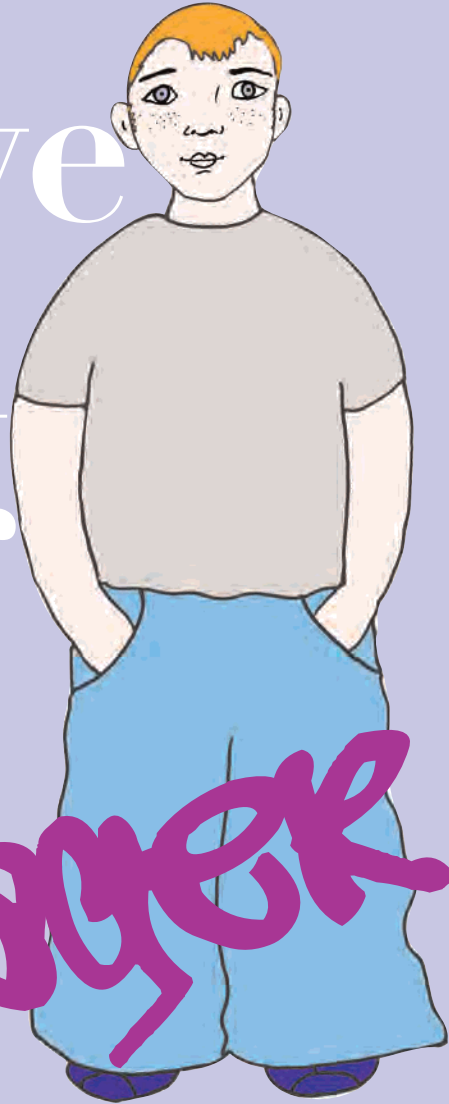
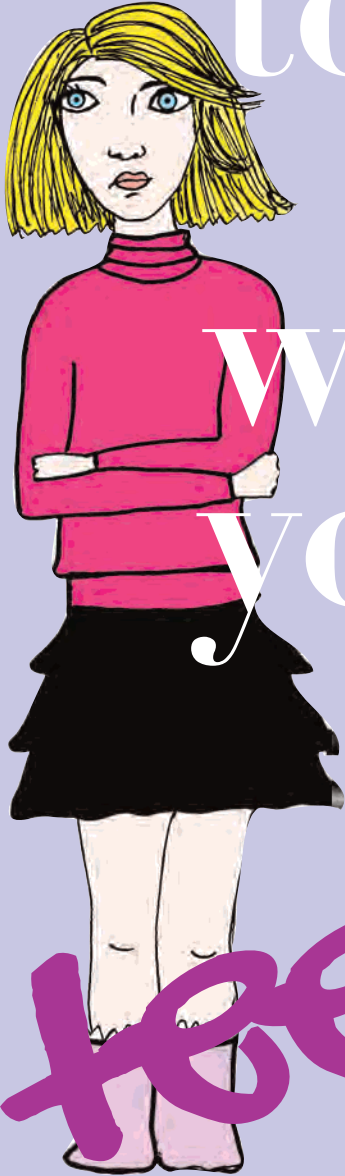


Learning
to live
with
your



TEENAGER

About this guide

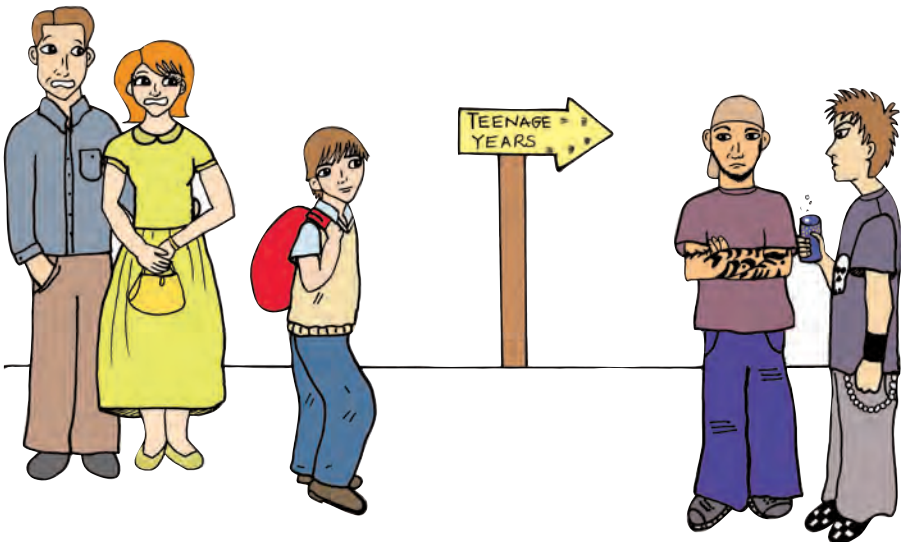
Teenagers can be difficult to live with. Especially these days.

Use this guide to help you turn a potentially traumatic period of your life into one where you create a good relationship with your children - for the rest of your lives.

And you will get things wrong. We all do. We're only human.

If you feel you got off to a bad start, don't worry. You'll find tips and ideas here to help you turn it round.

We also want you to look after yourselves, and avoid the stress that can make things worse.



Always seek professional advice

Although every care has been taken in researching this publication, neither the company, Julian Jordan Ltd, nor the individual authors can accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information; neither can they accept liability in respect of any actions taken as a result of acting upon the information.

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You're a role model

Most of us blame parents for our hang-ups at some time or other. It is not all down to parents, but we ARE a major influence on our children. Let's make it a positive one:

Children? Best thing that's ever happened to me.

I hated my parents when I was a teenager. I don't know how they coped with me. Must have had the patience of saints. But we get on great now.

It's not been easy. But it has been worthwhile.

They learn more from what we do than what we say. Many of us:

- ★ Drink, smoke or take drugs
- ★ Don't respect other's views
- ★ Are sometimes aggressive

If we want them to respect us, we have to respect them and their opinions.

Remember:

You WILL get it wrong. Don't try to pretend you're the perfect parent. They won't be fooled. Be honest about your failings, and they'll respect you for that.

If she thinks I'm going to back down...Oh, why is she so stubborn?

Can't think where she gets it from.



Change and adolescence

Bodies change so much in puberty, no wonder teenagers are moody and sleep so much!

