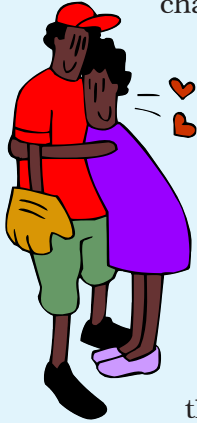


## Adolescent Gripe

*"Why can't you accept me, faults and all?"*

### Reason for the Gripe

Being accepted is paramount to a middle schooler. All adolescents have ups and downs. They think they're ugly. They agonize about failing a test. They worry because they don't measure up to a parent's expectations. This gripe can be translated, "Do you still love me?" Middle schoolers are also coping with increased academic challenges. They have more difficult classes and more homework. This gripe can also be translated, "Do I really have to work so hard?"



### How You Can Cope

**Tell your child every day that you love him.** Give him specific praise. For example, you can say, "I'm so proud of how hard you worked on your science project." Make sure he knows that you don't expect perfection in his looks, his schoolwork or other areas of his life, but that you do expect him to put forth his best effort. If he does have a "fault," see how you can help him overcome it. For example, if he has received a low grade on his report card, help him decide how he can bring it up during the next grading period. Focus on what he can do in the future, not on how he failed.

## Adolescent Gripe

*"Why don't you trust me?"*

### Reason for the Gripe

Middle schoolers think they're mature. And they are—at least they're more mature than they were when they were in elementary school. But they're not ready for unlimited freedom and they know it. When they want to do something without giving the details that they know may curtail their wishes, they try to eliminate further conversation with "Why don't you trust me?" In some cases, parents are so protective that they don't allow their children the gradual freedom that should come during the middle school years. These children also ask, "Why don't you trust me?"

### How You Can Cope

**Trust is essential in your relationship with your middle schooler.** Establish it now, and you have laid a great foundation for the years ahead. But trusting your child doesn't mean relinquishing your responsibility. During her middle school years, gradually relax some of the control you have had over your child. For example, trust your child to complete her assigned chores. If she has to clean her room, set a deadline for getting the job done and then leave her alone. Don't nag. Don't ask, "Have you cleaned your room yet?" Talk over areas where you aren't ready to let go yet. For example, if she wants to hang out at the mall with a friend or ride in a car with a high school driver, explain your concerns and rules.

