

## Understanding Your Adolescent

Awareness of some common adolescent characteristics will help you understand and assist your child. Talking to him about these facts might be met with a dull stare or the ever popular “Nuh-uh.” So you might want to just be aware of these facts instead of feeling compelled to discuss them with your child. Middle schoolers:

- **Have high levels of physical and emotional energy**, which may contrast with long periods of idleness. Let your child sleep an hour or two extra on the weekends, but do wake him after that amount of time.
- **Take risks, are curious and love danger and adventure**, yet their feelings can be hurt easily. This is the time when they feel immortal, but they worry a lot about what their friends think about them. They are physically strong and emotionally weak. Be careful with your words. Even the biggest adolescent is still tender inside; tread softly.
- **Want to be independent** from their families, and at the same time, they need to be pampered and protected.
- **Withdraw and want a private life**, and at the same time, they worry about being accepted by their peers.



- **Demand privileges but avoid responsibilities.** At the same time, they are developing an awareness of social problems and the welfare of others.
- **Need to be taught organizational skills.** Provide your child with manageable tasks that will help him develop organizational skills.
- **Need encouragement to try new things** and to regard failure as a necessary part of learning and growing. Make sure that tasks are challenging, but still realistic.
- **Can easily become depressed** or overly anxious. Be alert to signs of depression or anxiety in your child and seek help if necessary.



- **Need you to be involved** in their education. Research shows that your involvement will help your child perform better in school, earn better grades and score higher on tests.
- **Need opportunities for you to teach them** how to set goals and plan for the long and short term.
- **Need new responsibilities.** Let your child accept a paid job. He could babysit, mow grass or pet sit.
- **Need explicit instruction, coaching and support** with regard to organizing time and resources for homework. Teach him how to study, take notes and take tests.

