

kids voices count

Delaware teens talk to
each other about parents

Often adolescents are caught in a state of limbo because they long to have freedom from parental control, yet they want attention, guidelines and rules. This dichotomy often leads parents to give too much freedom, which inadvertently says to their child that it doesn't matter what they do.

Source: Goldstein, Andrew. "Paging All Parents."
Time. July 3, 2000. 47.





Members of the Indian River High School Journalism team:

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KIDS COUNT in Delaware is dedicated to making our state a better place for kids. We want to focus the attention of Delaware's policy makers, community leaders and parents on the importance of parental involvement in the lives of teenagers.

Kids Voices Count provides the teen perspective. This interviewing and writing project was undertaken as a volunteer effort by the journalism students at Indian River High School, under the supervision of their teacher Missy Burbage. These young people spent several weeks during the spring of 2000 interviewing their peers on the subject of parental involvement. The interviews were conducted with no adults present.

They are pleased to present their thoughts on an issue that deeply impacts their lives.

Note: The names of the teen interviewers and photos are real, however to protect confidentiality, the names of the interviewees are fictitious and their photos are not included. The words are those of the teen journalists themselves as submitted to KIDS COUNT.

Throughout this booklet are photos of Delaware teens and their parents. In order to preserve the anonymity of the interviews, the teens photographed are NOT the teens quoted in the interviews.

Kristin

Interviewer: Erin Harker

Kristin is your average student, maintaining between a B and C average grade wise. She takes mainly academic classes and tries to keep her grades up as best she can. Kristin told me that her parents just expected her grades to be good and didn't really pressure her or push her to do well. She felt that her parents weren't really that involved with the academic aspect of her life. "Well, they want me to do good, but they never really ask to see my report card, or ask me how school is." I also asked her if they ever met with any of her teachers, but she told me that they really have no reason to since they never even asked who her teachers were in addition to their lack of concern with her school work and grades. I then asked her if she wished her parents were more involved with her academics, and she replied, "Yeah, sometimes I wish they would ask me about my school day before I tell them about it, or would at least ask to see my report card. But don't get me wrong, it's not that they don't care about what goes on, they just assume that I can keep good grades and do well in school."

Close Parent-Child Relationships

Much has been written about the increasing importance of peers during the adolescent years. However, most adolescents retain strong bonds with their parents and continue to spend time with their parents. In general, having a positive relationship with parents constitutes an important indicator of positive youth development. Youth who disconnect from parental influence are at particular risk for delinquent activities and psychological problems.

Source: "Preventing Problems vs. Promoting the Positive: What Do We Want for Our Children."
Child Trends Research Brief, May, 2000.

Eric

Interviewer: Erin Harker

"Eric" is a 16 year old boy who is in the top ten percent of his class and involved in many extracurricular activities, including sports and clubs. While he felt that his parents really pushed him to be involved in extracurricular activities, he felt that he would remain involved even if they weren't there to push him. His father was specifically interested in him being involved in sports, but also encouraged activities such as Spanish club and student council. He and his parents both agreed that being a well-rounded student could help in being accepted to colleges and receiving scholarships. When asked if his parents were overly involved, Eric said, "Yeah, sometimes they get a little too involved, like my mom is the president of soccerboosters and my dad helps coach my big league baseball team. But it really doesn't bother me a lot because it's not like they're always in my face or anything. They do their thing and I do mine."

One third of adolescents say that they would like to spend more time with their parents.

Source: Goldstein, Andrew. "Paging All Parents."
Time, July 3, 2000

Eric told me that he felt sports were more important to him than to his parents. He thinks that academics and sports are equally important, while his parents felt that academics were much more important than sports. He also felt that while his parents' encouragement wasn't the only factor in his success, he probably wouldn't be as successful without their support. Overall Eric felt that his parents were very helpful with everything he is involved with.