Boys

- ★ Sexual organs start to grow around age 13
- ★ Pubic hair grows, gets thicker through puberty
- ★ facial hair appears
- ★ Voice gets deeper, may break
- ★ Acne because of oilier skin and hair
- ★ Many grow tall rapidly
- ★ Starts to look less like a boy, more like a man
- ★ May have wet dreams and spontaneous erections

Girls

- ★ Some reach puberty by 13
- ★ Start menstruating around age 11
- ★ Periods settle into a regular pattern after about one year
- ★ Often fully mature by 15 with a woman's body

Becoming adult

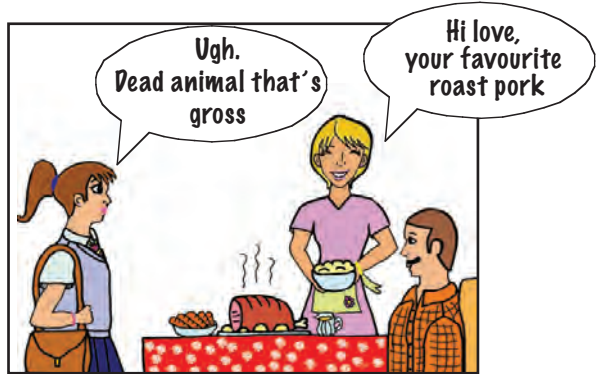
Your job is to help them to independent adulthood. Sometimes you'll see them as adults, sometimes as kids. Your deep-voiced son might need a hug sometimes. Your mature daughter might cry like a baby. It's normal. Remember when you were a teenager? OK, it was a different era, but some things are the same. Teenagers challenge you. It's normal, in trying to become adults in their own right. What can you do? Understand! Put yourself in their shoes. Remember what it was like for you.

Losing your influence

The need to belong to the group is very strong. It can make them do things that shock you. It's normal. They take risks as part of growing up - we all do. One day they'll be on their own, and you can't protect them.

They might find it hard to accept your view of the world. They may do outrageous things to test your reaction, or to show how they're independent of you.

It might be something that's in your face:



Or it might be something you don't find out about:





Letting go

You've protected them for so long, how can you let go?

But you have to, so they become independent.

Bit by bit, let them make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes, so long as they know you're there, like a safety net.



When parents disagree

You may disagree about how far to let them fall but you must compromise for the sake of fairness and consistency. Be especially careful if you're parents who live apart. It's too easy to use them as pawns in parents' battles.

Getting along together

I am the father
Explaining patiently.
You, the temperamental teenager
Deliberately misinterpreting
My moderate request.

You are the cool young man
In step with all humanity
I, your out-of-touch parent,
Failing to 'get real',
Treating you like a child
Deliberately misinterpreting
Your moderate request.

Sometimes,
there's nothing
you can do,
except love them
in spite of it all.

Make it natural

Make talking to your children a natural part of every day. Not huge conversations, lots of little ones, about anything: what's on TV, how her friends are doing, etc. Then, when you want to talk about big issues, it won't seem such a big issue.

Make time for them

Create more time together. Take them shopping, football, whatever. Do something different. Learn something together. Why not get them to teach you? If you change the power relations between you, you'll help them move towards being adult. •

“Yeah, my dad, right, he seems to be listening but he's just waiting to jump in and make his point. That's not proper listening is it?”

Relax

Don't try to control: ask and listen, REALLY listen. It gets you information.

You might not like what you hear. It's up to you how you handle it but, if you're too judgmental, they might not open up to you.

Accept, don't judge

Stop saying they're wrong, unless you want to blow it completely! If they want to stay in their rooms, let them - it's no big deal.

To understand how they see the world, listen to them.

If they see you accepting their views they'll eventually respond.

Lots of people think how embarrassing they were as teenagers.

How brilliant if your children remember how accepting you were of them in their teenage years.

Learn the signals

Read the body language. Hear with your eyes as well as your ears. How often has this happened to you?

Words don't always tell the whole story. Get used to reading all the signals.

Get your respect in first

You can't demand respect, you earn it.

Some parents try to order their kids to respect them. Respect them first and they're more likely to respect you back.



FINE =

Fed-up

Insecure

Neurotic

Emotional,

but fat lot you care!

Laying down the law

But they have to know the rules!

Yes, but do we have to keep searching for what's wrong?

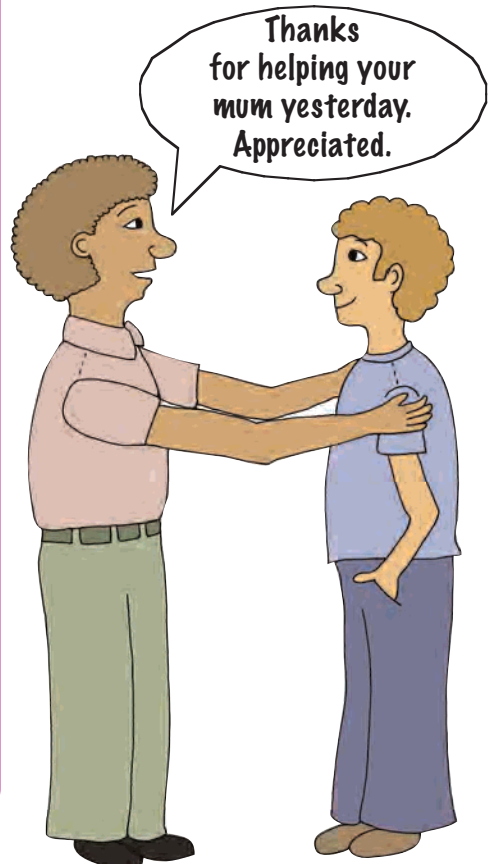
Ignore (understand) the bad stuff; give them praise or thanks when it's due - or even if it's not?

Why are rules always negative? Perhaps rule number one is what you most want for them: to be happy, contented, safe etc.

Catch them doing things right

- ★ Don't take it personally - they're trying to create their own identity
- ★ Keep communicating - she still needs your love and respect
- ★ Get off their backs: trust they'll learn from their mistakes, like we all had to
- ★ In disagreements - go for win-win
- ★ Hitting causes long-term damage; it's illegal. Don't do it. If you do, apologise
- ★ Agree workable rules and sanctions
- ★ It's sanctions, not revenge
- ★ Avoid sanctions you can't enforce

And: don't discipline when you're tired and irritable. You may regret it.



Sex and relationships

Healthy Sex

Most of us want children to grow up to enjoy a healthy sex life, preferably in a loving relationship, don't we? And all parents have had sex – haven't we?



16-24 year-olds have highest rates of Chlamydia

UK has highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe

So you've valuable experience to pass on to your child. Think about it: if you don't tell them about sex and relationships, who will?

If you're open with them about it all, they're more likely to listen.

It's also true that some things are different now. You must know the facts about today's world, so you can discuss things with them properly.

Your teenagers live in this world, not the one you wish they lived in

Sex Facts for Parents

- 1 they mature earlier/more sexually active than your generation
- 2 they've greater risks of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs)
- 3 under-16s have the right to free contraception advice
- 4 they're not all having sex, despite what they say
- 5 most don't have sex before age 16 - those who do usually regret it
- 6 under-16s are less likely to use contraception
- 7 many are drunk when they first have sex – and regret it
- 8 sex education doesn't encourage under-age sex
- 9 many feel pressured into having sex

Pressure to have sex

TV, magazines, friends' conversations, can all seem like encouragement - pressure even - to believe that, if you're not sexually active, there's something wrong with you.

