

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

What Are the Experts Saying?

A major research study by ETR, a private non-profit health education organization based in Santa Cruz, California, **revealed:**

Parent-child connectedness is a super protector. During our review of the literature, ETR found parent-child connectedness (or lack of parent-child connectedness) associated with 33 adolescent outcomes such as tobacco use, depression, eating disorders, academic achievement, pregnancy, HIV infection and others. For more info, go to:

<http://www.etr.org/recapp/column/column200401MajorFindings.htm>

The common thread among teens who do well academically and socially, and stay healthy and drug-free, is that they have close relationships with their parents. these teens report that their parents are interested in them, in what they do and in who they know. they also say their parents are curious about their lives and their ideas. they feel connected, because their parents listen to them and take time to find out what's going on in their world.

From The American Academy of Pediatrics

The Search Institute conducts [applied scientific research](#) on positive child and adolescent development. Their research also documents that a healthy parent-child relationship is one of the most effective protective factors in preventing high risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, school dropout, premature sexual behavior and teen violence. A prevailing theory of positive youth development comes from research of the Search Institute that identifies 40 Developmental Assets as building blocks of healthy development—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Click here for a list of the 40 Developmental Assets: <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/>. It is a holistic approach with strong emphasis on the parent-child connection. Here are a few of their listed assets that are addressed by our parent coaching program:

- 1. Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- 2. Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
- 8. Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- 9. Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
- 16. High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
- 30. Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
- 37. Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- 38. Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.

39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”

40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

HOW DOES THIS RESEARCH RELATE TO COACHING?

The main goal in coaching is developing strong healthy relationships between parents and their children.

Coaching tools are in alignment with adolescent development and respond to the teen’s need to find their identity and independence. In addition, coaching supports teens through their developing independence and empowers teens to make healthy choices. The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry lists the following attributes of normal adolescent development:

Movement Towards Independence

- Struggle with sense of identity
- Feeling awkward or strange about one's self and one's body
- Focus on self, alternating between high expectations and poor self-esteem
- Interests and clothing style influenced by peer group
- Moodiness
- Improved ability to use speech to express one's self
- Realization that parents are not perfect; identification of their faults
- Less overt affection shown to parents, with occasional rudeness
- Complaints that parents interfere with independence
- Tendency to return to childish behavior, particularly when stressed

Coaching provides new tools for the parents of adolescence. As teens are changing developmentally, coaching provides new tools to respond to their growing independence and search for identity. Coaching evokes the excellence in others. Every parent wants their teen to become the best they can be.