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## **Advice for navigating the teen years**

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Being the parent of a teen-ager can be exhausting. Your once easygoing, affable child has morphed into someone who swings between moody, impulsive, rebellious, uncommunicative and more.

As teens make their way through high school, they look to gain independence all while having a bit of an identity crisis. Let's look at what parents/guardians can do to help their teens and keep their sanity at the same time.

### **Be proactive**

Teens struggle to see the connection between what they're learning in school and "real life." You can help make the connection by stressing the importance of education. Monitor classwork and grades through your school's student management system (for example, PowerSchool) and talk with your teen about what's happening in various classes.

### **Attend after-school events**

Attend your teen's sporting events, concerts and theatrical productions. Although they likely won't say it, they want to see you in the stands and audience. Celebrate them; tell them why you are proud of them.

### **Teach your teen how to ask for academic help**

Work with your son or daughter on how to communicate with their teachers and counselor. Help your student learn to take ownership by talking to the teacher before you step in. Teen-agers are maturing and part of that process is not having their parent intervene in their affairs too much.

### **Don't be afraid to allow them to fail**

As parents/guardians, we must hold our teens accountable and support rather than enable them. Although it can be difficult, it's important that we let them learn from failure. Help them understand the difference between short-term and long-term failure.

### **Spend one-on-one time together**

Do what they want to do; maybe it's binge watching Game of Thrones. Go with it. Carve out one-on-one time with your son or daughter, and be present in that time. In just a few years, you'll be thankful you invested the time.

### **Remember, everything will be OK**

The teen years are guaranteed to be stressful, but there are plenty of good days among the tumultuous ones. Sometimes, let things go. Keep your sense of humor. Your son or daughter will make mistakes, but that's how they learn. And remember that, although it's

not always obvious, your teen has been listening to you and watching you for years. They know the right thing to do. They will make good choices and learn to be responsible

### **Don't go it alone**

The Glenbard Parent Series speaker series is a free monthly program that features nationally recognized parenting experts and local educators discussing a range of topics that all families face as teens make their way through adolescence to adulthood.

Programs offered during the afternoons, evenings and Saturdays focus on everything from helping teens manage stress to what digital citizenship is all about to navigating the college application process and much more. It's also a great place to connect with other parents and guardians who are facing many of the same issues you are. Check out the program lineup at [glenbardgps.org](http://glenbardgps.org) and set alerts on your calendar so you won't miss these powerful programs.

These are exciting, emotional and challenging years. In partnership with your teen's teachers, counselor, coaches and club sponsors, you – and your teen – are going to be OK. Now, getting through your youngest child's commencement ceremony – that's a subject for another day.