It's a UK thing. Attitudes to sex are healthier elsewhere in Europe.

Such attitudes thrive in ignorance.

Tell them: most young people are NOT having sex, they just say they are.

Listen to
their views
first.

They'll
value your
opinion
more
when
you
haven't
given one

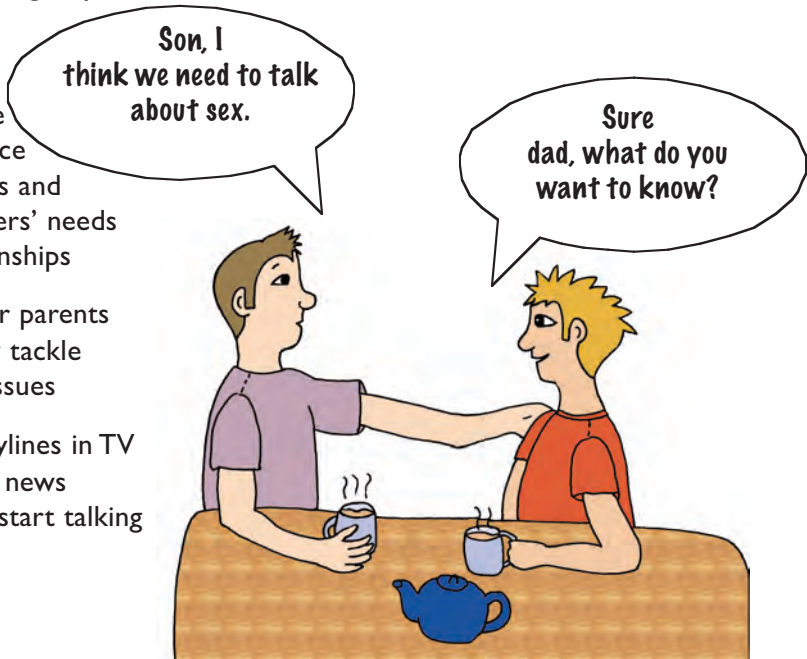
Their greatest danger is ignorance of how to practise safer sex. For their own safety, don't take them out of sex education. Discuss what they've learned. Get their views. Without preaching, you can explain your ideas on love, relationships, marriage.

Talking about SEX

Top Tips

- ★ Listen more than you speak – get their views first, before you give yours
- ★ They often know the basics from school. Ask what they already know, as a way to start the discussion
- ★ Lots of little chats can be better than big, heavy conversations
- ★ Tell them the facts (above), particularly on safer sex, and ask their views about it all before you give your opinions
- ★ Talk about the importance of feelings and each others' needs in relationships
- ★ Ask other parents how they tackle difficult issues
- ★ Use storylines in TV soaps, or news items to start talking about it

“we had lots of little chats about it every now and then, washing the car or watching TV”



Talk to them about contraception.

They may find it difficult hearing it from you, but they need to know, and you need to know they know.

If religious beliefs make it difficult for you to discuss, get help from someone else.

The sooner you start discussing it, the easier it is to introduce your own ideas and values

You may need to accept that they'll experiment with sex. The more they feel they can talk to you - and you'll really listen - the more they'll feel valued, the more you'll know what's happening to them, and the more you can help or advise.

If you can't discuss sex and relationships with them, you'll have less influence.



The faith dilemma

Michael and Theresa care about their religion. They know that contraception and sex before marriage is forbidden by their faith. They worried that telling their children the facts might lead them to think it was OK to ignore that. But they were also concerned about the pressures that all young people are under in this country, and the problems of STIs.

They decided to get the facts, tell their children straight, AND let them know exactly how they felt about contraception and sex before marriage. They felt that their honesty enabled them to have more influence than if they had just ignored the issue.

Am I gay?

Lots of teenagers question their sexuality. Some may experiment with same-sex relationships. It doesn't mean they'll become gay. There's a social stigma to being gay that puts pressure on teenagers.

If you've a problem with the idea of having a gay child, remember: they need you, above all people, to UNDERSTAND.

See Where To Get Help page 57.



Better-informed
teens are less
likely to have
sex, particularly
unsafe sex

Health and well-being

Few teenagers think long term. But things they do now affect the rest of their lives.

The BMA* says that teenagers risk destroying their health in later life because of their lifestyles:

- ★ 1 in 5 13-16 year-olds is obese
- ★ Many 13-year-olds have diabetes caused by poor diet and sedentary lifestyle
- ★ STIs are soaring among teenagers: 60% admit not using condoms; around 10% of 16-19 year-old young women are infected with chlamydia
- ★ Some under-16s average 10 alcohol units per week
- ★ 15% of 15-16-year-olds smoke regularly
- ★ 11% of English 11-15-year-olds used drugs at least once in the past year
- ★ 20% teenagers experience mental health problems

* British Medical Association

Food for growing

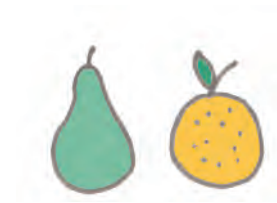
Fast-growing teenagers need extra food for energy, but it should be a balanced diet: less fat and sugars, more fruit and veg.

Big eaters

Some teenagers steadily put on weight. If it's a problem, talk to your GP.

Small eaters

Social and media pressure lead some to worry about their weight. But few get eating disorders. Don't nag so that they worry about their weight. If it's a healthy diet with exercise they should be fine. If you suspect anorexia, talk to your GP. Further information: British Nutrition Foundation, www.nutrition.org.uk



Exercise

It's not 'cool', so teenagers often give up exercise. Many girls never start again. If they're getting less exercise because of exams, explain how it helps with study.

Sleep

They're not being lazy. Children's sleep patterns DO change in adolescence. Be understanding. If they get up for school and do their work, where's the problem?

Bullying

It can make their lives miserable. Victims can end up ill, truanting, clinically depressed or display anti-social behaviour. In extreme cases they self-harm or attempt suicide.

It's often not taken seriously, because it covers a range of behaviours from teasing and name-calling, through threats, to physical abuse.

Research shows that, if it goes unchallenged, it can escalate from the mild to the serious. And it is a problem for parents of bullies, too.

It happens in schools, children's homes, youth clubs, internet chat rooms, via texts and emails. In other words, it can happen in your home without you being aware of it.

Young people say this is their number one concern

If you think your child is being bullied, ask them directly.

Stay calm. Allow them time to talk about it. Even if she won't tell you, reassure her you're always there to help

How do you know your child's being bullied?

