

# Parents TOGETHER

A Newsletter for Greenwich Parents of Adolescents ©  
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## The Essence of Adolescence Understanding Teen Development

by Sonya Rencevicz, LCSW

**A**DOLESCENCE IS A TIME of internal and external transformation when many changes occur in a relatively short period of time. It is often described as a time of “ungracious empowerment” where teenagers seem to approach most situations with a heavy dose of entitlement. It is a time of rapid physical, emotional and intellectual growth leading to the inconsistency and unpredictability of adolescents and their peer group.

The five major tasks of adolescence include: 1) formation of a sense of self as unique in the world, referred to as *identity*; 2) increasing feelings of autonomy where peers replace family as the main focus, also known as *independence*; 3) a shift in cognitive abilities from concrete to abstract thinking, their *intellect*; 4) a time of developing their own internal set of morals and values through experimentation, referred to as *integrity*; 5) all combined with hormonal changes that lend themselves to increasing gender, sexuality issues, and relationships, referred to as *intimacy*. It is easier to understand these tasks (and therefore, what you are dealing with) by looking at the physical, intellectual and social/emotional aspects of adolescent development.

### Physical Developmental Aspects

Physically, the introduction and production of hormones begins anywhere between the ages of 9 to 16. The rapid physical and emotional changes often leave teens feeling as if they are “losing control.” Their changing bodies create concern with self image at a time when they are intensely comparing themselves to others in their peer group. As a parent, it is difficult to comfort or validate your adolescent’s sensitivities, as they are at a time in life when they are trying to see themselves in the larger world without you, and therefore questioning everything you say.

Hormone increases bring with them a new interest in sexuality. In our culture, adolescents are bombarded by sexual imagery and, over time, become desensitized by the content of what they are seeing and hearing. The result is that teens appear more mature and more informed than they really are. They talk a sophisticated sexual language, and parents should not assume that teens understand everything they talk about on this subject. It is important that parents discuss their views with each other so as to be clear with their teenagers regarding appropriate sexual behavior. It is helpful to normalize your adolescent’s experiences as much as possible, so take advantage of teachable moments, even if they are awkward. Even though they rarely admit it, adolescents rely on parents for information. Studies show that teens who get sex education information from their parents are more likely to postpone sexual activity.

### Intellectual Developmental Aspects

Intellectual development in the adolescent has benefited recently from the explosion in brain research, and neuroscience has provided the opportunity to understand the impact of brain development on teenage behavior and communication patterns. This knowledge can be helpful when dealing with adolescents and increase your effectiveness as a parent.

Teenage behavior is often referred to as a “phase.” The moods swings and “multiple personalities” indicative of this life stage can leave even the best of parents guessing. Part of this behavior has often been understood psychologically as characteristic of the separation individuation phase of development where teens jump back and forth between neediness or dependence of youth

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To all our readers:

Wishing you a happy, healthy, safe  
and relaxing summer  
with friends and family.

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and fierce independence of adulthood. However, understanding the science behind this “phase” can help you respond more effectively in stressful situations. Armed with this information, perhaps you will be less surprised at their impulsiveness and lack of concentration. Perhaps you will be less likely to personalize their behavior as they seem to forget the rules, the values and morals with which they were raised.

The prefrontal cortex is the reasoning center of the brain, the area where reflection and awareness take place, as well as the regulation of emotions. It is the area of the brain that affects our ability to be mindful and make intentional choices. At puberty, a process called “particulation” occurs, whereby there is a massive shedding of brain cells. This is followed by a “reconstruction” phase that is complete around the age of 25.

As the brain is reconstructing the prefrontal cortex, it relies on the hypothalamus to function. The hypothalamus happens to be sitting just above the amygdale, the part of the brain that responds to stress with a freeze, flight or fight response. In times of stress, the amygdale “hijacks” the body and limits prefrontal activity. This leads to excessive pruning of brain cells, hindering an individual’s overall ability to respond, including the ability to concentrate and reason. In other words, the teen (or parent!) gets locked into an emotional arousal state, their body flooded with stress hormones. Consequently, the ensuing irrational fears, anxiety, and anger affect their reaction to the situation.

While understanding where some of the behavior originates, it is not license to excuse the behavior. The

hope is that you can use this information, take a step back, and reflect on it prior to responding yourself from your own emotional arousal state. Once educated, you will be more likely to respond with consistent, predictable discipline in a calm manner. An added bonus: if you can communicate more effectively with your teen when they are in stressful arousal states, they will more likely develop a cohesive core-self over time.

