknowledging their achievements and supporting them through mishaps. Read books and watch videos that help you understand the importance of self-esteem and what you can do to support your child.
- Take care of yourself.** Parenting is about balancing time. You need to make time for yourself, for your partner and for all of your family together. This includes self-care.
- Don't be afraid to seek support.** Effective parenting is a very challenging task, but extremely important all the same. Therefore, it is important to know what support is available and to use it. It is okay to ask for help when the demands become overwhelming. You may be surprised at the amount of useful and practical information available to parents.

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## PARENT SERIES

### Tips for dealing with drugs + teenagers.

- Be open to discussion** with your teen about the issues involved in drug use. Make time to talk with your teen and encourage a positive and supportive atmosphere.
- Be prepared and informed.** Parents often exaggerate the dangers of drugs due to their own fears and concerns. Present your teen with honest and factual information.
- Don't be judgmental when talking about drugs with your teen.** If your teen feels defensive, he or she will not want to discuss these important issues with you in the future.
- Don't panic.** If you discover that your teen is using or experimenting with drugs. The calmer and more prepared you are, the more productive your communication will be with each other.
- Listen to their point-of-view** and let them know your concerns. Don't expect your teen to make decisions on the spot about what position they will take regarding drugs.
- Accept that your teen will make mistakes.** Teens may experiment with drugs and other risk-taking behaviours as a normal part of adolescent development. Mistakes can be an opportunity for learning if they are handled the right way.
- Make a Safety Plan with your teen.** Ask your teen questions about how they can keep themselves safe and make appropriate decisions in relation to drug use.
- Set clear values and boundaries** – Make sure teenager knows what your expectations are. For example, no use of drugs by your teen or their friends in the family home. Create a safe space for your teenager while also maintaining clear boundaries.
- Encourage open and honest communication** – ensuring that even though you may be unhappy with them for using drugs you are always going to be there to support them through it.
- Consult your teen** about drug issues and the boundaries you want in place. You will find they are more likely to stick to any agreement you make and to talk to you when problems arise if they are consulted about the issues that affect them.
- Seek support for yourself** – through counselling. The Community Drug and Alcohol Support throughout Perth offer counselling for parents and significant others as for your teen. The phone number for the Alcohol and Drug Support Service is (08) 9442 5000.

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### Tips when talking with your teenager.

What happened to the kid who always wanted to talk? Are you having trouble talking to your teenager? Here are ten tips that might help!

-  **Show interest.** Ask them to tell you about what they are doing and leave it to them to choose what they will talk to you about. Make eye-contact with them – this nonverbal communication will show them that you are paying attention and listening to them.
-  **Demonstrate respect.** Accept the times they don't feel like talking. Let your teenager know that you still want to have the discussion as it is important to you, but that you can wait until a more appropriate time.
-  **Actively listen.** It is not important to do all the talking. If you take over the conversation you may miss out on hearing about your teenager's world. Validate their feelings to show you understand and empathize; "wow, that sounds difficult".
-  **Avoid lecturing, nagging and ordering.** Your teenager may not feel heard and you could possibly close down the conversation, when you probably want to open it up. After they have spoken, ask if they would like some assistance or your opinion.
-  **Be aware of your judgements and reactions.** If teenagers feel judged or belittled, they will not come to you when they need to talk and you will feel closed off from their world. Stay calm, ask questions and listen without judgement to your young person.
-  **Avoid giving mixed messages.** Be assertive, clear, open and honest with your teenager. Lead by example: if you are talking to your teenage about the importance of doing exercise, why not do some exercise yourself, or better yet, go for a run together!
-  **Choose a place and time.** Providing the right environment, free from distraction can allow greater opportunities for deeper discussions. If you are spending a lot of time in the car driving your teenager around, use this time wisely to hold conversations.
-  **Share your experiences.** In an age appropriate manner by enquiring if they would like your experiences and opinion. They are learning to think for themselves and are able to make some decisions for themselves and may or may not need your opinion.
-  **Include other topics.** Talking about a broad range of topics will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of your teenager's perspective and give them an opportunity to see that you are also human which may make it easier for your teenager to talk to you.

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