Their behaviour often changes. They might:

- ★ Not want to go to school
- ★ Start truanting
- ★ Go missing
- ★ Often feel ill – especially at school time
- ★ Not want to walk to and from school
- ★ Begin to lag in their schoolwork
- ★ 'Lose' possessions at school
- ★ Lose their appetite
- ★ Stop communicating with you
- ★ Become aggressive, withdrawn, anxious
- ★ Have regular nightmares, trouble sleeping or begin bed-wetting
- ★ Ask for, or begin to steal, money
- ★ Bully younger brothers/sisters
- ★ Self-harm or attempt suicide

What can you do?

If he admits he's being bullied, ask what he wants you to do. Make sure they agree with any action you intend to take. It's vital your child feels they've some control over proceedings, as being bullied can leave them feeling powerless.

If there's a problem at school, see a teacher (class teacher or head of year). They have to take bullying seriously, and make clear that it won't be tolerated. They should work with you to solve any problems.

Who else can help?

See 'Bullying' on page 55 of Where To Get Help

Teen-friendly home

A teen friendly home is parent-friendly, too

- ★ Eat together, turn off TV, talk about their day, focus on positives, enjoy their company
- ★ Don't take stress home. Leave your bad moods at the door
- ★ Laugh more. Watch comedy together
- ★ Let go of negative feelings. Arguments benefit from a walk around the block to cool off
- ★ Agree on quiet times. No TV, music, computer. Be prepared to negotiate this
- ★ Look after yourself. Take exercise, yoga, eat well. Anything to relax
- ★ Touch. Hug, kiss goodnight, pat them on the shoulder to say "well-done"
- ★ Pitch in. As a family, help one another. If your child's struggling with a school project, do the display stuff, type it for them, etc
- ★ Celebrate birthdays, good marks, tidy rooms - any excuse. Leave them daft cards, or all go for a pizza
- ★ Welcome friends. Encourage them to invite friends round, eat together or sleep over
- ★ Inspire. Talk about your own plans and goals. Get them used to the idea of having plans and something to look forward to

Drugs, Smoking and Alcohol

1 in 5
young
people
binge
drink

The Drinking Culture

More of them take alcohol than illegal drugs; more are harmed by it than by drugs. Surveys show that most white 14-15 year-olds see getting drunk as a normal way to have fun. It often leads to risky sexual activity and to drug use later.

Drugs in Perspective

Drugs aren't the problem, the harm they can do is. Most of us take drugs, mostly on prescription. In Britain, six times as many depend on alcohol as on class A drugs.

The Drug Culture

60% of teenagers experiment with drugs; most eventually stop. Most don't let drugs ruin their lives, just as most adults drink moderately without it causing problems.

Risk factors

Some youngsters see drug use as 'normal'. If your child mixes in such groups there'll be pressure to experiment. Teenagers want to be accepted by their peers, so often yield to the pressure. Don't panic; most experiment, then stop. But some do become long-term users.

The risks are reduced by:

- A teen-friendly home
- Feeling good about themselves
- An open channel to you
- Regular attendance at school, college or work
- Positive role model (if you drink or take drugs...)
- Your time
- Regular interests or hobbies

Just say no?

No, it's not that easy, or more of us would just say 'no' to alcohol. The British culture encourages both alcohol and illegal drugs use. So, let's not be hypocrites. Let's work with the facts, not what we wish they were.

Drug facts - Good news

- ★ Most aren't long term users
- ★ Most use less-harmful drugs
- ★ You CAN make a difference

Drug Facts - Bad news

- ★ Many teenagers secretly take drugs
- ★ One in 12 of 12-year-olds try drugs at least once. One in three try at 14, and two in five at 16.
- ★ Smoking and drinking start around age 13
- ★ Drug use is risky, especially for the vulnerable minority
- ★ Many are brought up in families with open use of drugs and alcohol

Learning from Experience

We've all got to learn to manage risks to survive in the world. It's part of growing up. If you can help them get through adolescence safely, they'll learn how to manage other risks throughout their lives.

To find out more about all this from:

drugconcern.com, the website for parents worried about drugs and young people.

See Where To Get Help for more information sources.

What can you do?

Your best weapon against drugs is a good relationship with your teenager. Assuming they're drug-users is NOT a good idea. You can be vigilant without being heavy.

Create a teen-friendly home (p22), where they feel they can talk and you'll listen, somewhere you'll enjoy going home to.

Be honest if you don't know. Ask them about drugs, to develop a more open relationship.

Be honest
if you
don't
know

Be informed.
Do your
homework

If your teen believes you have faith in them, they're more likely to share details of their social lives.

You'll have a better idea of what they get up to, and they'll be more likely to see your viewpoint, and appreciate your interest in their well-being.

When you need to talk

- ★ Listen calmly, without assuming, judging or anger
- ★ Get someone neutral to talk to them – a relative?
- ★ Don't panic: trying cannabis doesn't make her a junkie!
- ★ Learn the facts before you talk (see Where to Get Help)
- ★ Show you care
- ★ Don't use the question 'why?' – it sounds judgmental
- ★ Don't blame – focus on where you go from here
- ★ Make clear what's acceptable and unacceptable to you
- ★ Make clear they're responsible for their actions and the results
- ★ Threatening punishment can ruin the rapport
- ★ If you need help, get it! (see Where to Get Help)

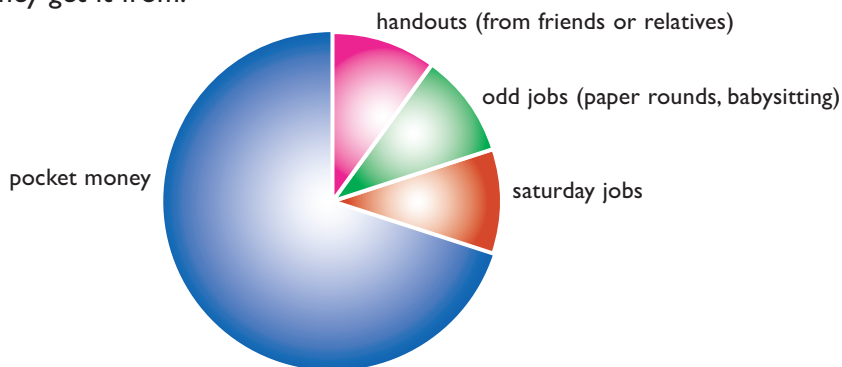


Money and Work

Teenagers and money

Advertisers target kids because they spend over £60m per year;

They get it from:



What on?

Two thirds goes on sweets and chocolate.

Girls also buy: clothes, shoes, magazines and toiletries. Boys buy food and drink, computer games, DVDs and CDs.

Teenagers spend more on mobile phone cards than on sweets.