Leslie

Interviewer: Sonya Carmack

Recently, I interviewed a 17 year old female named “Leslie” who is currently dating someone out of her race. Her parents strongly disapprove of interracial dating, but Leslie will not obey their wishes to limit herself to the Caucasian race only. I could tell by the way she spoke that she was deeply torn between what she thought was right and what her parents thought was right. Leslie claimed to respect all of her parents rules except this one. I asked her why it was so important that she date out of her race, and she responded with a good argument. “People can’t help who they fall in love with, and if they try to restrict an entire group of people from their lists of dating material, then someone could be passing up the chance of a lifetime to fall in love. The chance is so small that you will actually find your true love, and if you limit yourself to one race, you’re just making that chance even smaller.” This sounded like a very reasonable answer to me but I still had to question the morals in Leslie disobeying her parents. Shouldn’t she listen to them until she’s at least 18 or listen to their reasoning behind not permitting interracial dating? Leslie had an answer ready for this question also. “I do listen to them about everything but this, because their reasons are not justifiable. They have no real reason for being against my boyfriend; they’re just not used to the idea. They would probably rather I’d be with a white person who beats me than my boyfriend who treats me like gold.” Well, if that is the case then I agree with Leslie. Parents can’t expect their children to obey rules that don’t have any grounds for their reasoning.

Jake

Interviewer: Sonya Carmack

The second interview I conducted was with a 17 year old white male. I started off by telling “Jake” the topic of the interview which was parental involvement in their child’s social activities. I first questioned him about his curfew. Jake explained that he didn’t have a curfew because he usually comes home at a reasonable hour, and if he didn’t come home until very late, there would be a good enough excuse for his parents. That sounded fair enough so I proceeded with my next question. I asked Jake if his parents permitted him to engage in illegal activities such as drink and/or smoke. His answer surprised me. It was unusual but it did make sense.

“My parents know that they can’t stop me from drinking or smoking on weekends when I hang out with my friends. No matter what they could try to do, it wouldn’t do any good. Most kids are like that. Because of this, my parents actually would rather me stay in the house if I plan on drinking. It might sound like bad parenting, but if they didn’t let me stay in the house and drink then me and my friends would be out on the roads drinking and driving like so many other teenagers with more ‘strict’ parents, which is even worse. My parents also try to be very understanding when it comes to drugs and alcohol. They like to know what I’m doing and where I’m going to be doing it. If I knew that they would not allow me to do things that I wanted to do then I would end up lying and sneaking around behind their backs like most other teens must do with their intolerant parents.” This sounded to me like a common situation. Most teens that I know also lie to their parents about their plans for the night or other various things. If parents would try to be more understanding then maybe it would eliminate the lying and sneaking most teens feel they must do to stay out of trouble when really it would probably just lead to more trouble. When children are going to do what they want regardless, then parents should learn to accept it and maybe then they could have more say on where, when, and how it happens.

Lack of support from parents has negative outcomes for both males and females. For males, it is linked with a heavier use of alcohol, and females tend to be more depressed and likely to participate in greater amounts of sexual activity.

Source: Advocates for Youth: Parent-Child Communication. Available from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/factsheet/sparchd.htm>

peer pressure

Beth Ann, age 16

- Q** *Do you sit down with your parents and talk about the pressures and difficulties you may face in your adolescent years?*
- A** *No, because I feel that they cannot help. I feel more comfortable talking about sex because it isn't really considered bad for you. For some odd reason, I feel more comfortable talking to my dad about that stuff.*
- Q** *Who do you rely on the most for support?*
- A** *I rely on my friends the most. Definitely not my parents. My friends are going through the same stuff as I am, so they really understand and will not lecture me.*
- Q** *Who has been the most helpful in your achievements?*
- A** *My cousin because he is two years older and has experienced everything.*

Peer Relationships

Social interactions with peers build upon and refine rules and norms of social interaction that children first encounter in their families. Although many adults assume that the influence of peers on adolescents is negative, the implications of peer relationships are often more positive than negative... Indeed, developing cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with peers is considered essential for successful negotiation of life. Children who have poor peer relationships are at risk for later life difficulties, especially school dropout and criminal behavior.

Friendships in particular can provide emotional security and intimacy and can often serve as an additional source of support outside of the family, especially in times of crisis. Good friendships are one of life's pleasures and can buffer against mental health problems and destructive behavior.

