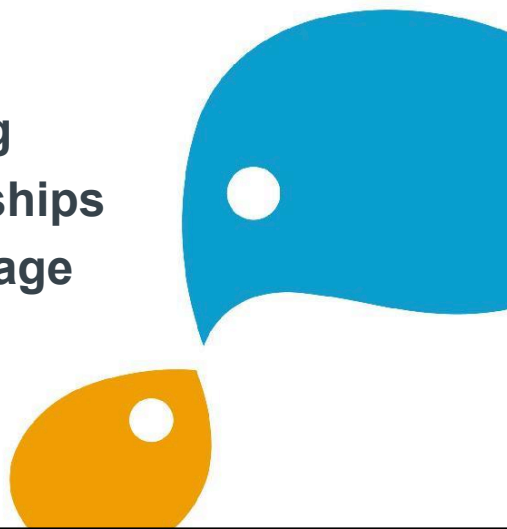


Discovering Your Family's Strengths: A Five-Part Webinar Series



PART 5

## Nurturing Strong Family Relationships During the Teenage Years



### Family Assets Webinar Series



\* Archive: [www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-strengths](http://www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-strengths)



## Session Overview

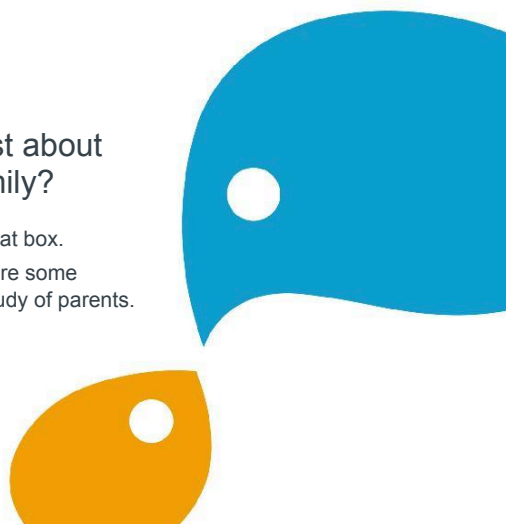
- Nurturing Relationships in Adolescence
  - How we think about them
  - What makes them work
  - What we found in our study
- What Kids and Parents Want in Their Relationships
- Starting Points for Parents
- Starting Points for People who Work with Families



## QUESTION

What do you enjoy most about being together as a family?

Please add your thoughts to the chat box.  
At the end of the webinar, we'll share some responses from our forthcoming study of parents.






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## Nurturing Family Relationships in Adolescence

- How we think about them
- What makes them work




### What Parents Continue to Hear . . .

“There are few situations in life more difficult to cope with than an adolescent son or daughter during the attempt to liberate themselves.”

— Anna Freud (1958)\*

\*Quoted, as factual, in *The New York Times*, 2014



## What Researchers Used to Think

- Primary need: Separate, detach emotionally
- Inevitable conflict, oppositional behavior
- No conflict = stunted development

“Parents were told to accept the adolescent’s rebellion, identity experimentation, and drive for emotional autonomy as normal and to be supportive in their role as the object of the adolescent’s dissatisfaction.”



Steinberg, L. (2000). The family at adolescence : Transition and transformation. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 27(2), 170–178.



## Why All the Parental Angst?

Parents and youth may experience their interactions (and their relationships) with each other in very different ways.

ISSUE	PARENT VIEWS*	YOUTH VIEWS*
Arguments, bickering	• Painful, hard to get over	• What fight?
e.g., clean room	• Sign of responsibility	• My business
	• Life skill, good habit	• Personal choice
	• Success as parent	• Waste of time

\* No, it doesn't always happen this way.

### MORAL FAILURE

Rejection of values, what I've taught

### WHATEVER

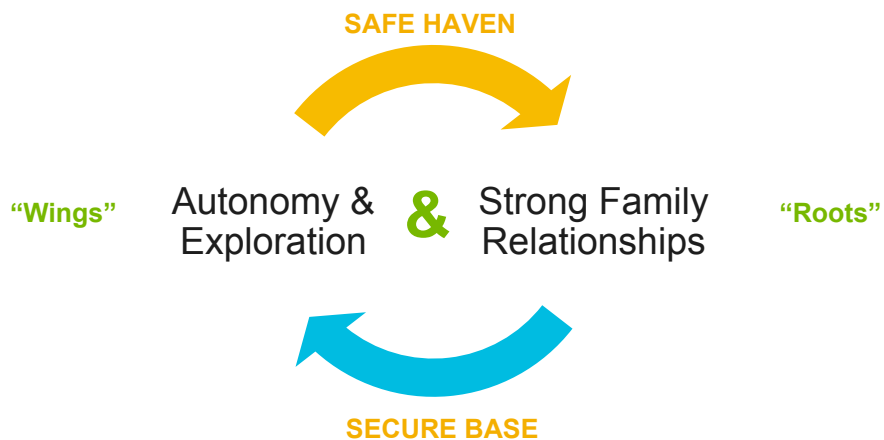
Lighten up, It's just a bed



Inspired by Steinberg, L. (2000). The family at adolescence : Transition and transformation. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 27(2), 170–178.



