

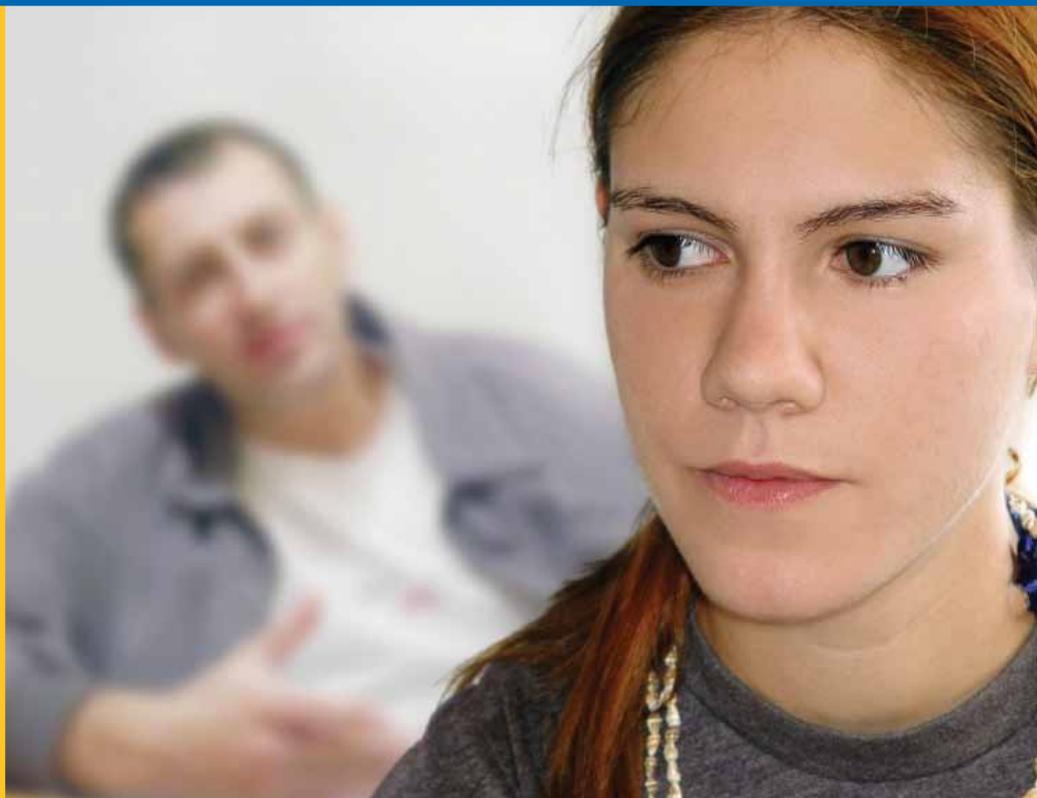
## Video Guide

### A New Kind of Parenting: Raising Kids 10 to 16 Years Old

This guide summarizes some of the information found in the *A New Kind of Parenting* video with Dr. Jean Clinton and includes questions that can help stimulate discussion and reflection.



Dr. Jean Clinton



# Video 1

## Introduction

In February 2011, Dr. Jean Clinton, an internationally-known child expert, spoke to Halton parents about a new approach to parenting teens. In this resource, Dr. Clinton uses common sense and plain language as she suggests new ways to nurture a positive relationship with children as they become teenagers.

She also provides insight about the teen brain, teen myths and practical strategies to help you learn how to thrive with your teen.

## Thriving with Your Teen

- There are many changes in the teen years, including what kids are focusing on and what's important to them. Parental involvement is still essential; however, learning to parent teens differently is key.
- Dr. Clinton's mantra to parents is "progress not perfection," as this is a transition time for teens as well as parents.

### The teen years and temperament

- Temperament is very important; there is a wide range in temperament characteristics.
- Temperament is about how intense or sensitive a person is; it's about how persistent or easygoing he or she is. "Do they have a regular rhythm or no rhythm at all?"
- All kids and parents are different, and should be aware of their own temperaments.
- Difficulty arises when a parent's temperament clashes with a teen's.
- The teen brain is under construction, the planning area is getting readjusted – teens can become forgetful.
- Be aware of whether your teen is an extrovert or an introvert. Open the lines of communication, especially if your teen is an extrovert.