Source: "Preventing Problems vs. Promoting the Positive: What Do We Want for Our Children." *Child Trends Research Brief*. May, 2000.

Damien, age 17

I have no curfew, so I don't bother coming home at night unless I'm hungry.

- Q** *Do you sit down with your parents and talk about the pressures and difficulties you may face in your adolescent years?*
- A** *No, because I am never home. I have no curfew, so I don't bother coming home at night unless I am hungry.*
- Q** *Who do you rely on the most for support?*
- A** *I rely on myself because I am the only one that is always there for me.*
- Q** *Who has been the most helpful in your achievements?*
- A** *My friends have helped me the most, but usually I do everything for myself.*

Tyra, age 16

Q *Do you sit down with your parents and talk about the pressures and difficulties you may face in your adolescent years?*

A *I talk with my mom about drugs, boys, peer pressure and stuff like that but I don't feel comfortable having conversation about really personal matters such as sex.*

Q *Why do you feel uncomfortable talking about sex but not drugs?*

A *My Mom feels much more strongly about me and sex than drugs because she knows that I would never do drugs, but there comes a time in everyone's life when they have sex, which worries her, and that is what puts the strain on our conversations about it.*

Q *Who do you rely most on for support?*

A *Myself and my mom because we are two people in this world that I know will never let me down.*

Q *Who has helped you in your achievements?*

A *Family—they'll always be there to encourage me and to back me up.*



Jeremy, age 15

Q *Do your parents talk to you about the difficulties you may face in life?*

A *They give me support when I need it.*

Q *Are you comfortable speaking to your parents about sex and drugs?*

A *Yes, if they ask me about sex and/or drugs, I answer them honestly.*

Q *Who do you rely on for support?*

A *When I need help with anything, I talk to myself and to God.*

Q *Who has helped you in your achievements?*

A *My mother and myself.*



peer pressure

Walter, age 15

Q *Do you discuss pressures or difficulties you may face with your parents?*

A *Yes, I feel very comfortable with my parents. We have an extremely open relationship.*

Q *Do your parents talk to you or give you advice about sex or drugs?*

A *They have already been through that stuff so they can give me advice from their experiences.*

Q *Is there anyone you rely on for support?*

A *I rely on myself. I try not to put too much trust into other people or lean on anyone for support, because I feel that I should be able to rely on myself.*

Q *Who do you feel, if anyone, has been helpful in your achievements?*

A *My dad has been helpful, because when I get out of line he's the first one to set me straight.*

36% of teens feel pressure from their peers to smoke pot

40% feel pressure from their peers to have sex

37% feel pressure to steal something from a store

Source: Goldstein, Andrew. "Paging All Parents." *Time*. July 3, 2000. 37.

Xavia, age 16

78% of teens get advice from their parents in times of need.

Source: Talking With Teens: The YMCA Parent and Teen Survey. May, 2000.

Q *Do your parents talk to you about the difficulties of being a teenager?*

A *The only things we talk about are sex and drugs. My mom gives me advice on how to deal with things that I could encounter.*

Q *Who do you rely on for support?*

A *I don't like to take advice or lean on other people, so I basically just rely on myself.*

Q *Who do you think has been helpful in all of your achievements?*

A *My mother because she always pressures me to do things even when I don't want to because she knows that it will be best for me in the long run.*

smoking, drinking & drugs

Sarah, age 15

Q Do your parents encourage you to say no to drugs?

A Not really. They tell me that it is not socially acceptable, but that they did drugs when they were in high school. Actually, they still smoke pot and don't really care if I do or not. They don't give it to me or anything, but don't care if I get it elsewhere.

National studies show that the average age when a child first tries alcohol is **11** and for marijuana it is age **12**.

Source: "Talking to Your Kids about Drugs."
Available from: www.talkingwithkids.org

Q Do your parents allow you to drink at home or at parties? How do they feel about drinking and driving?

A They do let me drink at home when I have friends over or if they are having a party. I can drink at parties, but they do not want me to drive or ride with someone who has had too much to drink. They realize that everyone at the party will drink some, so they tell me to pick someone who hasn't had a lot.

