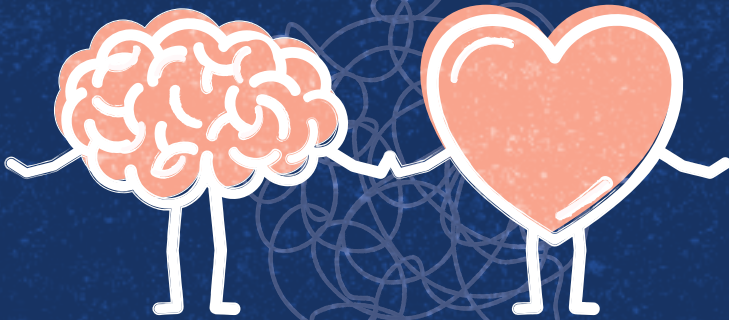


# MENTAL HEALTH



## WHAT IS IT?

Mental health is the **state of well-being** in which your child can reach his potential and **cope with ordinary life situations** and the stresses they produce.

Mental health is therefore a state of complete physical, mental and social wellness.

Source : <https://aqpamm.ca/les-grands-types-de-maladies-mentales/>

IT IS NOT JUST THE **ABSENCE** OF MENTAL ILLNESS.



### EARLY CHILDHOOD [ ages 0-6 ]

This is a time when your child rapidly develops **skills** that will have a major impact on mental health throughout his life. It is therefore essential that his various needs be met.



### CHILDHOOD [ ages 6-12 ]

During this period of **learning**, your child has access to a new world of experiences and new freedoms. It is a time of **discovery** and independence.



### ADOLESCENCE [ ages 12-18 ]

This is an intense period of **change** along with physical, social, cognitive and emotional development. It is also a time of experimentation when **identity** is being formed.

# HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH?



Get enough  
**sleep**



Make positive and  
meaningful **relationships**  
with others



Develop skills for  
coping with and  
**managing stress**



Organize the use of time,  
making sure to schedule  
**free time**



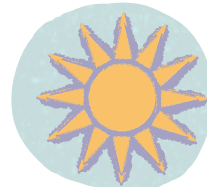
Have a healthy and  
varied **diet**



Play a sport or be  
physically **active**



**Help**  
others



**Laugh**  
frequently



Have enjoyable or  
relaxing **activities**



**Get professional**  
help if necessary



Consult the other Info Sheets for advice and tips on these topics:

- Managing stress and anxiety
- Healthy lifestyles & habits
- Social isolation
- Social and emotional Skills
- Substance Use


or find the Toolbox section on our website : <https://rapcotenord.ca/>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC

### Encouraging my child's mental health

 <https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/je-suis-un-parent/favoriser-sante-mentale-enfant/>  
(in French only)

 <https://www.mouvementsmq.ca/trucs-et-astuces/jeunes> (in French only)

 <https://fondationjeunesentete.org/en/family-toolkit/>

# MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRESS AND ANXIETY?



### Stress

It's the way we react to a life **event** that we perceive as a threat or a challenge.

- It is short-lived
- It happens in the here and now
- It is related to a real situation (the house is burning down)
- It allows us to **adapt and meet challenges** (a person calls 911 because the house is burning and makes sure everyone gets out quickly)

### Anxiety

It's worrying and creating **scenarios** about what **might happen**. It's the fear of being afraid! It can be normal and healthy (see the next page).

- Helps us protect ourselves from an actual danger
- Helps us anticipate a catastrophic event
- Allows us to **mobilize and find solutions** (check the batteries in the smoke detector and the accessibility of a fire extinguisher, in case the house catches fire)

IT'S ALL **NORMAL!**



# WHEN DOES ANXIETY BECOME A PROBLEM?

WHEN IT PERSISTS OVER TIME AND WHEN IT HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON A CHILD'S LIFE.

## HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE IT?



Releases natural **protective mechanisms**  
(e.g., insomnia or avoiding situations perceived as dangerous)



Causes uncomfortable **physical symptoms**



**Prevents us** from having satisfaction in daily life

## POSSIBLE PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

- **Change of habits**  
(Consult the Info Sheet: [Social Isolation, refusal to talk](#))
- **Procrastination**  
(putting everything off until tomorrow)
- Intense fear leading to **avoidance**
- **Excessive control** of his environment  
(always wanting to know where his parent is and what the parent is doing)
- Fear of **new situations**
- Refusal to go to **school** or participate in activities
- Difficulty **making friends**
- Difficulty **being organized**
- Excessive need for **reassurance**
- **Irritability**, tantrums, crying fits, resistance
- Low **self-esteem** with a sense of helplessness





## POSSIBLE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sense of cognitive “emptiness”
- Panic attack or difficulty breathing
- Tics or compulsions  
(nail biting, skin scratching, hair pulling, etc.)
- Nausea
- Increase or loss of appetite
- Diarrhea
- Stomach ache
- Tightness or pain in the chest
- Increased heart rate
- Feeling of a «lump» in the throat or choking
- Dizziness or feeling light-headed
- Chills or hot flashes
- Numbness or tingling
- Trembling
- High blood pressure
- Restlessness or difficulty keeping still
- Increased sweating
- Redness of the skin
- Muscle tension



**Anxiety can be difficult to detect because it can be masked by other behaviours (resistance, tantrums, embarrassment, etc.).**

If the difficulties and symptoms persist and significantly interfere with your child's functioning, you should consult a professional. Find available resources on the [rapcotenord.ca](https://rapcotenord.ca) website

# ADVICE AND TIPS

**N.U.T.S.** (by Sonia Lupien)

**Stress triggers always contain at least one of these ingredients: N.U.T.S.**  
The more ingredients at play in a situation, the more stressful it is likely to be for your child.

## Novelty

**Something your child has never experienced is happening, like going to an unfamiliar place.**

- Present the new thing in a less threatening and more predictable way  
(Before the start of high school, you can make an appointment to tour the school).

## Unpredictability

**Something completely unexpected happens or your child did not know it was going to happen.**

- Get him to ask questions about what is going to happen.
- Remind him of past experiences where he adapted to a change.  
(How did he react when a beach trip was rescheduled or postponed because of the weather or a change of teacher?)

## Threat to the ego

**Your child's skills and self-worth are being tested. He has doubts about his abilities.**

- Help him practice his oral presentation skills.
- Remind him of past successes.

## Sense of lack of control

**Your child feels he has little or no control over the situation.**

- Offer him choices.  
(When moving, let him choose the colour of his room)



N.U.T.S. - Sources:

<https://www.stresshumain.ca/Documents/pdf/De-stresse-et-progresse/CestquoiDetresseetProgresseV2.pdf> (In French only)

<https://humanstress.ca/programs/de-stress-for-success/>

# ADVICE AND TIPS



## Abdominal breathing

Suggest that your child do abdominal breathing to slow the **heart rate** down and calm breathing using 5 steps:

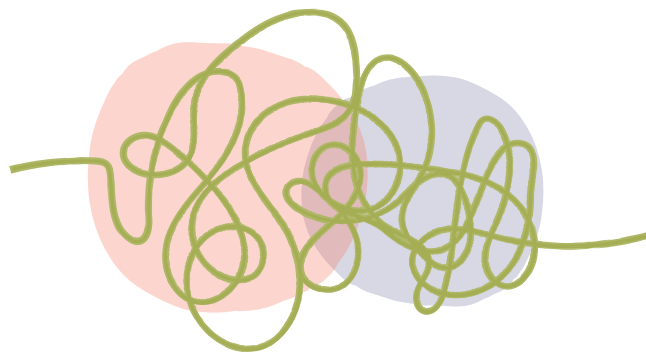
1. **Inhale** and push the belly out as much as possible.
2. **Hold** his breath for a few seconds.
3. **Exhale** completely and pull the belly in.
4. **Hold** his breath for a few seconds.
5. **Repeat** as many times as desired.



## Recherche de solutions

La recherche de solutions augmente la confiance en soi et l'**estime de soi** et amène des réussites.

- Amenez votre enfant à identifier des solutions possibles à une situation créant de l'anxiété ou du stress.



## Replacing anxious thoughts

When your child has an unpleasant thought, help him replace it with a **pleasant one**.

Does your child express his fear of going to the swimming pool? (fear of drowning, afraid of being laughed at, etc.).