Pocket Money

A survey* of youngsters shows monthly averages of:

£45 at 13

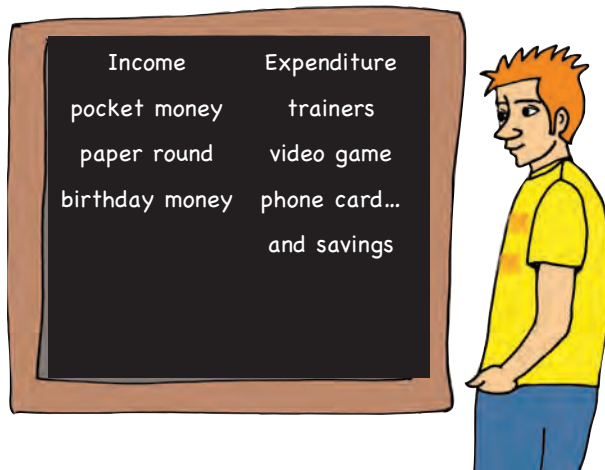
£60 at 16

£120 at 18

Two-thirds of young people had paid jobs, including two-thirds of under-16s

*source MTV One, 2007

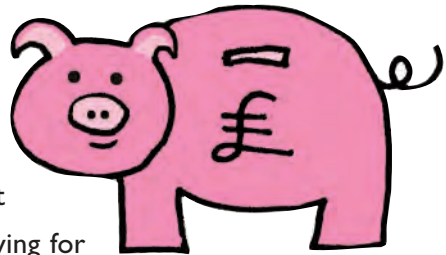
Teach them simple money management:



Do you set a good example in managing money?

Encourage them to start managing their own money. Get them to open a bank account.

Give them a fair allowance for something to manage themselves: for clothes perhaps, or whatever you can afford. That way, they'll understand that money's limited, and they may start saving for something special, like DVDs or trainers.



Remember, you'll need to live with the consequences. Try not to criticise what they buy or wear; they need to make their own mistakes.

Should they work?

Here are arguments for and against teenagers working. Tick those you agree with then look at our comments.

- A job teaches the value of work
- Jobs distract them from studies
- No child should be allowed to work
- They need work experience before going into the real world
- Saturday jobs help parents financially
- Having their own money helps them become independent
- Volunteering shows commitment to help others

What do you think? They all have some truth, don't they?

There's a balance between helping them be independent and understanding the value of money on the one hand, and having the energy and time to study on the other. Apart from having their own money to spend (or save), it's a good introduction to paid employment. If the work's boring or hard, it can stimulate teenagers to do well in their exams for fear of ending up in a dead-end job. It gives them a chance to meet and mix with new people, often of various ages, views and backgrounds. Work and volunteering give them chance to meet and mix with new people of various ages, views and backgrounds.

“It was hard work, but you were, like, one of the men. You earned your money like everybody else. It made me determined not to do that sort of work for the rest of my life! I worked harder at school.”

The Law on Children's Employment

Children can't work until they're 13. Under 15, they can work up to 5 hours on Saturdays (and weekdays in the summer holidays), up to a maximum 25 hours a week in school holidays. On ordinary schooldays and Sundays they can work only 2 hours.

Over 15's can work up to 8 hours daily on Saturdays and school holiday weekdays. They can work up to 35 hours a week in the holidays.

They must have a local-authority-issued employment card and be covered by employers' insurance.

There are some places where they can't work, like betting shops, pubs and building sites. Your local authority has a list of places where it's illegal for them to work.



A minimum wage of £3.40 per hour applies to under 18s if they're no longer of compulsory school age (after last Friday of June of the school year in which they become 16).

Divorce and separation



Daft as it sounds, kids often blame themselves for their parents splitting up, or think they're responsible somehow.

Of course, they don't usually tell you that's what they think. But they can have these guilt feelings for years.

It helps if you tell them clearly they're not the reason for the break-up.

Teenagers are separating emotionally from their parents anyway. It's their job as teenagers, part of becoming adults. They need family stability at this time, often more than you realise. They can be angry that parents seem to put their own needs before those of their kids.

Both parents must reassure their children that they're loved

Being angry and moody is how they cope with it. If you get angry or moody back, it can reinforce their opinion that you don't care about them.

They will know children whose parents are separated. Some may have moved house and lost friends – and friends are important to most teenagers. They might be afraid of what could happen to them.

Some end up being piggy-in-the-middle of their parents' battles.
DON'T DO IT!

Don't criticise the other parent. It's still their mum/dad. They need to keep loving both of you. Never ask your kids to take sides, even by casual remarks:

That's typical of your mum.

Well, she's bound to feel a bit angry with me.

Some parents are scared to discuss the subject with their children.

You need to:

- ★ Tell them you love them
- ★ Tell them what's going to happen – the facts.
- ★ Not react - let some things go
- ★ Hug and hug again
- ★ Make time for them, but accept if they don't want to see you. They mostly do later.
- ★ Tell them you love them (again)

Tell them
you love
them

Do
anything
to remind
them they
are loved

The best thing is to be available for your children when they want to see you. Never criticise your ex or the new partner in front of their children. It just rubs the children's noses in problems they're already aware of.

The wicked stepmother/father

Knowing our children are with a step-parent can be difficult – for us and our children. We might be jealous, or dislike the new partner. We have to back away and put up with it – if we can't change it.

Are you a live-in step-parent?

Remember: you can rarely replace their parent, so you shouldn't start telling them how to behave. It's not your place and will only remind them that you are an interloper.

You have to accept them for who and what they are, even if you don't like it

All these teenagers have suffered a loss. They need time to mourn, to grieve. Everyone does. And that needs sympathy, patience and understanding from the adults.

Visit www.itsnotmyfault.org.uk, or www.parentlineplus.org.uk for information on divorce, separation and contact with children.

Loss and bereavement

Relationships are important to teenagers, so losing someone close can be a huge shock. It's the same thing with other losses. For teens this might be:

- ★ Loss of friends when moving away
- ★ Loss of their childhood
- ★ Break-up with boy/girlfriend
- ★ Poor school results

In grieving, we often experience initial shock, denial, anger and depression, before acceptance: “coming-to-terms with” it. Teens are questioning the world anyway, so they might display aggression, withdrawal or even depression. They need sensitive parents right now.

Don't say: I know how you must feel – even if you think you do! Just let them know, gently, that you are aware of their sadness.