Q Do your parents smoke and do they care if you smoke?

A No, they do not smoke cigarettes. We have never discussed it because I also don't smoke cigarettes. I have friends that do, but they never do it in front of my parents.

Alexia, age 14

Q Do your parents encourage you to say no to drugs?

A My parents do not allow me to do drugs. I think that if I was caught doing drugs, they would send me to a rehabilitation facility. They are very serious about that stuff because my uncle died from an overdose and a cousin has had a lot of trouble dealing with drug use.

41% of adolescents report that they see people their own age taking drugs or drinking alcohol every day.

Source: "Kids These Days" A Special Report
from Public Agenda, June, 1997.

Q Do your parents allow you to drink at home or at parties? How do they feel about drinking and driving?

A My parents feel the same about alcohol. They do drink occasionally when we go out to dinner, but they would never even let me have a sip. I would never think of asking! I don't go to parties yet, but when I do, I am pretty sure that I better not come home with alcohol on my breath!!!

Q Do your parents smoke and do they care if you smoke?

A My parents do not smoke and neither do I. I have friends that do and I just don't know why they do it. My parents would kill me, but a lot of my friends' parents smoke and let their kids smoke too. I think that is weird!

dating

Tobias, age 18

Q *What kind of limitations do your parent put on you for dating?*

A *I make my own decisions about who I date because my parents know I'll make the right choice. I won't date anyone out of my race or someone significantly younger than me anyway.*

Q *Do you talk to your parents about your relationships if they get serious?*

A *I can talk to my mom about what's going on, but I don't ask for advice. I like to work things out on my own.*

Q *Do your parents talk to you about who you are dating?*

A *No, I have been dating my girlfriend for three weeks now, and she still hasn't met my family.*



Maria, age 17

Q *Do your parents put limitations such as race or age on the people that you date?*

A *They don't let me go out with anyone that is older than 21, but they don't believe that a person's color matters in a relationship.*

Q *Do you disagree or agree with this restriction?*

A *Yes, I think that it's very reasonable. I wouldn't date anyone that old anyway. It would be statutory rape.*

Q *If your relationship gets serious, do you talk about it with your parents?*

A *I don't feel comfortable talking about personal things like how my relationship is going with either of my parents.*

Q *Do your parents like to meet your boyfriend?
Does this bother you?*

A *My mother likes to have conversations with him when he comes over to my house. I think it's too much. She's embarrassing.*



Shanita, age 16

Q *Have your parents ever put restrictions on who you're allowed to date?*

A *I can't date any boys that are more than a year older than me. Other than that I'm free to make my own choice.*

Q *Do you agree with them that you shouldn't be allowed to date older people?*

A *Sometimes, it depends on who the guy is. Some guys who are a couple years older still look or act just as immature as boys my age. It's also a little unfair because girls mature faster than boys, so I'm stuck with guys who seem even younger than me.*

Q *When you're involved in a serious relationship, do you feel you can ask your parents for advice?*

A *No, my parents aren't who I turn to for advice about boys. They are so old that they forget what it's like to be young and dating. I usually go to my friends and ask them what I should do.*

Q *Do you think your parents get too involved in your relationships?*

A *They usually don't ask much about who I'm dating, and they hardly ever meet them. Of course, I've never been really serious about anyone yet.*

Cecelia, age 17

... they know not to pry too much.

Q *Do your parents care if you date people who are older than you or out of your race?*

A *They don't care if I date people out of my race as long as I don't end up marrying someone of a different color, and older guys are okay if they are not ridiculously older.*

Q *Do you agree with these rules?*

A *Eventually, if I fall in love with someone, I'm going to marry him regardless of his race. As far as age goes, I wouldn't want to date anyone too much older anyway.*

Q *If a relationship you were in got really serious, could you talk to your parents about it or ask them for advice?*

A *Yes, we have a completely open relationship and can talk about anything.*

Q *Do you feel that they get overly involved in who you date?*

A *No, my parents don't get too involved in my relationships. They like to have him over for dinner, but they know not to pry too much.*

Teens Ready to Talk

Teenagers who have strong emotional attachments with their parents are much less likely to become sexually active or pregnant at an early age, or cause a pregnancy, and more likely to use contraception if sexually active.