### Myths and perceptions about teens

- The language we use to describe teens is very important.
- If we think about teens in a negative way, such as lazy or narcissistic, we create an expectation of what the child's behaviour is going to be like. If you have a positive attitude and language about teens, you have different outcomes.

#### Recommended Book:

*Raising your spirited child* by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka. For children who are MORE – more excitable, more gleeful, more sensitive, sadder. For children who are intense.

### What we used to believe:

#### Teens are full of rebellion and conflict.

- This is not true. Teens today are volunteering more and are contributing more to society than in any other previous generation.
- The media portrays teens negatively. Science tells us that our teens today are doing very well. They are not into crime and drugs. According to the Halton Youth Survey 2012-13, the percentage of Grade 7 and Grade 10 students engaging in criminal activity has declined since 2009/2010.

#### Peers are more influential than parents.

- Also not true. Teens have a biological need to be with their peers. They enjoy the company of their peers. This does not mean they don't like their parents or love them any less.

#### Parents should crack down or give up in order to survive.

- Again, not true. Trouble behaviour occurs when parents crack down or give up on their teens.
- When parents form positive, respectful relationships with their teens, there is no need to crack down or give up.

### What we know now:

- Problem behaviour, family conflict and psychological problems are no more common in adolescence than any other time.
- We need to learn to parent teens differently and deal with conflict that might arise, which is really no different than any other time in a child's development.
- Peers do have an influence; however, strong family connections allow parents to have long lasting, deep influence on their teens. Also, relationships and family values play an important role in your teen's choice of peers.

### Reflective questions:

- What concerns do you have about your child entering the teen years?
- Reflect and describe your child's temperament. How does this influence your parenting?
- How is your relationship with your teen changing and how do you feel about this?
- How is your teen's relationship with their peers affecting your family? How do you feel about this?
- What negative teen portrayals have you experienced in the media? Now that you are aware of negative media stereotypes, how will this change your thoughts about teen behaviour?

## Video 2

### Positive Parenting

Parenting style matters! Positive parenting, also known as authoritative parenting, works best.

- When you use the positive parenting approach, kids do better. They do better in school and have better quality relationships. It also has a positive impact on teens who suffer mental health issues.
- Good news – it's never too late to start positive parenting. Canadian studies show that when families changed to an authoritative style, their children's behaviour changed from problematic to positive.
- Teens do best with solid relationships and human connectedness is the most important thing.

The Journal of the American Medical Association states: "parent connectedness is the single healthiest force in the lives of U.S. teenagers."

#### **Positive parents nurture, discipline and respect their teenager:**

- Positive parents nurture by being warm, supportive and encouraging. It is difficult to be nurturing in challenging situations, but how we deal with those challenges really matters.
- Positive parents discipline by teaching and monitoring behaviour, and by setting and reinforcing limits. We need to let kids know what is in bounds and out of bounds and help them make decisions that come from the inside rather than being imposed from the outside.
- Positive parents respect by treating teens as they treat their adult friends.

We want kids to ask questions, push the envelope and disagree – that is how they learn and develop and resolve conflict; however, we do not want them to do so in a disrespectful manner. We want to have conversation with our children and then reach a decision.

The Our Kids Network Report Card 2011 supports the idea that when kids have a positive connection to their parents, school and community, they do far better.



#### **Under construction**

Why is parenting a teen tough? It's because parents are not having a conversation with a fully developed adult. The teen brain is under construction!

- The teen brain is developing; the brain connections are being altered, beginning around age 9 or 10 and continuing until age 25.
- The teen's environment, relationships and experiences are literally changing their brain. When you are dialoging with them, they are learning how to respect and be respected.
- The back of the brain that deals with more physical activities develops first.
- The front of the brain that helps make decisions – the "stop and think about it" section – develops later.
- Thrill seeking or novelty seeking is a biological drive that makes teens do irresponsible things and unfortunately, the "stop and think about it" part of the brain develops later.
- There will be drugs and alcohol at teen parties. We have to give our kids the skills and abilities to say no. And no matter the situation, they need to know they can call you to help – that is an important message for kids.