- Get him to see the positive side of the activity.  
(being with friends, having fun, getting a reward afterwards, etc.)



## Action Steps

It is important to take action to have control of life and **avoid the victim role**.

- Be physically active  
Consult the Info Sheet: Healthy Lifestyle Habits  
<https://rapcotenord.ca/saines-habitudes-de-vie/>
- Find a distraction  
(watch a movie or read a book)
- Watch a funny video or a comedy show
- Spend time with friends or family
- Do good deeds  
(participate in a rewarding activity, such as providing a service or volunteering)

Actions Steps - Source: <https://humanstress.ca/stress/trick-your-stress/principles-of-stress-management/>



# ADVICE AND TIPS

## Helpful Thoughts

**Never question the feelings your child has.** Fear and its symptoms are very real. It's the perception of the situation that is wrong. That's why he needs help to see things differently.



### To accomplish this, ask these questions :

- What is the worst thing that could happen to you in this situation?
- If that happened to you, would it be so terrible?
- If your friend was faced with this situation, what would he think or do?
- Are you certain about what you think is happening?
- What makes you see the situation that way?
- Is there a different way to look at the situation?
- Are you concluding too quickly that it will be a disaster?
- Have you experienced similar situations in the past that turned out well?
- Is it a given or can it be looked at differently?


Helpful thoughts – Source Beck, 2011 [http://www.reussiteeducativeestrie.ca/jps/dynamiques/Presentation\\_Webinaire\\_Anxiete\\_1.pdf](http://www.reussiteeducativeestrie.ca/jps/dynamiques/Presentation_Webinaire_Anxiete_1.pdf) (in French only)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC

### Videos from the training: «Anxiety in my child: What can I do as a parent?» Stress or anxiety? (in French only)

 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OolPaQYZs3E&ab\\_channel=LeCentreRBCd%27expertiseensant%C3%A9mentale](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OolPaQYZs3E&ab_channel=LeCentreRBCd%27expertiseensant%C3%A9mentale)


### My child... anxious? (in French only)

 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjD6LgAyXv&ab\\_channel=LeCentreRBCd%27expertiseensant%C3%A9mentale](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjD6LgAyXv&ab_channel=LeCentreRBCd%27expertiseensant%C3%A9mentale)


### Information sheet that summarizes the concepts of the videos: (in French only)

 [https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Fiche\\_parents\\_stress\\_anxiete.pdf](https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Fiche_parents_stress_anxiete.pdf)


### PowerPoint presentation of the RBC Center for Academic Mental Health Expertise Webinar (in French only)


 [http://www.reussiteeducativeestrie.ca/jps/dynamiques/Presentation\\_Webinaire\\_Anxiete\\_1.pdf](http://www.reussiteeducativeestrie.ca/jps/dynamiques/Presentation_Webinaire_Anxiete_1.pdf)

### Stress Management - Quick Fixes

 <https://humanstress.ca/programs/de-stress-for-success/>

### N.U.T.S.

 <https://humanstress.ca/stress/understand-your-stress/sources-of-stress/>

 <https://www.stresshumain.ca/Documents/pdf/De-stresse-et-progresse/CestquoiDetresseetProgresseV2.pdf> (in french only)



Réussite - Accomplissement - Persévérance

# HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HABITS

Developing healthy lifestyle habits is the best way to ensure your child's **health and well-being**. It is important for parents to begin to encourage a healthy lifestyle **at an early age** which helps with physical and mental health.

**FOR GOOD PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**



# POSSIBLE RESULTS OF POOR LIFESTYLE HABITS



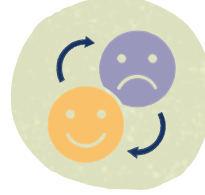
Difficulty  
concentrating



Organizational  
difficulties



Reduced school  
performance



Mood  
swings



Low  
self-esteem



Changes  
in behaviour



Memory  
problems



Increased  
stress levels

## Go to bed at a reasonable time to get enough sleep

Establish a routine with regular bedtimes and wake-up times.