Half of teens say they "trust" their parents most for reliable information about birth control, only 12% say a friend.

Seven out of ten teens said they were ready to hear what their parents thought they were not ready to hear. When asked why teenage girls have babies, 78% of white and 70% of African-American girls said it was lack of communication between the girl and her parents.

Source: General Facts and Stats. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Available from <http://www.teenpregnancy.org/genfact.htm>

too strict/not strict enough

Jermaine, age 14

They trust me to be responsible, and I haven't let them down yet.

Q *Do you have a curfew?*

A *No, my parents don't have to tell me to be home at a certain time because they know I never come home really late anyway.*

Q *Do you feel that your parents are ever overprotective?*

A *They're not overprotective, and they don't worry about me. They trust me to be responsible, and I haven't let them down yet.*

Q *Are you allowed to do things which are against the law such as drink or smoke?*

A *They let me drink sometimes when I'm with them. When I'm out, they leave it up to me to make my own choices.*

Q *Do your parents say that you can hang out with certain people but not with others?*

A *No, they let me choose my own friends. I've never had any that they disapproved of though, and if I did, I don't know how they would react.*

G.B., age 15

I do it anyway is all, just behind their backs.

Q *Do you have a curfew? If so, do you agree with it?*

A *I don't have a set curfew, but my mother gives me a certain time to be home every night. It's usually around 11:00, and no I don't agree. I absolutely hate it.*

Q *Do you feel that your parents are too overprotective?*

A *Oh, yes. They always want to know who I'm talking on the phone with, what about, where I'm going, and everything else. They're so nosy.*

Q *Do your parents let you drink, smoke, or do anything else that would be illegal?
How does this affect you?*

A *Nope, they don't let me do anything against the law. I do it anyway is all, just behind their backs. I think it would be better if they did let me because it would reduce the risk of getting in trouble by doing it outside of my home.*

Q *Are there certain people that you are not allowed to hang out with?*

A *Only one person is strictly off limits because I tend to get into trouble with her. I'm free to choose whoever else though.*

Asagi, age 17

Q Do your parent have a curfew set for you?

A No, they stopped trying to control me back when I was like 14 because I quit listening to them anyway.

Q Do you feel that your parents are very overprotective of you?

A They like to know where I'm going and who I'm going with especially when it comes to white girls.

Q Do your parents approve of you doing illegal things such as drinking and smoking?

A No, they know that I drink but they don't approve of it.

Q Are there any certain people that you can't be friends with?

A I can hang out with basically anyone. They just don't like white girls for some reason.

When teens speak about their relationships, it is clear that they place a high value on adults who give them positive attention, care about their progress, provide structure in their lives, and require responsible behavior.

Source: Playing Their Parts – Public Agenda. March 1999.
Available from <http://www.publicagenda.org>

Allowing children to make all kinds of good choices will give them and their parent's confidence that they will make good choices about things that really matter like use of drugs and alcohol.

Source: Talking with Kids.
Available from: www.talkingwithkids.org

They trust me to stay out of trouble

Angelina, age 18

Q Do you have a curfew?

A No, when I turned 18, I was legally an adult so they stopped with the curfew.

Q Do your parents ever act really overprotective of you?

A They trust me to stay out of trouble and to do the right thing, I've never been in trouble before, so they feel they have nothing to worry about.

Q Are you allowed to drink, or indulge in any other illegal activity? Does this have any effect on you?

A I have a glass of wine with my mother every now and then but that's it. As far as how it affects me—I just have to be sneaky about it, but I still do it.

Q Do your parents tell you that there are certain people that you can't hang out with?

A Well, I don't hang out with anyone real crazy or anything like that, so they let me choose my own friends.

academics

Parent Involvement Critical to Success

Parent involvement is critical to students' academic success. Adolescents who feel that their parents care about their academic achievements and take part in their school activities often have higher grades than teens who do not perceive the same things.