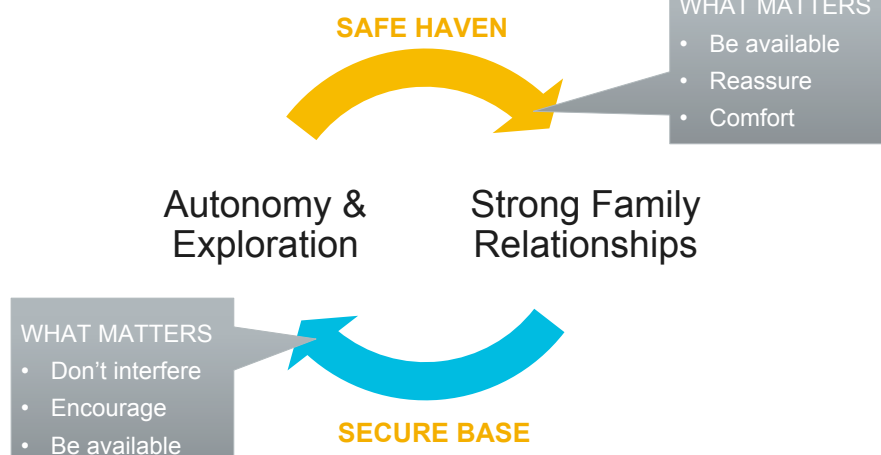
## Attachment in Adolescence



Adapted from Feeney, B. C., & Thrush, R. L. (2010). Relationship influences on exploration in adulthood: The characteristics and function of a secure base. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(1): 57–76. doi:10.1037/a0016961.

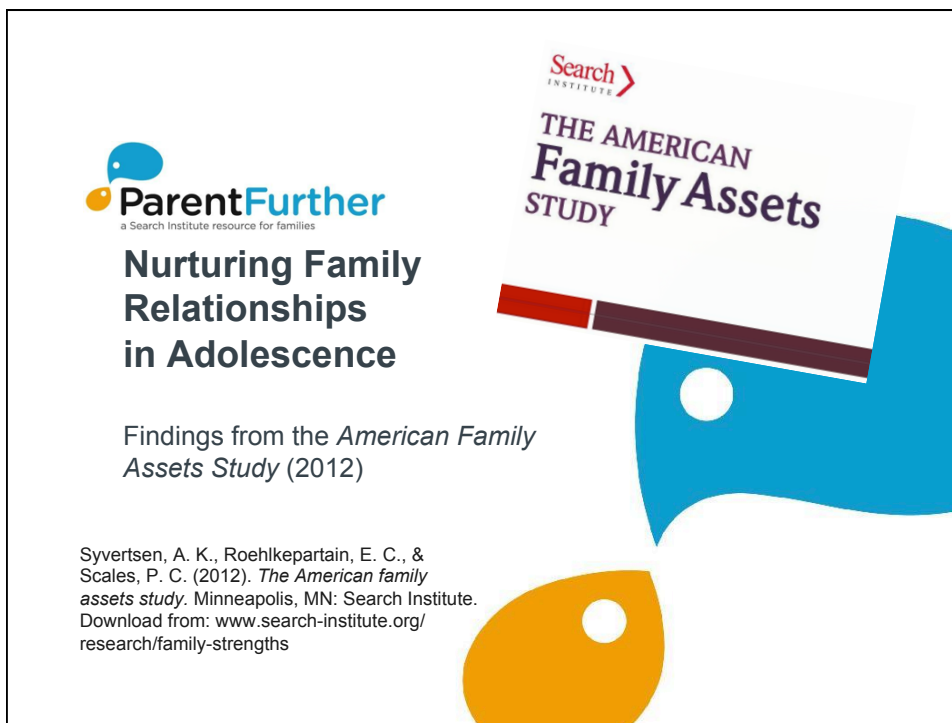


## Attachment in Adolescence



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## Nurturing Family Relationships in Adolescence

