

10 Pressures Your Teens and Preteens Are Facing

Dealing with pressures and stress in middle school and high school can be difficult. The pressure to make friends, earn good grades, excel in sports or other activities, deal with hectic schedules, and navigate an occasionally difficult home life can feel overwhelming at times. Help your kids through these preteen and teenage years with patience and guidance.

1. Image. Kids are beginning to worry about their body image at younger and younger ages. Everywhere they turn, they are presented with the “ideal” person. All of the girls are impossibly skinny and the guys look like they have had six packs Photo-shopped on. Your kids need to know that it is very unlikely they will ever look that way. And they shouldn't. Instead, they should strive to eat healthy and exercise.

2. Acceptance. People want to be liked. At the preteen/teenager age, this is even truer. Your teens want to make friends and have people accept them. Help your kids to realize to accept themselves first and be confident in who they are.

3. Opposite Sex. Your kids may feel like everyone their age is having sex. Someone may use that to pressure them and they may give in to get accepted. Present your kids with the statistics; most kids their age are not having sex. Also, warn them of the dangers such as teenage pregnancy and STDs.

4. Drugs and Alcohol. Movies and music glorify drugs and alcohol and hide all of the ugly after effects. Teach your children about drugs and alcohol. No matter how much you try to shelter or protect them, they will end up in a situation where they are present. The best way to fight temptation is to

understand it.

5. Bullies. This age group can be very insensitive and mean towards each other. Bullies will often pick on others to make themselves feel better or to make themselves appear “cooler.” Today bullying doesn’t just occur in the schoolyard, but also on social media sites, text messages, blogs, and instant messaging. There is no escape for victims. Make sure that your kids know that they can come to you if they are being bullied, so you can help.

6. College. More and more people are going to college now and it is becoming tougher to get in. High school students face pressure to keep their grades up every day. They are in a competition with their peers to be the best and the brightest in everything. Grades are not enough though; their resumes have to include extracurricular activities and volunteer work. Between the three, students find themselves with very little down time. Another pressure connected to college is money and the stress of having enough to pay for the education.

7. Driving. Being behind the wheel of a large powerful vehicle can be terrifying in the beginning. Your kids will feel the stress of driving to your standards, not wrecking the car, and learning quick enough to keep up with their peers. Then once they pass the driving test, new stress arrives with figuring out how to get somewhere, avoiding speeding tickets, and not getting in an accident and getting the car taken away. As a parent, you can help make driving less stressful for your kids by not yelling at them while they drive and being patient with them.

8. Athletics. So many youth are engaged in sports now. As kids get older, the pressure to improve and win increases dramatically. Remind your kids of their passion for the sport and help them not to get caught up with winning and to just give it their best.

9. Finances. Financial stress begins for your kids when they are preteens and teenagers. Some of the stressors include: gas money, college, paying for dates, hanging out with friends, name brand clothing, music, athletic gear, school dances, etc. As their parent you can offer them chores around the house to do or help them find a job.

10. Growing Up. During the teenage years, your kids will feel the pressure to grow up. No longer will they be able to act like a child and not worry about responsibilities. Suddenly, they will be juggling responsibilities and being presented with adult temptations. Your job as a parent is to help them make this transition from a child to an adult and teach them to make wise decisions. Prepare them for the world ahead of them and don't let go completely at once. Gradually let the growing up occur.

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