Source: Advocates for Youth: Parent-Child Communication.
Available from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/factsheet/fsparchd.htm>

Enrique, age 16

Q *Do you think that your grades would be different if your parents were more involved or less involved?*

A *They are not involved hardly at all, and if they were, I don't think it would make much of a difference.*

Q *Do your parents ask to see your report card?*

A *Only when they know I have one.*

Q *Do they go to parent teacher conferences or contact your teachers? How does this affect you and your grades?*

A *No, they don't ever do anything like that, but if they did, it might make me try harder to get good grades.*

Q *Do your parents care about your grades? If so, are there consequences for bad grades?*

A *No, I have bad grades and they don't do anything because they don't care.*

Q *Are there any standards that they have set for you and your future?*

A *They have always wanted me to be a singer.*

Zoey, age 15

Q *If your parents were more involved in your academic progress, do you think that your grades would be better?*

A *They want me to do good, but they don't really put pressure on me or anything, so my grades would probably stay the same.*

Q *Do they ask to see your report card?*

A *Yes, always.*

Q *Do your parents go to parent teacher conferences or contact your teachers?*

A *Only if I'm failing a class, they will talk or meet with my teachers but that is usually it.*

Q *Are there any consequences for you if you get bad grades?*

A *They don't yell or punish me or anything, but they do encourage me to do better.*

Q *Are there any expectations set for you by your parents?*

A *They expect me to have a good attitude at school and toward my teachers.*

According to surveys there are inconsistencies in how parents and children view their involvement:

92% of parents say they are interested in their child's schoolwork

75% of kids said that this was true

77% of parents say they help kids with their homework to ensure that they learn more

60% of kids said that this was true

3% of teachers say that parents are deeply involved in their child's education

Source: Goldstein, Andrew. "Paging All Parents."
Time, July 3, 2000. 37.

Beth, age 16

Q *If your parents were more or less involved in your academic progress, do you think your grades would be different?*

A *I work for my grades myself, so I don't think that they would be significantly different.*

Q *Do they ask to see your report card?*

A *Definitely, it's expected in my family.*

Q *Are parent teacher conferences or meetings normal in your family?*

A *If they saw a change in my grades they would contact my teachers but they don't go to PTA or anything.*

Q *What are the consequences for getting bad grades?*

A *They don't yell at me or anything, they just encourage me to do better.*

Q *Do you have certain standards that they expect you to meet?*

A *The only standards that they expect are the standards that I've set for myself over the years. Considering my past academic progress, if all of the sudden I started getting F's, then they would expect better.*



John, age 17

They want me to do the best that I can.

Q *Do you believe your grades would be different if your parents were less involved?*

A *I think they would definitely be worse. Parents are always telling you to study.*

Q *Do your parents ask to see your report card?*

A *They don't ask to see it, but they know it's coming so I gladly hand it to them.*

Q *Are your parents involved in going to parent teacher conferences or contacting your teachers? How does this affect you?*

A *They don't contact my teachers, but my teachers sure do contact my parents a lot. I think it helps my grades, because then my parents tell me what to do to make them better.*

Q *Do your parents care when you get bad grades? What are the consequences?*

A *Yeah, they care, but they don't punish me or anything.*

Q *Do your parents set standards for you?*

A *Yes and no. They want me to do the best that I can but they don't push me too hard. They want me to experience high school without my face down in a book all the time.*

74% of parents say that they do more for their children's education than their parents did for them.

Source: Public Agenda: Playing Their Parts.
March, 1999.

extracurricular activities

Jennifer, age 15

They always come to support me and that makes me feel good.

Q *Do your parents encourage you to get involved in sports and/or clubs?*

A *Yeah, they like me to get involved because it builds my self-esteem, which helps me become a leader.*

Q *If you join a club or a team, do you feel that your parents are overly involved? If so, does this bother you?*

A *No, I don't think they're overly involved but if they were it wouldn't bother me.*

Q *Do your parents come to watch you if you play sports?*

A *Yes, they always come to support me and that makes me feel good.*

Female athletes are less likely to get pregnant, begin having sex later, have sex less often, have fewer partners, and are more likely to use contraception than non-athletes.

