

Wellness by Wenk

Navigating Teen Independence

As a parent, we only want the best for our children and we want nothing more than to give them the world. But our children need independence and they need to feel what it's like to take initiative. How can parents better navigate teen independence?

Teens strive for independence as it is an essential part of human development. They need to take responsibility for their thoughts and actions as well as form their own values and figure out decisions and choices that are right for them. Though parents want to protect their children, they need to find a healthy balance between setting limits and letting your teen forge their own path through this world. Finding that balance begins with recognizing healthy and typical independence decisions from at risk decisions.

What are some telltale signs that your son or daughter is seeking independence in unhealthy ways?

- 1- They suddenly have a change in peer groups and they no longer speak to their old friends/peer groups
- 2- They begin to isolate themselves from old friends and family
- 3- They are no longer interested in hobbies and activities they once enjoyed
- 4- Sudden, more distinct mood changes, unlike regular moodiness
- 5- Signs of drug, tobacco and/or alcohol use
- 6- They become unresponsive or overly defensive when confronted with concerns and worries from their parents
- 7- A rapid decline in grades, especially in classes they once enjoyed and excelled in