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Queensland Government

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# How to help my teen grow up

It's normal for your teen to want more freedom as they grow up.



It's normal for your teen to want more freedom as they grow up. Hear from Justin Coulson on how to find right balance in giving your teen freedom but also keeping them safe.

[Music]

Narrator: Young people go through a lot of change during the teenage years. And as your child grows up, they may want more freedom. But it's important to find the right balance. So your teenager has some freedom to learn new things while also staying safe and feeling like they belong.

Justin: As a parent, one of the most important things that you can do is keep your relationship strong and positive with your teenager. Your teenager is biologically wired to be connected to you, even as they separate from you during adolescence. They want your approval. They want your... they want your safety and security.

<https://www.sparktheirfuture.qld.edu.au/teen-grow-up>

They want to know that you're there and that they're important to you. This is a very large portion of where their sense of self-esteem, where their resilience, where their self efficacy, where their willingness to do things comes from having your approval. And we don't give them approval by saying you're great. We give them approval by helping them to know that they matter, that they belong. We want to do our best to not be too controlling. So when our teenagers have opinions, when our teenagers say they want to do things, our job now isn't to say "no, you can't do it". Our goal is to start, I guess, moving into more of a coach role than a pure parent, you know, "I'm going to tell you how to do things" role. I want to be really clear about this, though. There are some things that our teenagers shouldn't be doing, and as parents, we still have that parenting role where sometimes we have to say, I'm not comfortable with that and the answer, unfortunately, has to be no. We've got to be careful with the words that we use. We've got to be careful with the way we address them. We want to avoid anything negative and critical. It's not always easy for parents to do this, especially with teenagers who are being trying. But if we can reach out to them and let them know how grateful we are for them and tell them what we do appreciate, they tend to feel better about themselves. When teenagers know that they belong, that they matter to us. They seem to do better in life. It's good for their well-being to know that they're...that they're an important part of our world.

[Music]

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