

# Staying Positive

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When children get to those double digit years, they change. The sweet, playful, mischievous children become challenging, moody, argumentative preteens.

Parenting becomes more difficult because these new changes wear on parents' patience. They want to argue back, meet challenges by asserting their authority, and adjust that negative attitude.

If parents become confrontational and negative, they will eventually erode the relationship with their children. It would be difficult for preteens to feel supported when their parents are focused on the negative. A more effective strategy is to reinforce preteens' positive behavior.

## Encourage Positive Behavior

Catch your child doing something right. When they do their chores or homework without being reminded, acknowledge that positive behavior. When they show kindness to their siblings or help you carry in groceries, praise them. There will be times when they

will face challenges. At these times, encourage your preteens by reminding them of all the positive qualities you have witnessed in them. Your confidence in them will help them build confidence in themselves.

## Be a Model of Positive Behavior

Model respectful communication and a positive attitude for your child. Be respectful when you communicate even in times of conflict. This will establish an expectation for communication and will give your preteens the language that will make communication more effective. Invite your preteens to participate in acts of kindness, whether it be taking food to a neighbor, helping a grandparent, or participating in a community service event. These positive influences will give your preteen options for their behavior in and out of the home.

## As Children Mature

As children mature into adolescence, they will have to contend with so many changes that will affect them, physically, intellectually, and emotionally. If parents can support this journey with positive reinforcement, their children will be more confident and capable when dealing with the changes they will experience.

With love and affection,

Rosemarie

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