#### **Reflective questions:**

- Reflect and discuss your parenting style.
- What are your thoughts about positive parenting?
- What information did you learn about the teen brain under construction?
- What strategies do you use to help your teen think about the choices they make? How are you able to remain nurturing during stressful situations?
- Discuss ways to help your teen cope when faced with risky behaviours at parties, including drugs and alcohol.

## Video 3

### Positive Parenting – Parenting Styles

- Positive parenting is warm, supportive and encouraging while being firm, consistent and fair. It also provides limits and boundaries.
- There will be conflict as teens learn to find new identities and friends. It is the management of this conflict that is important to the relationship.
- Positive parents have high nurturance, high expectations and high levels of respect for their children. When kids make mistakes, positive parents do have consequences but also have positive messages.

### Dominating parenting

- Dominating parenting is harsh, punitive and rigid.
- These parents are cold, forceful and coercive; it's my way or the highway. Research shows that children of dominating parents have more conduct problems, are more likely to be in trouble with the law and often have oppositional behaviour problems.
- Other characteristics include low nurturance, high expectations and low respect.

### Permissive parents

- Permissive parents have inconsistent enforcement of rules, or no rules at all. They have a need to be a pal, more than a parent.
- They also have high nurturance, low and unclear expectations, and moderate and diminishing respect.
- They give in to their teen if he or she whines, cries or stomps long enough.

### Unengaged parenting

- The unengaged parent is most concerning. With an inconsistent parenting presence in a child's life, the teen essentially raises himself or herself.
- They have low nurturance, low expectations and low respect.
- These parents feel that it is time to let go now that they have teens and they focus solely on their own needs.

Statistics based on research by Dr. Larry Steinberg indicate that 20 to 25 percent of parents are positive, 20 percent are dominating, 20 percent are permissive and 40 percent of parents are unengaged.

At times, parents will visit different parenting styles; however, it's really about what you do most of the time and what you are striving to achieve. Remember – “progress not perfection.”

### Reflective questions:

- Reflect and discuss your parenting style.
- How is learning about parenting styles going to help you parent your teen?
- Discuss family rules that are working for you.
- Describe strategies that help you be consistent with your rules. What are some exceptions?



## Video 4

### Positive Parenting – Boundaries, Rules and Expectations

Positive parents provide limits; they give clear rules and boundaries while encouraging independence.

#### Why should parents want to use positive parenting?

Positive parenting is the most effective parenting style. Teens raised by a positive parent:

- Enjoy their teen years better.
- Do better in school.
- Have lower rates of depression and stress.\*
- Are less likely to engage in risky behaviour.
- Have better social skills.
- Are more respectful.
- Deal better with conflict.

*\*Biology does play a role in depression; positive parents are more equipped to support a child suffering from a mental illness.*

#### Why aren't many parents using this positive style of parenting?

It is hard work, and parents have to be working at it all the time. With many families having both parents working, parents do not want to have to deal with conflict when they get home and don't communicate well with their children.

It takes effort, requires time and consistency.

#### Rules

Parents need to think about what they want for their kids and how they are going to help them be the best that they can be. What are the conditions that raise great kids?

##### Firm rules:

These rules are understood by both parents and teens. Use firm rules when:

- Physical or emotional health or safety is at stake.
- The family's values are at stake.

##### Flexible rules:

Some rules are open for discussion, can be negotiated, waived or changed.

As a parent, you need to ask yourself what is really important. Some parents try to control their children's behaviour and are worried about all the wrong behaviours.

Positive parents will talk about the situation and negotiate. Parents need to trust their teens; this is achieved by having a respectful relationship with them.

#### What is wrong with saying "Because I said so!"?

When parents arbitrarily lay down the law without listening or discussing the issue, it sends a message to your teen that says he or she can't make decisions for himself or herself.

You do need to have high and clear expectations and rules; however, have discussions with your teen about what the important rules are. Be clear and limit the number of rules.