- **AGES 5 TO 13 :**  
Need 9 to 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night
- **AGES 14 TO 17 :**  
Need 8 to 10 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night

## Avoid video screens 1 hour before going to bed.

Set up a «charging zone» away from the bedrooms. Family members can put their devices there an hour before going to bed.





# ADVICE AND TIPS

## Aim for a healthy diet

### Support your child by promoting a healthy diet

- Provide a **variety of foods** based on Canada's Food Guide.
- Eat **3 meals** a day and snacks as needed.
- Make **breakfast** a priority as it ensures the educational success of children.  
(It helps them pay attention and do better in school).
- For hydration, suggest **water** as the drink of choice.
- Encourage listening and following the **body's hunger and fullness cues** for healthy eating habits.
- Involve your child in **menu planning** to help develop cooking skills.
- Make **family meals** an enjoyable time.
- Avoid **distractions** while eating.  
(cell phone, television, computer, etc.)



### Teach your child to accept his body the way it is

Help your child realize the body's attributes and capacities that allow him to move, express himself and excel.

# ADVICE AND TIPS

## Ideas to get your child moving

### Ages 5 to 11

- **Be active yourself** and demonstrate your interest in exercise.
- Bond through a **family sports** activity (basketball, Frisbee, jogging, or organized activities like races, rallies, active challenges, online workouts).
- Set up a **schedule** for screen time and outside play time.
- Get **simple materials** for outdoor games. (chalk, snow and sand shovels, skipping rope, beach ball)

### Ages 12 to 17

- Invite **one or more friends** to join you hiking. (picnic on a mountain, hike around a lake).
- **Show an interest** in your teen's activities.
- Be open to **participate** with him in an activity he enjoys.
- Encourage him to **ride a bike** when the weather permits.
- **Commend him** for his activities and efforts to keep active.



## EXERCISE DAILY

**«You don't have to be athletic to be active!»**

You can help to plan your child's daily activities. Take every opportunity to be active daily!

Take advantage of active transportation : Walk or cycle to work and use the stairs.

# ADVICE AND TIPS



## Limit screen time

### Be an example

- Evaluate **your own use** of the internet and screens. Try to improve your habits!
- For screen time, be **consistent** between what you tell your child and what you do yourself. (without aiming to be perfect!)

### Set some guidelines

- **Limit screen time by setting time limits:**
  - **By age :**  
keep it to a minimum for younger children and set up a daily schedule for older ones;
  - **Depending on the context :**  
work/school obligations or for recreational purposes.
- Encourage **quality** content.
- Identify **good times** for screen time.

### Talk about it

- **Talk to your child** in an objective, positive and non-judgmental way. Get him to think.
- **Take an interest** in his online activities.
- **Talk to other parents** about their rules for screen time. Share your concerns and tips!

### Listen to your child

- **Be consistent** and constant in your interactions with your child.
- **Be flexible** by adjusting the rules for each child according to age and needs.
- Talk about «**online**» and «**offline**» activities rather than «**virtual**» versus «**real world**.»
- Accept that online friends or experiences can **seem «real»** to your child.
- Don't use screen time as a **punishment**. (This may increase his desire to be connected).

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC

### Sleep

- 🌐 <https://www.alloprof.qc.ca/en/parents/articles/healthy-life-habits-and-educational-activities/benefits-restorative-sleep-academic-success-k1425>
- 🌐 [https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents/Tous-les-themes/Etapes-et-defis/Sommeil?gclid=CjwKCAjwtdcFBhBAEiwAKOIy50N87R9EImYdB89V0jFD-mXslUTuAXWO\\_CvIr0VxLUalpZTFWmc5fRoCCChQAyD\\_BwE](https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents/Tous-les-themes/Etapes-et-defis/Sommeil?gclid=CjwKCAjwtdcFBhBAEiwAKOIy50N87R9EImYdB89V0jFD-mXslUTuAXWO_CvIr0VxLUalpZTFWmc5fRoCCChQAyD_BwE) (in French only)
- 🌐 <https://promotionsante.chusj.org/fr/Boite-a-outils/> (Pour les ados - dormir ça sert à quoi?) (in French only)

### Physical activity

- 🌐 [https://csepguidelines.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CSEP\\_24HourGuidelines5-17\\_2016.pdf](https://csepguidelines.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CSEP_24HourGuidelines5-17_2016.pdf)
- 🌐 <https://naitreetgrandir.com/en/feature/everybody-outside/>

### Healthy lifestyle habits in general – Alloprof Parents

- 🌐 <https://www.alloprof.qc.ca/en/parents/>
- 🌐 <https://www.alloprof.qc.ca/en/parents/articles/healthy-life-habits-and-educational-activities/healthy-life-habits-academic-performance-k1427>

### Diet

- 🌐 <https://equilibre.ca/grand-public/monequilibre/> (in French only)
- 🌐 [http://cscp.umontreal.ca/nutrition/documents/viens\\_manger.pdf](http://cscp.umontreal.ca/nutrition/documents/viens_manger.pdf) (in French only)
- 🌐 <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

### Screen time

- 🌐 <https://pausetonecran.com/> (in French only)
- 🌐 <https://pausetonecran.com/blogue/les-bienfaits-des-pauses-sans-ecran> (in French only)



# SOCIAL ISOLATION

Every child is different and will have **his own perception** of the social situation.  
A child may have many relationships, but sense that they are superficial or shallow.

**AS SOON AS THEY SHOW DISTRESS, IT'S TIME TO HELP.**

## What to watch for?

Action should be taken if you notice  
your child exhibits:

- Signs of anxiety  
Consult the Info Sheet : Managing Stress  
and Anxiety  
<https://rapcotenord.ca/gestion-stress-et-anxiete/>
- At-risk behaviours  
(substance use, drinking alcohol, using drugs,  
addictions, excessive screen time, self-harm)  
**Consult the Info Sheet: Substance Use**  
<https://rapcotenord.ca/la-consommation/>
- Excessive Irritability  
(extreme anger, verbal and physical aggression)
- Social withdrawal



## YOUR CHILD IS DOING WELL SOCIALLY IF HE ...

- Is able to make friends and maintain friendships.
- Is able to talk with others independently.
- Enjoys social activities.
- Likes to try new activities.
- Can play alone or with other children.
- Likes to be creative and share ideas.
- Is optimistic about the future.
- Has a sense of humour.
- Is involved in various spheres of life.  
(school, extracurricular activities, work, family, etc.)



### CAUTION

**Don't pressure your child to make friends. It is important to give him time to develop a desire to reach out to others on his own.**

## ISOLATION BEHAVIOURS

- He does not feel like going out.
- He withdraws and does not share emotions or opinions.
- He no longer interacts with friends or family members.
- He prefers to be alone and not participate in social activities he used to enjoy.
- He avoids social interaction.
- He has fewer relationships with others.
- He tends to disconnect from the rest of his surroundings.
- He does not want to leave his comfort zone.
- He favours silence, becomes suspicious and refuses to communicate.



Source : Gouvernement du Québec, 2018; Dumas, 2013; CYMHIN-MAD, 2010 et Hincks-Dellcrest-ABCs, s.d. dans Gouvernement de l'Ontario, 2013  
[http://www.reussiteeducativeestrie.ca/jps/dynamiques/Presentation\\_Webinaire\\_Anxiete\\_1.pdf](http://www.reussiteeducativeestrie.ca/jps/dynamiques/Presentation_Webinaire_Anxiete_1.pdf)

# ADVICE AND TIPS



## DEVELOPING SELF-CONFIDENCE

A confident child with good self-esteem is better able to integrate socially

- **Encourage** your child and point out his **strengths and qualities**.
- Remind him that it **takes time and practice** to be comfortable with others.
- As a family, consider opportunities to help in **the community**. (volunteering, picking up litter, helping the elderly, etc.)
- **Listen and offer to help** when your child voices concerns about reaching out to others.
- Take an interest in his **ideas, opinions and feelings**. They may differ from yours, but they are real.
- Set up a personal **meeting** with him.

## BE A ROLE MODEL

Your child develops social skills with others by watching you

- **Spend time with him**: invite him to participate in your activities.
- **Involve him** in some daily chores.
- Talk about your **successes and failures**, and what you have **learned from them**.
- Establish and maintain **family routines**. For example, eat a meal as a family without television.
- **Set a good example**. Show your child what it means to interact socially.
- Invite your **friends and family** over!