Do:

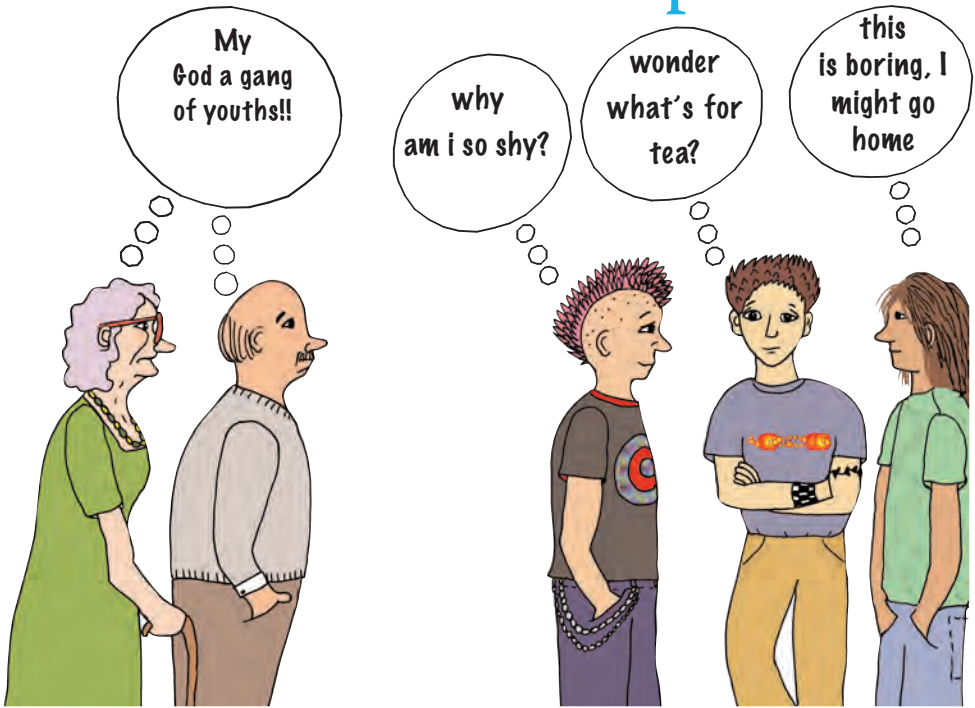
- ★ Acknowledge their feelings
- ★ Make time for them to talk
- ★ Listen, and accept what they say – it's their reality
- ★ Remind them that they are valued
- ★ Listen (again)

Looking after yourself

You need to be at your best so you can care for them. Get help if you need it, from:

Bolton Child Protection
Unit, 01204 227468

Behaviour - is it a problem?



Teenage behavioural and emotional problems are worse now than 25 years ago. Fact

Just because they hang round in groups doesn't mean they are a problem. Young people have always done that. Most of you did the same.

Experts think it's because the transition from adolescence now takes longer, so they're in a kind of limbo: they often don't leave home until their 20s, stay longer in education, can't earn their own living, yet are bombarded with images of what they should buy and how adult they should be.

It's a lot of pressure on them: "We demand that teenagers become responsible without giving them the means to become so," says one researcher.

We expect good exam results from them, then pass anti-social behaviour laws suggesting they're a nuisance. They don't know if they're adults or children – and neither do parents.

The result, according to charity NCH, is:

"We don't give teenagers the emotional support they need, a hug and love."

They need you to be consistent with them

Tips for Coping

To reduce the possibility of behaviour problems, you need to BELIEVE that:

- ★ They are not their behaviour - don't be fooled. Your child is still in there
- ★ You'll get through it – most kids grow up perfectly normally
- ★ It's harder to be a teenager now than it was for you – more temptations, more pressures, etc
- ★ They DO want to talk to you – but on their terms. Respect that. It's better than not talking.

Their behaviour often hides their emotional fragility

They love you

Have a look at the websites in Where to Get Help.

- ★ They need your love and affection more than ever – but you must be subtle about showing it.
- ★ It's just a phase – most come back and have great relationships with parents for the rest of your lives
- ★ They will respect you if you respect them – especially if you are honest and consistent
- ★ It's OK to look after yourself – take time out, find someone to talk to, get support if you need it. (The test: if you think you might need it, you do!)

Trouble with the Law

Lots of young people get into trouble with the law. Around one third of men in their mid-thirties have a criminal record. 50% - 95% of young people admit breaking the law, mostly in mid-to-late teens.

Research shows that the lives of young offenders, their families and their own children will be better if they're prevented from offending in the first place, or from re-offending if they've started.

Your teenager will probably break the law. But so do most drivers, at some point

That's not to say you shouldn't be concerned. Criminal records can harm people's lives. Young people often don't realize the long-term consequences of their "pranks". The law now takes many things more seriously than it once did.

Later in life, persistent offenders have more problems of unemployment, substance misuse and mental health. Their anti-social behaviour stops them benefiting from education or health provision. They're more likely to be victims of crime than non-offending peers.

BUT: only a small percentage of young people become persistent offenders. What makes them do it?

Their need to start growing away from you, and from themselves as a child, confuses them. Family conflicts, having only one parent at home, poor relationships with parents - all tend to make things worse. The better your relationship with your child before they become a teen, the less their chances of getting into trouble.

What can you do?

- ★ Don't tell them to stop, find them something better to do. Take their minds onto something else. Distraction works just as well with teenagers as with young children. Motivation is the key.
- ★ Do more with them yourself, if you can. Encourage them to do things with you that they enjoy doing, and do them more often.
- ★ Take interest in their schooling, by focusing on their good subjects and not worrying about the bad, unless they ask for help.
- ★ Learn about out-of-school programmes and leisure opportunities for them.

In bad company?

Yes, it does make a difference who they are with. We all know that some people are easily led astray. And you can't always do anything about it.

Research shows that finding ways to get them away from bad company can make a big difference. But ordering them to stay away can backfire on you and make them more determined.

Perhaps you have to trust that your child has enough nous?

Instead, as you did when they were small, find something else to concentrate on: take them out, to football or buy them a keyboard, a bike or anything that might take their attention away from their friends – move house if it helps and you are that concerned! Anything that disturbs a bad pattern can help, so long as you are not seen to be simply being negative. Remember, most young people are resilient and adaptive and usually grow out of any anti-social behaviour.

so, you've no idea where she goes?



- Get to know their friends
- Make them welcome at your house
- Who does she hang round with? What's her friend's name?
- Where does she live?

Getting help if you can't cope

Talk to friends with similar age children, if you can. Look at Parentline (www.parentline.com) for ideas. Contact Children's Services (see Where to Get Help) and talk to someone. There are various initiatives to help if you're struggling, including parenting classes. Here's how other parents found the classes:

“When they said ignore the minor problems completely I found it hard. But it works.”

“I've tried the ideas and he seems a different child. Amazing, yeah!”

“I thought I was on my own!”

“I would've had a breakdown without them.”

“I don't know what I'd have done without this group.”

Remember:

- ★ Catch them doing something right.
- ★ Praise them. Ignore the negative, build on the positive
- ★ Provide them with interesting things to do
- ★ Set a good example. SHOW how you want them to behave; not tell.
- ★ Speak to them like an adult; they'll be more cooperative.
- ★ Ignore minor misbehaviour. Don't waste your energy.
- ★ Be prepared. Know their rights and the law – in case they get into trouble
- ★ Take care of yourself. You'll feel calmer and respond better

Manage
your own
feelings.
Remain
calm

Negotiate
ground
rules.
Then stick
to them

Spend quality
time together,
so they know
they're loved

The Law and Your Teen

If your teenager is arrested, do you know what to do? What rights have they got?

How should you react?

Does your teen know? Do you know if they know?

Get the Children's Legal Centre fact card: You and the Police, The Basic Facts, from www2.essex.ac.uk/clc (50p, free to children and young people).

Stop and search

The police can stop anyone at any time and speak to them.

They can only stop and search people if they've good reason to suspect they're carrying: drugs, weapons, stolen property, tools to be used to commit a crime, or if the person matches a description the police have.

10 - 17 year-olds can be stopped and searched in the streets without an adult being present.

The government has introduced measures to try to divert young people from crime: holiday play schemes, mentors, personal advisers and education schemes.

They're not allowed to stop and search because of someone's age, race, colour or looks

Anti-social Behaviour

More youngsters get caught up in the legal system because of new laws about how they should behave.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)

Police or councils impose them against anyone age 10+ whose behaviour is seen as antisocial: damaging property, graffiti, harassing, alarming or distressing people. ASBOs restrict where a young person can go, and what they can do. It's a criminal offence to break the order.



Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)

Before going as far as issuing ASBOs, ABCs can be used for similar behaviour.

ABCs are voluntary agreements between youngsters involved in anti-social behaviour, and people responsible for tackling it: council staff, police, youth offending teams, landlords, prosecutors, the courts, and other agencies.

They encourage young adults, children and their parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour, and usually warn that continuing bad behaviour may lead to an ASBO.

The exact terms of each ABC are tailored to the circumstances of the individual case.

Final warning system

This replaced cautioning. A first offence means a reprimand or a final warning, depending on how serious it is. The next offence brings a warning or a charge. Young people on final warnings are referred to the local Youth Offending Team.

Persistent young offenders can also be subject to supervision, surveillance and tracking, including electronic tagging.

Restorative justice is meant to help young offenders understand the effects of their crime. They have to meet the victim and agree to make reparations. www.rizer.co.uk has information on the criminal justice system relating to young people.

Over 14s can be sent to prison. Increasing numbers of young people are being locked up

Young people in custody

12-14 year-old persistent offenders can be sent to secure training centres.

Although parents tend to get the blame from the media, in law they are not held directly responsible for their children's criminal acts.

Parents of offenders, or whose children are considered at risk of offending, can be given parenting orders. They must attend 12 sessions where they learn to improve their skills as a parent.

Gone missing

Around 77,000 under 16s run away from home every year. They do it for all sorts of reasons: family arguments, things they daren't talk to you about like being bullied, relationship problems, drugs, etc. Perhaps you argue, she threatens to run away; or you've had enough and tell her to go. BUT in most cases when the child has run away, both parent and teenager wish they had not gone. BUT most of them don't go far, and come back after a few days.

How to stop it - surrender and win

Which is more important to you, winning the immediate battle (not backing down) or the long-term war (keeping her at home)?

Admit you were wrong (even sometimes when you weren't) to allow your teen to step away from confrontation, too. In their "victory" they may allow you to learn more about their thinking. Listen, from their point of view. Be on their side.

How can it happen?

In disputes, people tend to take up POSITIONS or a stance. It becomes important to win, or not back down. "Not losing face" becomes more important than the original argument. It's daft, but it's human nature.



She's run away! What shall I do?

Look in the obvious places first— all of them. Don't just phone: GO!

Take Action. Report it to the police.

You don't have to wait 24 hours.

Often, they want to be found. Going to their friends might prove to them that you care. Their friends can see how genuinely worried you are, and you get a better sense of whether they know where she is.

Ask their friends to let your child and all her friends know that you love her and want her safely back home. Be calm. Show that you are not angry.

Check her phone bills to see who she might have contacted or gone to.

Try social services and local hostels. Many travel to other parts of the country, so think about where they might go.

Leave your phone number with anyone who might get a message from her. You can put it on a card, or even leave a written message for your child with her friends. Put the following on the card, too:

Runaway Helpline

0808 800 70 70 (24-hr Freefone)

www.runawayhelpline.org

They can help teenagers get to a place of safety, and will pass a message to family or carers.



Returning home

If she decides to return, don't expect the problems to disappear. Think of how to change the old patterns you got into. How do arguments usually start? When? Find some way to break the cycle.

Encourage them to talk about their problems; and LISTEN. But don't expect them to tell you everything – or even anything.

Just shut up,
give them
space and let
them know
you care

Sometimes they appreciate you not pushing them to tell you where they've been or what they've experienced. It might be too painful.



Local mediation services can help you to talk to each other in useful ways. Your child may get in touch but be unsure about returning home. You may have your own concerns, too.

Perhaps a close friend or relative will allow your child to stay. You will know they are safe and you can meet up on neutral ground – somewhere comfortable for you both.

Remember:

- ★ You both need space
- ★ Compromise; surrender and win
- ★ Be patient

Get help to talk it through, if you need it:

www.als.org.uk

www.shelter.org.uk

www.getconnected.org

0808 808 4994 freephone.

Confidential help for young people.



Be Informed

They won't always make contact from home. Where else do they go? Friends? Cyber cafés? Separated parent's house? And many mobile phones can connect to the internet. If you are worried, check phone bills and look at the history on the internet page. But, be subtle. You don't want to seem to be accusing them if they are innocent.

Getting help

Young people can go to the NSPCC site, www.there4me.com, and talk to an NSPCC adviser online,

or Childline on 0800 1111 (it won't be listed on your phone bill).

Adults can speak to the Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90 or email Jo@samaritans.org

There's more info on:
www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Are you an abuser?

If you have abused a child, or think you might; or you have a child with worrying sexual behaviour, contact Stop It Now on confidential freephone 0808 1000 900 or www.stopitnow.org.uk.

Other sources of information and help:

www.chatdanger.com

www.childnet-int.org

www.ncmec.org is a US site with more ideas and information

Where to get help

General

School Nurses can help and support you and have useful contacts.