Positive parents use a positive and respectful attitude and say, "Let me think about that." They gather information rather than saying no right away.

#### Will rules make my teen rebel?

- Children thrive with rules and knowing what is expected of them.
- It is a way to let your kids know that you care.
- The rules need to make sense. Rules that make teens rebel are the ones that do not make any sense.

#### Reflective questions:

- Share some of the challenges you see with being a positive parent.
- What are some of the strategies you can use to overcome these challenges?
- Share a few rules you would consider to be firm in your home.
- Share some rules parents may be flexible around.
- Discuss/share parenting strategies that are working for your family.



## Video 5

### Positive Parenting – Monitoring and Reducing Risk

Research shows that teens who spend more time unsupervised engage in more risky behaviours.

#### What does monitoring mean?

- Teens tell you where they are, who they are with and what they are doing.
- Texting and calling are ways teens can communicate with parents.
- Ask your teen if there is or will be adult supervision at a party or get together.
- Parents should provide teens with skills that will help them resist risky behaviours.
- Review your boundaries and rules, such as no drugs or alcohol.
- Teens should be aware and feel assured that, in a difficult situation, parents will come and get them.

#### Risky behaviours:

- Examples are tobacco use, drinking alcohol, drug abuse, sexual activity, poor nutrition, violence and unintentional accidents.

When parents and other adults help teens avoid these risks, they are setting the stage for lifelong health.

- Parents should have conversations about drugs and alcohol. Teens need to know the truth about marijuana and binge drinking and the effects they have on their developing brain.
- Parents should talk about sexual activity about sexually transmitted infections and family values.

#### Monitor and stay involved.

Research says teens feel more secure and are involved in fewer risky behaviours when they know there are adults around who care, especially at these times:

- Getting up in the morning.
- Coming home from school.
- Evening meal time (with TV off!).
- When going to bed.

#### Be involved with your teen. These are reasonable expectations.

- Know WHO they are hanging out with.
- Know WHAT they are doing.
- Know WHERE they are.
- Know WHEN they will be home.

#### Resources:

*Hold on to your kids* by Gabor Mate

#### Research says:

School connectedness is associated with better emotional health, and higher academic aspirations and performance, as well as fewer risk-taking behaviours.

#### Reduce the risk

- Know what your teens are doing and listen to what they have to say.
- Speak about the issues and risks with your kids; teach them your family values.
- Give your teen the message that you will come no matter the situation; it's about your relationship.
- Have a "code" word teens can use to ask for your help when in risky situations.
- Teens will find friends who are like them. Talk to your teen about positive friendship qualities.
- Get to know their friends and their friends' parents.
- Peers have an influence on teens; however, parents have the most influence.

#### Give your teen hope for the future.

- Help your teen be engaged in and connected to school.
- Be clear that attending school is an absolute expectation and non-negotiable rule. It is more important than employment, sports or other extra-curricular activities.
- Know what's happening at school.
- Allow your teen to work no more than 14 hours per week; working more than this puts academics at risk.
- Make homework part of the family routine. Create time, space, and the expectation that homework be completed.

#### Reflective questions:

- What challenges do you face when trying to monitor your teens?
- Reflect on monitoring solutions for these challenges.
- What are your thoughts about teens having a code word they can use with you to ask for your help to get them out of a situation?
- Reflect on the times your child is monitored vs. alone. How can you increase monitoring in the morning, after school or at dinner?
- Discuss ways you can get to know your child's friends and their parents.
- What risky situation has your teen been involved with? What did you do in these situations? After hearing Dr. Clinton, what strategies will you start to implement?

# Video 6

## Positive Parenting – Parenting with Respect

Parenting with respect means you teach respect by being respectful, and by demonstrating and modeling respect.

Learn about the Halton Police “Give Respect, Get Respect” campaign at [www.haltonpolice.ca/COMMUNITYPOLICING/YOUTH/Pages/GiveRespectGetRespect2011HighSchoolChallenge.aspx](http://www.haltonpolice.ca/COMMUNITYPOLICING/YOUTH/Pages/GiveRespectGetRespect2011HighSchoolChallenge.aspx)

Research says:

Teens do better when parents are clear about rules and monitor behaviour, but teens are poorly affected when parents try to control their beliefs or do not allow them to express their feelings.

