



SMART TWEENS PARENTING CHECKLIST

A growing sense of independence

- ☐ I offer my child choices they can realistically handle.
- ☐ I encourage them to take responsibility for age-appropriate tasks.
- ☐ I let them solve small problems on their own before stepping in.

Emotional validation

- ☐ I name and acknowledge my child's emotions out loud.
- ☐ I resist the urge to "fix it" right away and instead focus on empathy.
- ☐ I model healthy ways of handling frustration or stress.

Friendship and social support

- ☐ I ask about their friendships with genuine curiosity.
- ☐ I offer guidance on how to handle tricky social situations.
- ☐ I avoid judging their friends (or gossiping about them).

Encouraging interests and talents

- ☐ I notice and comment positively on what excites them.
- ☐ I support hobbies for joy and growth - not just achievement.
- ☐ I praise effort, not just outcomes ("You really stuck with it!").

Quality one-on-one time

- ☐ I spend regular one-on-one time with my child without screens.
- ☐ I show interest in their world - even if it's not my thing.
- ☐ I make time for moments of warmth (a hug, a smile, a short chat) every day.

Respectful communication

- ☐ I try to listen more than I talk.
- ☐ I avoid sarcasm, shouting, or "because I said so."
- ☐ I regularly ask open-ended questions like "How did that feel for you?"

Clear boundaries and expectations

- ☐ I set clear and consistent rules (bedtime, screen time, chores).
- ☐ I explain the reasons behind limits and consequences.
- ☐ I let natural consequences play out when it's safe to do so.

Safe space for hard topics

- ☐ I keep a calm face when my child brings up tough topics.
- ☐ I've let them know it's okay to ask anything, anytime.
- ☐ If I don't know an answer, I say, "Let's find out together."

Freedom to learn from mistakes

- ☐ I stay calm when my child messes up (as much as I can).
- ☐ I use questions like "What could you do differently next time?"
- ☐ I've shared stories of my own kid-sized mistakes and what I learned.

Healthy screen time and boundaries

- ☐ We have clear rules about screen time — and they know why.
- ☐ I sometimes join them in digital play (games, shows, music).
- ☐ I've talked with them about online safety, ads, and how they feel after screen time.