Bolton Child Protection Unit

Endeavour House
Waters Meeting Road
Bolton

BLI 8SW
01204 337 468

Bolton Children's Services

North East District

Endeavour House
Waters Meeting Road
Bolton, BLI 8SW

01204 337 400

South East District

Farnworth Town Hall
Market Street
Farnworth

Bolton, BL4 7PD
01204 337 729

West District

Le Mans Crescent
Queens Street
Bolton, BLI 1SA

01204 337 960

Emergency Duty Team

Out of Hours Service

01204 337 777

Education Social Work Team

01204 338 173

Halliwell Children's Centre,

Aylesford Walk Bolton, BLI 3SQ

01204 463 500

Smoking cessation

The NHS Stop Smoking Helpline

www.givingupsmoking.co.uk

The Quitline

www.quit.org.uk

Bolton Stop Smoking Service team

01204 462 345

stopsmoking@bolton.nhs.uk

Bullying

Bully Free Zone

01204 454 958

www.bullyfreezone.co.uk

Kidscape

Bullying helpline for parents

020 7730 3300

Internet Safety

Think u know

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Support For Parents

Parentline Plus

0800 800 2222

Textphone: 0800 783 6783

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Where to get help

Drugs and alcohol

Frank

Drugs helpline

0800 77 66 00

frank@talktofrank.com

www.talktofrank.com

Project 360

Drugs treatment, information,
advice and support for under 19's

01204 337 330

www.drugconcern.com

PADA - Parents Against Drug Abuse

Telephone support by, and for,
parents 08457 023 867

www.pada.org.uk

Harbour Project

Telephone and group support for
parents of drug users

01204 622 74

Police

0161 856 7948

Bolton Community Alcohol Team (CAT)

Giles House

43 Chorley New Road

Bolton BL1 4QR

01204 380948

www.boltondrugsinfo.co.uk

Alcohol Concern

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

The Parallel

For young people and worried
parents. Confidential advice on
alcohol, drugs, sexual or any health
matter.

9A Churchgate

Bolton

BL1 1HU

01204 462 444

www.theparallel.net

Work

Working Families

(formerly Parents At Work)

1-3 Berry Street

London EC1V 0AA

020 7253 7243

0800 013 0313

office@workingfamilies.org.uk

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Bolton Volunteer Centre

The Bolton Hub, Bold Street,

Bolton, BL1 1LS

01204 546010

mail@boltoncvcs.org.uk

Where to get help

Health, Sex and Sexuality

The Parallel

A young person's health centre, they are happy for parents to contact them with concerns on any topic:

01204 462 444

www.theparallel.net

Sex Education Forum at

National Children's Bureau

www.ncb.org.uk/sef

www.schools-out.org.uk

Supports lesbian and gay young people

Other useful sites:

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

For info on bringing children up:

www.raisingkids.co.uk

Marriage & Divorce

NCH (It's Not Your Fault website)

www.itsnotyourfault.org

Relate

Herbert Gray College

Little Church Street

Rugby

Warwickshire CV21 3AP

Phone: 01788 573 241

Phone (2): 0845 456 1310

Email: enquiries@relate.org.uk

www.relate.org.uk

National Family Mediation

Margaret Jackson Centre

4 Barnfield Hill

Exeter

EX1 1SR

01392 271 610

general@nfm.org.uk

www.nfm.org.uk

Child Support Agency – National Helpline

Quay House

The Waterfront

Brierley Hill

West Midlands DY5 1XZ

Phone: 08457 133 133

www.csa.gov.uk

Education

Advisory Centre for Education

Free education advice for parents

1C Aberdeen Studios

22 Highbury Grove

London N5 2DQ

0808 800 5793

www.ace-ed.org.uk

Education Otherwise

PO Box 7420

London N9 9SG

0870 730 0074

enquiries@education-otherwise.org

www.education-otherwise.org

The Department for Education and Skills (Dfes)

Curriculum, tests, choosing a school, educating children at home.

www.parentcentre.gov.uk

School Attendance

“Is Your Child Missing Out?”

(publication for parents)

0845 602 2260

dfes@prolog.uk.com

Where to get help

Police/Legal matters

Legal Advice

Citizens' Advice Bureau

26-28 Mawdsley Street

Bolton, BL1 1LF

0870 126 4038

www.boltoncab.co.uk

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Community Legal Service (CLS)

CLS Directory Line: 0845 608 1122

www.clsdirect.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre

You and the police: Basic facts

A pocket-sized fact card on young people's rights and police powers,

£2 (inc. post and packing) from

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Legal helplines:

Young People Freephone:

0800 783 2187

Child Law Advice Line:

0845 120 2948

Resolution

Online advice centre on family law

01689 820 272

info@resolution.org.uk

www.resolution.org.uk

Advice Now

Online advice service on all aspects of the law.

www.advicenow.org.uk

Government advice on Criminal

Justice System

www.rizer.co.uk

Victims of crime

Victim Support

01204 399736

For Victims of Crime

Keith Salt House

31 Chorley Old Road

Bolton

BL1 3AD

Fortalice

For Women Experiencing

Domestic Violence

01204 523476

Women's Aid

24-hour Free phone domestic violence helpline

0808 2000 247

Health & Safety

Patients Association

PO Box 935

Harrow

HA1 3YJ

0845 608 4455

www.patients-association.com

Child Accident Prevention Trust

4th Floor

18-20 Farringdon Lane

London EC1R 3HA

020 7608 3828

Email: safe@capt.org.uk

www.capt.org.uk

Where to get help

Missing from home

RU'rNA (Remember UR Not Alone)

Urban outreach

Environ House

Salop St.

Bolton

BL2 1DZ

01204 385848

Runaway helpline

For under age 18s who are away from home or care.

0808 800 7070

help@runawayhelpline.org.uk

Message Home

For missing adults to pass a message home

0800 700 740

help@messagehome.org.uk

www.astraproject.org.uk

Help and advice for runaways

www.ncmec.org

U.S. site with more ideas and information

Child Abduction

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Child Abduction Section

0207 008 0878

Mon-Friday 9am-5pm

For emergency out-of-hours:

0207 008 3350

Reunite International Child Abduction Centre

Advice, information and support to parents, family members and guardians who have had a child abducted or who fear child

abduction.

0116 2556 234

reunite@dircon.co.uk

www.reunite.org

Other Resources

Home Office Crime Statistics

www.crimereduction.gov.uk/sta_index.htm

Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds

National Family and Parenting Institute

www.familyandparenting.org

National Youth Agency

www.nya.org.uk

Parenting Education and Support Forum

www.parentinguk.org

Includes an information service for members

Sure Start

www.surestart.gov.uk

Trust for the Study of Adolescence

www.tsa.uk.com

Teenagers in Trouble: skills for parents. Video and Support Pack, TSA, 2000

Youth Justice Board website and annual reports

www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

Published by Julian Jordon Ltd
11 Palace Court, Bolton BL1 2DR
t: 01204 398 148
e: info@julianjordon.co.uk
www.julianjordon.co.uk
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Julian Jordon 2004, 2007

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With thanks to the many colleagues who gave of their time to comment and advise on the manuscript.

Large print, interpretations, text only and audio formats of this publication can be produced on request.

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