Teens need to question and debate rules. This is how they discover who they are and what they believe. It is a necessary process of growing up and helps them become independent thinkers.

- Teens should be allowed to voice their opinion without using inappropriate words or insulting others.
- Make sure that what your teen is hearing what you are actually saying.

### When in conflict remember...

- Don't engage in power struggles that are about how to think and who is right.
- Focus on the important issues of health and safety.
- Model the language and tone of voice you expect from your teen.
- Stay calm and remember – you are in charge. You are the adult.
- Avoid conflict when you are pressed for time.
- Be realistic about how your teen acts. Teens do not have the skills and experience parents have in dealing with disagreements.
- Do not forget your sense of humour.

### A model for solving problems together

When preparing to discuss an issue with your teen, think of the words *I care, I see, I feel, listen, I want and I will*. This will help you problem solve with your teen.

- I CARE: express warmth and love.
- I SEE: state the facts.
- I FEEL: share your feelings.
- LISTEN: ask your teen his or her thoughts.
- I WANT: state a plan of action.
- I WILL: say what you will do to help.

### What if my teen won't talk to me?

- It is common that teens are becoming private and keeping thoughts and feelings to themselves.
- Find regular time to be together; just you and your teen.
- Don't interrupt: listen.
- Be available by stating, “You can always talk to me when you're ready.”
- Be available when he wants to talk and learn to listen. Open the conversation by asking:
  - Tell me about...
  - What do you think...?
  - How would you do that...?
  - Feel like talking...?

### Final thoughts:

- Reflect on how you can be a positive parent.
- Reflect on how you can provide your teen with what he or she needs to learn and grow and be the best that he or she can be.
- Positive parenting is about strong respectful connections to you and others; it's the relationship.
- Teens thrive with clear expectations, lots of love and clear limits.
- Parents are providing the skills and the gifts of lifelong learning.

Teens are not empty vessels that can be filled or moulded; they are creative human beings and magnificent thinkers who are able – with our support – to make the right decisions.

How we think affects how we feel, which affects how we act. If we see our teens as under construction and having the ability to thrive, we will see our teens differently, and feel more positive.

This is the beginning of a whole new kind of relationship.

### Reflective questions:

- What strategies do you use when in conflict with your teen?
- Discuss strategies that help you communicate with your teen.
- What are the benefits of allowing your teen to voice his opinion?
- What are the challenges you face when speaking with your teen about drinking, drugs, and sex? How do you incorporate your values and expectations?
- How did this resource help you think about your relationship with your teen?
- What helped you most to better understand your teen and his or her needs?
- Share at least one new idea you will start to use.



## References

**Developmental Assets®:** Developmental Assets are better predictors of a child's likelihood to thrive or engage in high-risk behaviours than poverty or being from a single-parent family. The research is definitive: assets empower all young people, regardless of gender, economic status, family, race or ethnicity. [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

**Halton Community Services Database:** [www.search.hipinfo.info](http://www.search.hipinfo.info)

**A New Kind of Parenting videos, Thriving Teens PowerPoint:** [www.ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/parent-teens](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/parent-teens)

**Our Kids Network:** [www.ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/parent-teens](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/parent-teens)

**Shoulder to Shoulder:** [www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org](http://www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org)

## Acknowledgements

All the words in this study guide are the exact words of or are paraphrased from the main ideas of Dr. Jean Clinton's lecture in February, 2011.

This study guide was produced with the collaborative efforts of Charles Sturt University, Ontario School of Education: [www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/ontario](http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/ontario), Halton District School Board: [www.hdsb.ca/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.hdsb.ca/Pages/Home.aspx) and Our Kids Network.

This study guide was completed as part of Atia Sajid's professional experience practicum of Charles Sturt University's Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies Programme.

Our Kids Network is a Halton-wide partnership of organizations and agencies serving children and youth. Guided by research, the network provides leadership for participating agencies to plan and integrate services and supports so all children thrive.

[www.ourkidsnetwork.ca](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca)