

Understanding Your Child

Finding Other Adults To Support Your Teenager And You

by Dr. Peter Benson

(NAPSA)—Middle and high school years present many challenges, changes and decisions for young people. It's also a time when children question whether or not they can talk to their parents about personal issues to get the advice and support they need. When teens think their parents don't understand them, they start to pull away, slowly creating a gap in teen/parent communication.

MVParents.com recently conducted a survey that found 52 percent of parents with children ages 11-20 know less about their teen's life as he/she gets older. That's normal as teenagers move toward adulthood, but parents still matter, and kids benefit from having strong relationships with their parents. However, children also should have relationships with other caring and responsible adults.

A Sign Of Strength

Inviting other adults to get to know your kids isn't a sign of weakness, but strength. Here are a few tips to help parents identify positive adult influences to support and guide themselves and their kids:

- Check in—Talk with your children about the adult family members who are already important to them, as well as adults in the community and other places they spend time.

- Talk with caring adults—Encourage adults you know and trust to spend more time with your children. Offer specific invitations for connections based on mutual interests.

- Encourage connections—Encourage your children to seek



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insights and encouragement from other caring adults when they're facing important questions or decisions.

- Connect in new places—If your children don't have a strong network of caring adults, consider helping them find activities and places where they can build new relationships.

- Thank those who take time—Notice and thank those adults who make special efforts to be there for your children.

Where To Get Help

Adults looking for tips to help raise responsible children may want to visit MVParents.com. This site was created by Search Institute and is sponsored by Coors Brewing Company. MVParents.com is full of great tips and ideas for parents and other adults who want to help kids make positive life choices and avoid high-risk behaviors like underage drinking.

Dr. Peter Benson, Ph.D., is the president of Search Institute and author of the book "All Kids Are Our Kids." Dr. Benson is widely recognized as a national leader in child and adolescent development.