### **Social/Emotional/Psychological Aspects**

The social, emotional and psychological aspects of adolescent development are defined less and less by the family as teenagers move towards adulthood, and more influence comes from the peer group. The peer group becomes their primary source of worth and identity fulfillment. Teens try to balance their need for uniqueness and individuality, with their desire to fit into the group. Faced with pending adulthood, they have a developmental need to see a place for themselves in the world. One way they accomplish this is to see themselves as different from their parents. Experimenting with the interests and styles of friends

also facilitates this process. In addition to peer influence, adolescents are highly susceptible to social scripts, including those that may be harmful. Their

fascination with celebrities, sports figures, fashion magazines, TV shows and movies is another way for them to get ideas on how to look, act and think, as they experiment with who they want to be.

Within the family setting, adolescents have an increased need for privacy and independence. In addition to questioning parents’ values, they universally try different

things from their parents in order to test and achieve autonomy. Have you noticed how they seem intensely embarrassed by what you wear, what you say, or how you act? It is developmentally appropriate for teenagers to see their parents as flawed - it is a way for them to comfort themselves about their own flaws. The disengagement and distancing you feel from them is helping them to develop a unique individual identity. In spite of their push for independence, they also worry about changing family relationships and they may worry about the effect their behavior has on the family.

In addition to family and peer changes, teenagers are also faced with incredible academic demands. They are living in a culture of increased competition and therefore, increased performance requirements. There is pressure to prepare for college at earlier ages than ever before. There is also pressure to have a plan for their future after college. Given that adolescence is characterized by self consciousness and an inner expectation to “know all,” these are additional areas where they feel they are measured. All of these stressors occur within a society that emphasizes the importance of taking advantage of *every* opportunity. This is an area where actions speak louder than words, meaning that teen’s performance at school can often be a way of measuring how they are doing overall.

It is importance to keep in mind the influences of current cultural climate. While many parents grew up and were influenced by the Vietnam War, today’s teens are living in a world of Columbine and 9/11, where the violence is much closer to home. Ours is a society of overindulgence, diminished accountability, social discourtesies and parental tolerance. The current culture is defined by domestic technology. The internet, email, pda’s and cell phones further devour our time. While there are many benefits to this technology, the

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thin line protecting the family unit from the fast paced, quick fix, bottom line demands of our culture is easily crossed. It is vitally important for the parental unit to acknowledge these specific impacts on their family and strategize responses to them. For example, what are your rules about cell phones, text messaging, internet accessibility, Facebook and Myspace pages, and iPod usage?

## Life from a Teenager's Perspective

*Suggestions for how to respond*

Let's take a look at life from a teen's perspective. The ideas presented here come from my work with adolescents and their families, and also from some of the books listed at the end of this article.

Teens are self-conscious and believe they are supposed to know the answers to many of life's dilemmas. This is important in terms of their behavior. They often don't want to admit you are helpful, because they are embarrassed that they still need your assistance. Adolescents are hungry for advice and information, but only if they ask for it. You may both want the same outcome, but try to remember, if you initiate an idea or endorse a solution, in their quest towards autonomy, they often feel they can't agree with it.

You will most likely lose credibility with your adolescent if they think you are trying too hard; if you are too eager and too invested in the outcome. A clue to this happening is when you notice that they have become passive and increasingly uninvolved. Teenagers of parents who try too hard, often feel that their homework, social issues, and even their boredom, are problems for their parents to fix. The parenting solution is to balance your interest with their effort, and not work harder than your teen on their issues and problems. When you try to motivate your teen beyond what they feel is reasonable, it confuses the notion of who needs to be in the driver's seat of change, and takes away valuable experiences they

need to learn responsibility. Too much excitement and investment on your part gives your teen even more of a position *against which* they can push.

As individuals, what we accomplish gives us a sense of who we are. As parents, if you do too much for your children, you deny them the opportunity of learning about their own capabilities. Over-performing parents reinforce weakness in their children. These children often develop into teenagers and adults who end up focusing on their own inabilities and

expecting others in their lives to take care of things. They can become ungrateful people who go through life with a chip on their shoulder, feeling as if they deserve more than they have received.

Adolescents need to know they can mention a problem without having to talk about it. They mention a subject, as a way to communicate and keep you informed, not to have you problem solve nor enter into a lengthy discussion or "lecture." Depending on the subject matter, it is best to directly ask them "are you just letting me know, or did you want help with this?" Obviously more serious issues will require more of your involvement whether they like it or not. Parents become less effective when they continue to offer unwanted advice. Remember, what you say is often not what they hear and understand. When you are repetitive and insistent, they hear that you think they are incapable, that their way isn't okay, and, ultimately, that you don't understand them.