## CAUTION

**Don't pressure your child to make friends and don't constantly mention it. It is important to give him time to develop a desire to reach out to others on his own.**



# ADVICE AND TIPS

## ACCOMPANY HIM AS HE DEVELOPS IDENTITY

Your child has to develop self-awareness to feel socially adept

- **Take an interest** in his activities, projects and problems.
- Encourage him to try **new activities** and tell him you are **proud of him**.
- Help your child find an **activity he likes** and does well at.
- **Understand and respect** that he will be very good at some activities but not others.
- When he tries something new, **remind him of past successes**, the effort he put in and the perseverance he showed.



## COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

Your child spends a large part of time at school and it is a place where he develops

- Talk with teachers to find out if your child seems to be doing well at school; or if he seems isolated, what the cause could be.
- Discuss your concerns with the teaching staff about steps that could be taken to help your child.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

- **Limit screen time (see the Info Sheet : Healthy Lifestyle Habits) and time on social media.**
- **Access to social media exposes your child to violent stories, disturbing images and videos, and gives the illusion of having a social life. This can cause feelings of insecurity leading to isolation.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Parent Help Line (Ligne Parents - in French only)**

<https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents/Tous-les-themes/Communications-et-relations/Habiletés-sociales-de-l-enfant-et-de-l-adolescent%C2%B7e>

**Guide for parents with teens (in French only)**

<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2983738>



Réussite - Accomplissement - Persévérance

# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Social and emotional skills provide your child with tools to **protect** himself, **assert** himself, **manage emotions and stress**, become a **responsible citizen**, **grow**, **build relationships** and **succeed in school**. These skills are very important for your child's **mental health** and healthy **development**.

**TO ENABLE YOUR CHILD TO ESTABLISH HIS FOUNDATIONS**



# AGES 0-6

## SOCIAL NEEDS

The family is your child's **first place for socialization**. He learns to take turns, to share, to make contact with others and to take his own place while respecting others.

### Advice and tips

- Provide opportunities for **interaction with other children**: play in a park or indoor facility.
- Teach how to **connect with others** like saying «Hello», introducing himself, asking to play, etc.
- Set **organized play** times that reinforce the ability to follow basic rules.
- Organize periods of **free play** to stimulate creativity.



## EMOTIONAL NEEDS

The quality of your relationship with your child is directly related to healthy development. From birth, this relationship is the **basis for bonding** with everyone encountered in life. It will help him develop the ability to express and manage emotions.

### Advice and tips

- Ensure a **secure environment** in which your child can feel comfortable by establishing a **routine for bedtime, brushing teeth, meals and getting ready for school**.  
(Make sure that this series of daily actions is always the same)
- **Talk to your child about emotions**; read him books that make it easier to learn words and images for emotions.
- Teach how to **express, recognize and name** emotions.
- **Comfort him** when you feel he is upset.





# AGES 6-12

## SOCIAL NEEDS

Your child is gradually moving out of the family circle and seeking to **discover the world**. He needs to be in contact with friends and will become more interested in spending time in a group.

This new social environment will enable him to develop social skills that will help to make friends: sharing, listening, negotiating, compromising, putting himself in the other person's shoes, etc.

### Advice and tips

- Encourage your child to **invite friends** over and to visit them. (He will see how different families function).
- Limit the amount of time spent watching TV and playing video games. Instead, choose to play **board games** so he can practice taking turns, managing temper, negotiation, etc.
- Encourage him to take part in **activities in the community**. He may meet interesting people. (skating rink, swimming pool, etc.).



## EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Your child needs to **know that you love him**, with his strengths and weaknesses, his successes and failures. It is also important to provide support that helps him **feel safe**.

The development of **good self-esteem** in your child affects all aspects of life: learning, relationships, health, career and satisfaction with life.

### Advice and tips

- **Be realistic in your expectations:** offer challenges that lead to successes. This makes him aware of his strengths.
- **Celebrate his successes** and congratulate him.
- Allow him to **make mistakes** and offer support when he experiences failure. Failures are just as important as successes.
- Clarify **important rules** and give appropriate consequences. **Be clear** in your choice of rules and above all, **be consistent. Stay on course!**



# AGES 12-17

## SOCIAL NEEDS

The social aspect of your adolescent's life is important. Most of the time, **friends become a priority**. He is not trying to distance himself from you, but wants to see points of view and ways of doing things that are different from yours. The **need for independence** leads to a desire for more autonomy and privacy.

Good **self-esteem**, the ability to understand others and put himself in the other person's shoes are abilities that help develop social skills. Factors like temperament, personality, home life and friends also have an impact. During this period, **romantic relationships** become significant and your teen experiences them with great intensity.



## Advice and tips

- Introduce him to places and activities where he can develop socially. Some teens don't explore the activities available to them, so they need a little help! (youth centres, extracurricular activities, etc.).
- Be considerate of his romantic relationships and the joys and sorrows associated with them.
- Take the time to get to know your teen's friends. Show concern. He will feel that you respect his choices.
- Allow some freedom in decisions, such as how to use spending money.
- Continue to supervise and have clear boundaries with your teen to ensure he feels secure, while respecting his need for autonomy. (Autonomy does not mean total disengagement from the parent).



# AGES 12-17

## EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Adolescence is a period when a teen is in search of **personal identity**.

He begins to question **who he is**, how he differs from others, what he wants to do in life and **who he wants to be with**.

A teen's self-esteem gives him **confidence to approach others**, express his needs and attempt to take his place in a group.

Although you are an important reference and role model, he will be less dependent on you and will **seek privacy**.



## Advice and tips

- Encourage him to be **assertive** and to **give his opinions** and ideas on topics.
- Listen, show respect and **share your knowledge** with him.
- Use everyday opportunities so he can **see other people's points of view**, **share his opinions** and **hear other opinions**. This will help him accept and understand differences so he can assert himself.
- Encourage him to talk, but **respect his limits and privacy**.
- Allow him the **freedom to accept or reject your advice**.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC

### Video games for children aged 6 to 17 (in French only)

[https://aidersonenfant.com/jeux-video-comment-instaurer-une-utilisation-saine-aupres-de-nos-jeunes/?gclid=CjwKCAiAm7OMBhAQEiwArvGi3E-f6OSMVIYRLq7vXPJlId0TADGOgkUfK2lxaQSc1JyX\\_ZGpVO57gcBoCsNEQAvD\\_BwE](https://aidersonenfant.com/jeux-video-comment-instaurer-une-utilisation-saine-aupres-de-nos-jeunes/?gclid=CjwKCAiAm7OMBhAQEiwArvGi3E-f6OSMVIYRLq7vXPJlId0TADGOgkUfK2lxaQSc1JyX_ZGpVO57gcBoCsNEQAvD_BwE)

### Video games for children aged 3 to 5 (in French only)

<https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/etape/3-5-ans/apprentissage-jeux/fiche.aspx?doc=bg-naitre-grandir-jeux-video-ordinateur>

### Social skills of children and adolescents (in French only)

<https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents/Tous-les-themes/Communications-et-relations/Habiletés-sociales-de-l-enfant-et-de-l-adolescente-ou-adolescent>

### What to do if my teen... reacts (too) emotionally (in French only)

<https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents/Tous-les-themes/Comportements/Adolescence/A-des-reactions-trop-emotives>

### Encourage my child's mental health (according to his needs) (in French only)

<https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/je-suis-un-parent/favoriser-sante-mentale-enfant/>

### Guide for parents of adolescents

<https://www.ciuss-scapitalenationale.gouv.qc.ca/en>

### Step-by-step development

<https://naitreetgrandir.com/en/step/3-5-years/development/>

<https://naitreetgrandir.com/en/step/5-8-years/development/>



# SUBSTANCE USE

Adolescents sometimes engage in **risky behaviours** such as smoking, vaping, drinking alcohol and using drugs.

**Substance use is often experimental, occasional and temporary.**

The majority of youth do not use or have problems related to substance use. However, substance use is risky and can have **negative consequences on health and quality of life.**



## WARNING SIGNS



Drop in **school** performance



Dramatic change in **friendships**



Less openness and **honesty**



Abnormal **sleep** habits



Withdrawal and deterioration of **family** relationships



New **health** concerns

