

PARENTING THROUGH MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Assessment Tool and Guide — Questions to Ask Yourself

When children become teenagers, parents need to do some things differently! The problem is that it isn't always clear what or how. This guide will help you to slow down and consider all of the issues before you act. You can put it on the refrigerator, or bulletin board, to remind you to stop and think before you react.

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| 1 <i>What's the issue or problem?</i> | An honest answer here will help you clarify what is really happening. Be objective. Consider all points of view. |
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| 2 <i>How do I feel about it?</i> | An careful look at your feelings may actually cause you to reevaluate your answer to number 1, above. Let your feelings guide you; this may help you uncover helpful information. |
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| 3 <i>What part of this belongs to me, and what part is my teenager's issue?</i> | As your teenager grows he or she will take on more responsibility and learn how to solve their own problems. Try and keep your issues separate from theirs. |
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| 4 <i>What is my range of options?</i> | You never have only one option. Although saying "no" means no, it doesn't mean that you cannot compromise in other areas. When you remain calm, you can brainstorm options with your teen. Include your teen in this exploration if it feels right. |
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| 5 <i>How much of this can I control?</i> —Should I? —What's at stake? | Ask yourself, "Is my teen's behavior developmentally appropriate? Does the behavior reflect my teen's temperament? Is safety at stake?" Thinking about these questions and probing further will help you respond with an appropriate level of involvement. |
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| 6 <i>What do I need—</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to teach?• to say?• to learn? | If you are struggling with how to respond or handle a situation with your teenager, these questions can help you identify the best course of action. |
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| 7 <i>What do I need to feel comfortable?</i> | Sometimes, parents are more uncomfortable than their teen with new situations. This question recognizes that you, too, have needs that must be met as you negotiate new territory with your family. |
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As a parent of a teen, you will find yourself in sticky situations where you need to make quick decisions—but the answers may not always be clear. Keep this guide handy and use it as a reference to help you when you need to think it through.

Parenting Through Middle School is a short, easy-to-use tool kit for parents with middle school aged children. We use helpful video clips, audio interviews, focused articles and downloadable tools so you, as parents, can learn what to expect, what you need to know, and how you can best support your changing child.

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