

Are teenage years the hardest?

Parents worry that they are making a poor job of raising their teenage offspring, a new report says.



The Institute for Public Policy Research reports that nearly three-quarters of parents feel the teenage years are the most difficult to deal with.

Parents were also concerned about discipline, finding time to spend with troublesome teens and not having access to organised activities for their children such as youth clubs.

Are the teenage years the hardest for parents?

As a teenager I did all the things which the parent's generally regard as 'bad'. I listened to heavy metal, I drank heavily, I avoided showering, and I played Dungeons & Dragons in shadowy rooms. At 25 I still listen to heavy metal and play Dungeons and Dragons in shadowy rooms but am also a very nice person and have recently got married. It's not always 'just a phase' and it won't always lead to crime and drugs. Parents should listen to the teenagers just as much as the teenagers should listen to their parents. It's simple lack of communication that causes most of the problems.

Doug, Swindon, UK

Even though we've all been through the trauma of those awful self-conscious teenage years, society, youth culture and morals are changing so rapidly, it's hard for any parent to identify with their teenager. I dread my son reaching that stage - who knows what kind of person he'll become, with his hormones raging? My parents had a trouble-free time with me - they were fairly liberal, but also instilled in us a great sense of pride in ourselves and respect for others. All I can do, like any good parent, is my very best, and hope that it's enough!

Kate, Manchester

Our society's gone insane. Anyone who thinks being a trouble maker, defiant, rude, uncontrollable etc is normal is just perpetuating this problem. I came back from India recently and was amazed at the wonderful manners and respect of every single teenager I met out there. They are polite, educated, know what they want, where they are going, have a wonderful sense of morality, are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the world around them and were an absolute delight to be around. Came back and as I stood at Heathrow for my bus watched a load of British teenagers shouting at their parents, blocking cars, seemingly unable to pick their feet up properly and walk! Says it all really. There is no reason on earth why a teenager has to go through any difficult period whatsoever. I didn't, the Indian teenagers I met didn't, why do we think it's normal in Britain?

Patricia, Henley, UK

Many adults seem to entertain the notion that they are perfect and must not be answered back to under any circumstances by teenagers and children. I am a 15 year old and following several family episodes I have come to the realisation that adults are not only not perfect, but that most of them have not grown up themselves. Oblivion of other people, disrespect and selfishness are all very common adult traits, and that's what makes the teenage years so difficult. How are we supposed to take in suggestions and statements by our parents that we know to be hypocritical. When we point out this fact, it is seen to be "cheeky". As soon as parents realise that they are not infallible, can be wrong when their children are right, and realise that not only did they make the same mistakes as us, but continue to do so, then progress might be made.

Oliver Robinson, UK