

# Did you know?

## ADOLESCENCE



Adolescence is a time when a lot of physical and cognitive changes occur in the human body, including:

- growth spurts;
- shifting interpersonal relationships;
- increased self-awareness;
- frequent introspection;
- synaptic reorganization and neuronal “housecleaning.”

The teenage years are a time of transition between childhood and adulthood. Paradoxically, adolescents want more freedom and independence, but they still need support from their family. The teenage brain undergoes an internal reorganization until adulthood. Keep in mind that the brain takes a lifetime to develop! The prefrontal cortex (part of the brain that regulates behaviour and contributes to decision making) is under development at least until the end of our twenties. This means that it is entirely normal for teenagers to experience intense emotions, have difficulty controlling their behaviour, and make

decisions. Adolescence is also characterized by a great deal of creativity, openness to change, exploration, introspection and analysis.

### What do teenagers need from you?

- **Affection:** Even though teenagers may seem distant, what they need most is your unconditional love!
- **Trust:** Showing them that you fully trust them helps them develop self-esteem.
- **Support:** Even at this age, teenagers need to be reassured and feel supported. They need guidance, support, as well as dedicated and caring parenting.
- **To become responsible:** Teenagers are ready to take on responsibility and need to feel useful. They need to develop independence. They have to experiment to grow and develop as a person, and must be allowed to make mistakes.
- **Hope:** Congratulate them for a job well done! Take pride in how hard they are working in today’s demanding world.
- **Dialogue:** Talk openly with them as equals. Avoid engaging in a power struggle.



## I'M INVOLVED!

# HELPING WITH CAREER CHOICES

## What can you do?

Deciding on a career is often difficult for teenagers, and can be particularly stressful.

- Build confidence and trust. **Relate to them.** Have some fun doing an activity they are interested in.
- **Be patient, sensitive and open** throughout this process. Everyone has their own pace!
- **Every profession is important!**
- **Listen** to their interests, hopes and challenges.
- Talk to them. Identify their strengths and potential. **Help them see themselves as you do.** The more self-confidence they have, the more motivated and successful they will be!
- Fears also come into play in the decision making process: fear of failure, the unknown, disapproval... **Reassure them** that this is normal.
- Share your own experience, difficulties and doubts.
- Give them the opportunity to try **different activities** so they can experience new things and find out where their interests lie.
  - \* Do you know a mechanic who would be glad to show your teenager the ropes?
  - \* Could your teenager spend some time on the land with an elder?
  - \* What kinds of careers, for example, game warden could be explored this way?
  - \* Could your teenager become a student for a day?
- What is your teenager interested in? Does your teenager like helping others? Manual work? Is your teenager interested in science or art? Would your teenager rather work outdoors or in an office? Does your teenager have a knack for computers or is good at playing video games?

Remember, indecision is also a step! No choice is final! There isn't only one RIGHT choice. The important thing is to be there for them, pay attention, listen and support them!

## Some helpful information is available on these websites:

[inforoutefpt.org](http://inforoutefpt.org)

[espaceparents.org/en](http://espaceparents.org/en)

[monemploi.com](http://monemploi.com) (In French only)

[reperes.qc.ca](http://reperes.qc.ca) (In French only)

[academos.qc.ca](http://academos.qc.ca) (In French only)

A guidance counsellor can help teenagers become more in tune with themselves and make informed decisions. Check and see if there is one at your school!

If not, you can get in touch with our support staff:

### Marie-Claude Ouellet

GOAL counsellor

418-842-7672 #3333

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## REFERENCES

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[cepn-fnec.ca/involved/](http://cepn-fnec.ca/involved/)

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