Adolescents will eventually learn to make good choices for themselves given the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes, when given a foundation of clear, consistent, and age appropriate structure followed by logical consequences. Parents should

try to hold firm to the boundaries they set, but allow the adolescent to push against them. This allows the teen to develop the "muscle" he or she needs to become an independent adult.

Tolerating misbehavior creates anxiety in children. When parents bend the rules or tip-toe to avoid conflict, for example, the parent/child dynamic is upset and the adolescent is left with a feeling of power they aren't sure what to do with. Holding them to a higher standard and not meeting every need and desire allows parents to decide what gets

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negotiated and what doesn't. Obviously the rules and expectations of behavior change as your teen nears adulthood.

Teenagers often see the world in black and white; who is right and who is wrong. As they age and their prefrontal cortex continues reconstructing, this narrow view shifts to a larger perspective. Often they will not consider a solution to a situation that may seem readily apparent to you. Remember, most often your teen would rather "save face" than be seen as wrong. To a teen, sometimes being *right* is more important than being *smart*. It is embarrassing for them to make a change while you are watching. And even if you aren't, they think you are. To them, everyone is watching. "What do others think?" is a defining concern of adolescents. As parents, you can help them save face. You may offer to be a buffer for them to get out of awkward situations, for example by them saying, "My mom won't let me go."

As much as you want to protect your children, you need to learn to tolerate their pain and distress. It adds to their anxiety and worry if you feel everything they feel.

Lastly, it is important to be a role

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# Parenting in Non-Traditional Environments

## During and After Divorce and in Blended Families

By Elisabeth Tullis Schneider, LMFT

“A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS living under one roof” is how the Miriam-Webster dictionary defines family. But any parent knows that family is so much more. Family is the unit through which we nurture, teach, discipline and care for our children. Family is the unit we create when we choose to marry and combine two adult lives. When a divorce changes the dynamic of that family, or when a remarriage creates a blended family, the roles and responsibilities of family members can become blurred and uncertain.

If you and your family have experienced such a change, take heart; between 43 and 50% of first marriages end in divorce<sup>1</sup> and more than a third of all children will be a part of a stepfamily at some point in their lives<sup>2</sup>. But while the numbers of families experiencing such transitions are high, the challenges that confront these parents and children are significant. You can minimize these challenges and improve the transition if you make a commitment to understanding and working through the process with your children.

### Parenting During and After Divorce

When you are going through a divorce, your life turns upside down. Whether you wanted the divorce or not, you suddenly find all the “constants” in your life are shifting and things as simple as taking the kids to school can become complicated. Your children face this instability and uncertainty as well, only they have even less information about, and control over, the situation. Here are some tips for parenting your children when you are going through a divorce so that they experience the least amount of turmoil.

**1) Create as much stability as possible.** Your family is in flux; daily changes may be occurring. You may not know from one day to the next who gets the children for that evening, whether you will be able to stay in your house, and how you are going to pay for the kids’ education/clothing/etc. Keep things as stable as you can and make as many decisions with the other parent as possible. Try to maintain key traditions such as family dinners and weekend pancake breakfasts. You can include your teen in this by giving him a role in the task and asking his input about the changes going on.

**2) Do not disparage the other parent to your kids....**as much as you may want to. This only hurts the children and often they will take it out on you instead of the other parent. The courts may also view this as parent alienation and they take a strong stance against this. This can be particularly hard when you have a teen who picks up quickly on cues and when you long for your teen to “know the truth.” But resist this urge – it will only hurt them – and keep the truth for your friends. Your teen should be allowed to love his or her other parent without your pain and anger complicating the relationship.

**3) If your anger at your spouse/ex is significant, get help.** You will need to find support and a good therapist who can help you separate your anger at him/her so that you can continue to co-parent effectively.

**4) LISTEN to your kids.** Talking to them is fine and sharing information is important, but it is even more important to listen, especially with teens. Listen to what they say both verbally and nonverbally. Be responsive. Let them know that just because you are going through a

divorce does not mean that you are going to abdicate your role as parent. When they ask you a question, don’t ignore them because the question is too hard. If you aren’t prepared to answer it then, tell them you heard them and you will give them an answer when you are able to. Allow your teen to voice his/her fears, concerns, frustrations, anxieties without reacting. Simply listening to him/her will provide healing.

Once the time of great turmoil has come to an end and you begin settling in to your life as a single parent, you will experience new challenges. This is uncharted territory for you and your kids. How can you alleviate some of the instability inherent in a changing family dynamic? First, make sure to continue to seek out good, healthy counsel and care from those around you. Second, try to follow some of these tips:

**1) Include your teen(s) in the development of your new lives** to the extent possible. Maybe they can come with you when you look at a new place to live. Or perhaps they can help you plan your next family vacation. Give them some say in the matter; they have just been through an experience where they have little to no say in anything that is happening to them and they will appreciate having a voice in this next phase.

**2) Continue the conversation.** Make sure you are listening to them when they tell you what they are feeling, what they need, etc. (note: much of this “conversation” will be nonverbal!). Get outside help if necessary. Recognize that many kids need extra support through this time and a group or individual counseling experience can have a positive and normalizing impact on your kids.

Resist the urge to tell them you know how they feel; adolescents react very poorly to this; they want *you* to hear from *them* how *they* feel. So, even if your own parents divorced, remember that every situation is different and focus on what they are sharing with you.

**3) Keep them out of financial issues** as much as possible. By nature, they will tend to worry about this sort of thing, so adding to their concern will not help. The older your child is, the more they may know about or be concerned about financial issues such as college, moving, etc. Talk to your teens about their concerns, hear what they are thinking and then tell them what they need to know; but keep the sharing to a minimum. For instance, tell your teen that you will still make sure that he/she can go to college but how you do that may look different. But don't tell him or her that the other parent is spending his/her college fund on a new house!

**4) Be very careful about dating.** Dating is an important, vital part of a single person's life and just because you have children does not mean you should not date. But, you must be very careful about whom you bring home to your kids and to what extent you involve them in the dating process.

- a. **Do not** have new and different men/women coming into the home when you go out on dates.
- b. Conservative therapists tend to support the idea that you should not introduce a significant other to your children until you have been dating long enough to determine that this is a serious, long-term relationship. Otherwise, they will experience a loss each time you end a "flings".
- c. If you are in a serious relationship, be thoughtful about how to introduce the new person into your children's lives. Don't make it a high pressure intense family event. Keep it low key and short enough that the kids won't feel forced to interact for many hours straight. I find it helpful with teens to allow them to choose the venue. A

sports event or a movie are good options because they don't require your teen to talk or answer questions.

- d. Never talk to your kids about your sex life with your significant other. It is totally inappropriate and can lead a teenager to act out sexually because "mom/dad is doing it".
- e. Try to go on dates when the other parent has the kids so that your time with your kids is steady and consistent and they know they are your priority.
- f. Be sensitive to including the significant other at events with the children's other parent. This will happen eventually, but it shouldn't happen until the new relationship is serious. When it does occur, talk to the kids in advance and give them an opportunity to voice concerns. Come up with a plan together about how to make the situation as comfortable as possible.

#### **How To Parent in Blended Families**

If you've made it through the post-divorce transition and have now decided to re-marry, you have new and different challenges coming to the fore. Creating a blended family can be extremely rewarding, but it takes a great deal of love, patience and intentionality (not to mention a thick skin).

If you are the step-parent, you have the challenge that your role is both undefined and unclear, not to mention that you are the easiest target for the kids' anger. You must deal with this while you build a healthy marriage. And if you are the parent, you have the challenge of parenting your children while also adjusting to a new marriage. You may struggle with balancing the needs of your new spouse and those of your children.

In the early days of a blended family, it is important to remember that kids don't need or want another parent in most cases. They aren't the ones who decided to remarry – you are. They may feel afraid that you are going to start a "new" family and forget them; or they may dislike your

new spouse. Sometimes children hear negative feedback from their other parent as well. And while your kids face these challenges (and likely act out because of them), you must parent and discipline them appropriately while you also adjust to this new situation.

Blending a family takes time. Research shows that it takes anywhere from 4-10 years to fully adjust to life as a step-family. The more you work together at it, the sooner the adjustment will happen. But becoming a step-family cannot be forced, nor does it happen with the natural flow of becoming a traditional family (pregnancy, birth, growth, etc). It requires patience and commitment and the sooner you accept this, the less pain you will experience. In the meantime, here are some guidelines to make the transition a bit smoother:

- 1) As spouses, you must be a team.** **Never** let the kids divide and conquer. Even if you disagree on an issue, and you will, you must present a united front to the kid(s) and discuss disagreements when you are alone. **Never** undermine your spouse in front of your child.
- 2) The step-parent should avoid taking the disciplinarian/parenting role.** Let the children's parent set the rules and make the major decisions; your job is to act as a supporter to those decisions. If you find that you do need to do some disciplining of your teen step-child(ren), come up with a plan with your spouse (appropriate expectations, etc), make it clear to the kids together and have your spouse detail the consequences for not following the rules.
- 3) Find trusted friends** and supporters outside of your marriage with whom you can share. Your spouse should not have to hear every complaint and frustration you have. While it's fair to share some of them, especially when you need to come up with solutions or implement changes, vent with your friends instead.

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## Airsoft and Paintball Guns

### Safety Considerations

by Detective Christy Girard,  
Greenwich Police Department

Both Airsoft and paintball guns are popular with today's youth. Connecticut State Law requires a person to be 18 years of age to *purchase* either type of gun, but anyone can *possess* one. They both shoot a projectile, however an Airsoft gun may look identical to an actual firearm. Some even have a detachable magazine similar to a real pistol. *Federal and state laws require the end of the barrel of an Airsoft type gun to be colored bright orange, but many do not have these markings.* This makes it almost impossible for even the trained law enforcement eye to differentiate between a toy and the real thing.

The differences between Airsoft guns and paintball guns are:

- ♦ Airsoft guns shoot out small plastic pellets; paintball guns shoot out marble sized "balls" of paint.
- ♦ Airsoft guns are replicas of handguns or rifles; paintball guns generally do not resemble actual firearms. They have a large attached container that holds the balls of paint, and a compressed air tank. When that container is detached, a paintball gun can look similar to a real firearm.
- ♦ The plastic pellets that are shot out of an Airsoft gun can travel 50-70 feet at speeds up to 500 feet per second (fps), whereas paintballs can travel up to 300 fps. The pellets can cause damage and/or severe injuries.

#### Safety Issues to Consider:

- ♦ Always have your child wear safety gear, including eye and neck protection, when handling type of guns.
- ♦ Supervise your child and instruct them on how to safely use either gun.
- ♦ Instruct them on looking beyond their target to make sure there is nothing or no one behind it.
- ♦ Check with friends' parents to be sure they allow their child to use this type of "toy".
- ♦ Instruct your child to **ALWAYS** put down the gun if a police officer approaches them.

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**4) Back off.** It is admirable to work hard at making everything wonderful, happy and cheery, but it will backfire. Kids need time to get to know you or your new spouse, and you need time to get comfortable with this new situation as well. Teens in particular, will often be slow to warm up. Don't take it personally if they don't adore you or your new spouse right away. Just back off and let them approach you. If you create a safe, healthy environment for them they will eventually warm up to you.

**5) Be consistent.** Figure out with your spouse what the rules of the house are and stick to them. Don't make exceptions just to get on the kids' good side because they will learn to manipulate you (and you will definitely pay the price later on). Stick to your guns but do it in a clear, non-confrontational way.

**6) Don't take things personally.** This one is tough. It feels personal when your child or stepchild ignores a question you ask and walks out of the room. It feels personal when they are disrespectful in your presence. Resist the temptation to react and remember that this probably has nothing to do with you and everything to do with their confusion and frustration with the situation.

**7) Help your kids/stepkids deal with the uncertainty and fear that they are feeling.** As much as you are uncertain and overwhelmed, I guarantee the kids are as well. Regardless of how mature or independent they seem, they worry about being forgotten and losing their parents' love. They need a safe and non-threatening environment in which to voice their concerns and to ask questions. If you can, create this at home with a weekly family meeting, but recognize that many adolescents are reticent to talk to their parents anyway. If this is the case, involve a third party (a therapist, spiritual advisor, etc) to help the process. And remember, you don't have to respond to or "fix" everything your kids say is bothering them.

It can be hard, when you are in the midst of all the turmoil and change, to imagine that step-parenting or blending a family will bring you joy and happiness, but it certainly can.

**1)** You get to be an integral part of the physical, emotional, intellectual and relational development of the kids' lives...and that is a privilege.

**2)** You can be a trusted adult to the kids without all the responsibility of daily parenting.

**3)** If you are a step-parent, your step-children can bring you great joy, satisfaction and fulfillment over the years as you see them grow, succeed and mature and know that you have helped them on their path.

**4)** You may find that your relationship with your child(ren) grows and expands in ways it didn't or couldn't when you were a single parent, doing things on your own.