Source: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Available from <http://www.teenpregnancy.org>

33% of adolescents have reported that they are alone without supervision when they get home from school.

Source: "Kids These Days". A Special Report from Public Agenda. April, 1997.

Reducing the Risks

In general, researchers have found that involvement in extracurricular activities is associated with positive development. For example, recent research has shown that involvement in at least one school club decreases the chances of a youth's engagement in risk-taking behaviors, reduces the probability of a non-marital teen birth and increases the chances of high school completion for teens who are at risk for school dropout.

Source: "Preventing Problems vs. Promoting the Positive: What Do We Want for Our Children."
Child Trends Research Brief. May, 2000.

Q *Do your views and you parents view of extra-curricular involvement differ?*

A *My dad wants me to play basketball, but I really don't like it.*

Q *Do you feel that your success in a sport is due to your parent's encouragements?*

A *Yes, I probably wouldn't even be involved in anything if it wasn't for their encouragement.*

Q *Do you ever feel that they push you too hard?*

A *No, but if they did push me, I know that they're just trying to help.*

Q *Which comes first in your parent's perspective; academics or sports?*

A *Academics—you have to have the smarts in order to be good at a sport. If you don't have good grades, then you can't even go out anyway.*

Pedro, age 17

Q *Are your parents encouraging when it comes to extracurricular involvement?*

A *Yes, because they want me to stay on the right track and accomplish things that they didn't. It keeps me out of trouble also.*

Q *If you join a sport or club do your parents get overly involved? If so, does this bother you?*

A *My dad gets involved but not too much. He comes to all of my games, and I respect him for that.*

Q *Do you and your parent's views on extracurricular activities differ?*

A *Yeah, because they expect me to make a college dream out of it, but I only play for the love of the game.*

Q *Do you feel that your success in sports is due to your parents?*

A *I can't tie it all into them because even if they weren't there, I would still play the same, but I do appreciate their encouragement.*

Q *Do you ever feel that they push you too hard?*

A *They're pushy, but it should be that way. I don't think I push myself hard enough.*

Q *In your parents view, what come first: academics or sports?*

A *Academics will always be the most important.*

Teens in community service have a

75% lower school drop out rate, and

43% lower pregnancy rates.

Source: Talking With Teens: The YMCA Parent and Teen Survey
Final Report. May, 2000.

Ralph, age 17

Q *Do your parents encourage you to be involved in extracurricular activities?*

A *Not really. They don't have to because I do it myself.*

Q *Do they get overly involved in your sports or club activities? If so, does it bother you?*

A *They do get involved, for instance they're the presidents of the Booster Club, but it doesn't bother me because I know it's all for me.*

Q *If you play a sport, do your parents always attend your games?*

A *They come if they don't have any prior engagements, but it's not their first priority.*

Q *Are your views and your parent's views about extracurricular involvement the same?*

A *Basically yes, except my dad is always trying to get me to play basketball, but I really only want to play soccer.*

Q *Is most of your success in a sport due to your parents?*

A *No, I encourage myself more than they do.*

Q *What is more important to them: academics or sports?*

A *Academics. They don't want me to base my life on sports. They would rather me get a good job and education.*

extracurricular activities

Jennie, age 16

I don't think I would try nearly as hard without their encouragement.

Q *Are your parents encouraging when it comes to being involved in sports or clubs?*

A *Yes, they like me to play soccer and volleyball, and they always tell me not to give up.*

Q *Are your parents overly involved in your sporting activities? Does it bother you?*

A *They're not overly involved to the point it bothers me, but they take their part.*

Q *Do your parents come to watch you play sports?*

A *My mother makes it to all of my games, but my father can't because of work.*

Q *How are your views different than you parents when it comes to sports?*

A *My mother is always saying she wants me to play sports all year round, but I don't want to. I'd rather just play out the season and then wait until next year.*

Q *Do you believe that your success is due to your parents?*

A *Yes, I don't think I would try nearly as hard without their encouragement.*

Q *Do you ever feel that they push you too hard?*

A *Yeah, sometimes it seems like they never quit talking about sports: it really tires me out.*

Q *Does academics or sports come first according to your parents?*

A *Academics.*





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