**5)** If you work as a team, creating a blended family can be very connecting and intimate for you and your spouse.

**6)** You can learn a great deal about yourself in the process; your step-children can teach you and help you grow as an individual if you take advantage of the opportunity.

**7)** If you have children, or plan to have children, your step-children can be a wonderful source of support and care for their half-siblings

These benefits may take years to realize and a great deal of patience and fortitude will be required of you in the meantime. With patience and a little time you can look forward to the these joys coming to fruition.

<sup>1</sup> [www.divorcereform.org/rates](http://www.divorcereform.org/rates)

<sup>2</sup> [http://info.ag.vt.edu/vce/offices/newsletters/blended\\_families.pdf](http://info.ag.vt.edu/vce/offices/newsletters/blended_families.pdf)

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## Our Heartfelt Thanks

Your donations are continuously needed to fund the eight newsletters (four issues of *Parents Together* and four issues of *Primer*) we publish each school year. Our sincere thanks to the contributors listed below whose gifts were received in response to our 2008 appeal letter. *List complete as of April 30. Our apologies for any errors or omissions.*

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## Dear Readers

Although this issue concludes our 26<sup>th</sup> year of publishing the *Parents Together* newsletter, this year marks the **30th Anniversary** of the Parents Together organization. In 1979 the Greenwich Advisory Council on Youth and Drugs (GACYD) in collaboration with the Junior League of Greenwich, the Greenwich Public School administrators and the PTA Council, created the organization to discuss cooperative measures for addressing newly perceived needs of parents. Since then Parents Together has been committed to the mission: "To give parents the opportunity to come together to **communicate** parenting concerns; **share** parenting skills and insights; **support** each other in making sound decisions about their children's activities; **learn** new skills for being more effective, loving parents."

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our 30th Anniversary Annual Appeal letter which was mailed in March. If you did not receive a letter and wish to contribute, please complete the form below and mail to *Parents Together*, P.O. Box 4843, Greenwich, CT, 0683-0417.

Thanks for your continued support!

Betsy Benenson  
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## Who We Are

*Parents Together* is an independent, nonprofit organization in Greenwich, CT, that offers ongoing opportunities for parents to communicate, share, support and learn together. We work in cooperation with the Parent Teacher Associations of the public, private and parochial schools in town. The *Parents Together* organization and delegates from Greenwich schools plan programs for parents in grades K-12. We also publish two quarterly newsletters: *Parents Together Primer*, for parents of children from birth through fifth grade, and *Parents Together*, for parents of adolescents. **Distribution:** *Parents Together Primer* is distributed to parents through their children's preschools and elementary schools. *Parents Together* is sent to parents of children in grades 6 through 12 in all Greenwich public and independent schools.

**Newsletter Subscriptions and Correspondence:** We invite parents and all other readers interested in local parenting issues to subscribe to either or both newsletters. For an **annual subscription**, please indicate which newsletter you wish to receive, and send your name, address and \$12 for each subscription with a check payable to *Parents Together*, to P. O. Box 4843, Greenwich, CT 06831-0417. Correspondence may be mailed to the same address.

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*"The Essence of Adolescence" continued from page 3*

model for the behavior you seek in your teenagers. Do you set aside immediate gratification for the long term goal? Do you have the capacity to meet and overcome challenges in a healthy manner? Do you apologize when you make a mistake? Are you holding them accountable as well as yourselves? They are watching and listening, even though they pretend not to. Adolescence is a wonderful, exciting time of life. Think back to your own teen years and remember what you were like - it should to help you relate to your teenagers today.

#### References:

- ◆ *Parenting from the Inside Out*, (How a Deeper Self Understanding can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive) Daniel Siegel, MD and Mary Hartzell, MEd.
- ◆ *Connecting with our Children*, (Guiding Principles for Parents in a Troubled World), Roberta M. Gilbert, MD.
- ◆ *Nurturing Good Children Now*, (10 Basic Skills to Protect and Strengthen Your Child's Core Self), Ron Taffel, PhD.
- ◆ *Stop Negotiating With Your Teen*, (Strategies for Parenting Your Angry, Manipulative, Moody or Depressed Adolescent), Janet Sasson Edgette, PsyD.
- ◆ *I'm on Your Side*, (Resolving Conflict with Your Teenage Son or Daughter), Jane Nelson and Lynn Lott
- ◆ *Positive Discipline for Teenagers* (Empowering Your Teen and Yourself Through Kind and Firm Parenting), Jane Nelson and Lynn Lott

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