Findings from the *American Family Assets Study* (2012)

Syvertsen, A. K., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Scales, P. C. (2012). *The American family assets study*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.  
Download from: [www.search-institute.org/research/family-strengths](http://www.search-institute.org/research/family-strengths)

## THE AMERICAN Family Assets STUDY

- 1,511 families
  - One parenting adult
  - One 10 – 15 year old
- Oversampled
  - African Americans
  - Latino/Latina
  - Asian Americans
- Weighed to U. S. Census



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## Key Findings from the Study

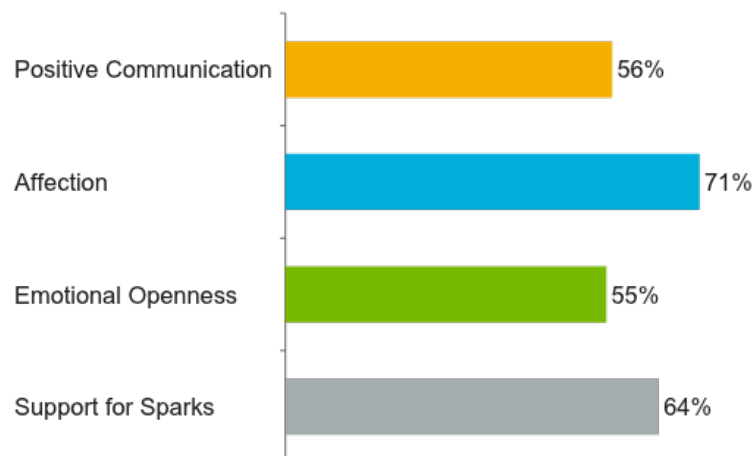
- 21 family strengths (Family Assets) identified
- Average family scores 47 out of 100 on an overall Family Assets Index
- Overall levels of family assets vary little, if at all, across different types of families
- Family assets are associated with a range of measures of youth and family well-being

### OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS

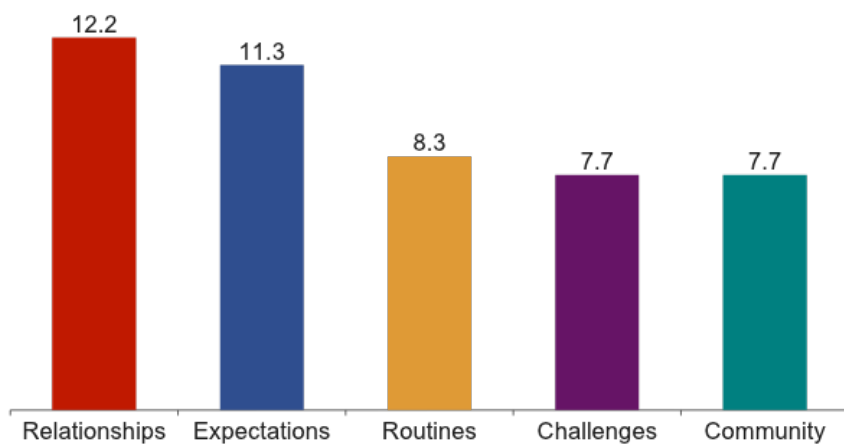
- [www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-assets](http://www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-assets)
- [disneydiscovertogether.com](http://disneydiscovertogether.com)



## Family Assets: Nurturing Relationships



## Levels of Family Asset Categories



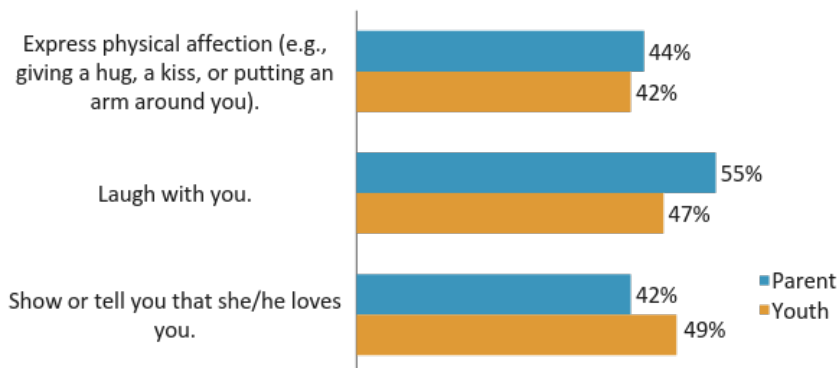
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Notes. Each category ranges from 0 to 20.

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## Affection

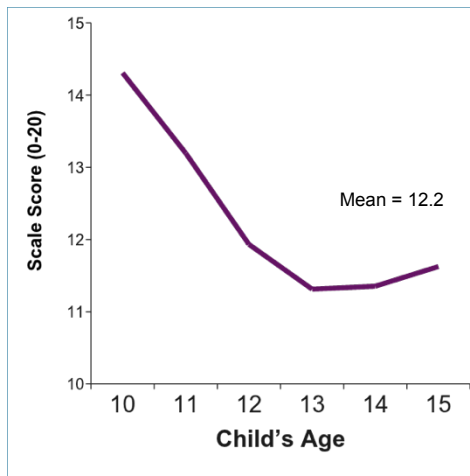
When you spend time with your child/parent, how often does she/he do each of the following? (Very often)



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## Nurturing Relationships, by Age of Child



### A relative strength

Levels of all categories of Family Assets decrease in early adolescence, then begin to rebound

Biggest drops:

- Maintaining routines
- Nurturing relationships



## POLL

Which of the key themes in the research is most important for parents to hear today? (Pick one.)

- Parent-youth relationships go through major changes as youth enter the teenage years.
- Most parents have positive relationships with their teenagers.
- Teens are better able to explore their place in the world when they have strong relationships with their parents.
- A key role that parents play is to be a "safe haven" when youth encounter setbacks and challenges.



## What Young People Say They Need in their Relationships with Parents

From Search Institute focus groups with youth in 2013.

### Be There for Me. Make Time. Listen.

“If you yell at me, it’s going to go in one ear and out the other. But if you talk to me, we can communicate!”



## Have High Expectations and Encourage Me



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## Ask Me, Value My Thoughts, and Respond to my Needs



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## What Parents Want in Their Relationships with Their Kids

From Search Institute focus groups with parents in 2013.

### Know I Care

#### Listen

*"You have to listen. You have to listen to their thought process and let the silence do all the heavy lifting for you."*

#### Show Interest



## Set Boundaries

*"I know I have a lot of strict rules at my house about it. You can only have it until a certain time. You cannot bring it to the kitchen table when we sit down and eat supper."*



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## Respect Each Other

*"Respect them. And expect them to respect you in return."*



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## Some Starting Points

- For Parents
- For People who Work with Families

## If You're a Parent (1)

- Keep balancing warmth and firmness
- Actively adapt your relationship to fit change
- Adjust as they work on emotional autonomy



## If You're a Parent (2)

- Connect with other parents
- Talk to other people who know your teen
- Notice and celebrate your emerging (and different) relationship



Remember: In almost all cases, getting/keeping the relationship on track is most important



## If You Work with Parents and Teens



- Reinforce that their relationship matters
- Create safe spaces where parents can connect
- Help them think through new ways of relating
- Distinguish: What's normal? What's not?





## POLL QUESTION

Based on your own experience and what you've heard today, what's one insight you'd offer a parent of a teenager about nurturing relationships in their family?

Write your ideas in the chat box.



# Questions?

## What Parents Like about Being Together

Being together, no electronics.  
 Being together outdoors in the fresh air  
 is very relaxing.  
 Being active and playing together.  
 We love getting creative and trying new recipes.  
 I like swimming with her  
 because I know she loves it.  
 When we have fun, laugh, and act silly together.  
 I enjoy being able to just spend time  
 with my family.



Quotes from a forthcoming Search Institute study  
 of parents of 4 to 12 year olds.



## Family Assets Webinar Archive

[www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-strengths](http://www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-strengths)



## Search Institute Workshops

### Discovering Your Family's Strengths

A workshop for parenting adults

### Engaging the New American Family

Relationship-based strategies for nurturing families' strengths

*More Info on these and other workshops:*

CALL: *Mary Shrader*: (800) 888-7828 ex. 526

VISIT: [www.search-institute.org/presentations-workshops](http://www.search-institute.org/presentations-workshops)



## Parenting Resources




Available at:  
[www.searchinstitutestore.org](http://www.searchinstitutestore.org)



**Preview**


## Coming in 2015: ParentFurther 2.0

Everyday steps to strengthen family relationships.




**EXPLORE YOUR  
FAMILY'S STRENGTHS**

*Take quizzes and get instant results to see how your family is building strengths and tackling challenges.*



**LEARN ABOUT IT &  
TALK ABOUT IT**

*Use research and discussion starters to focus on what's important to your family.*






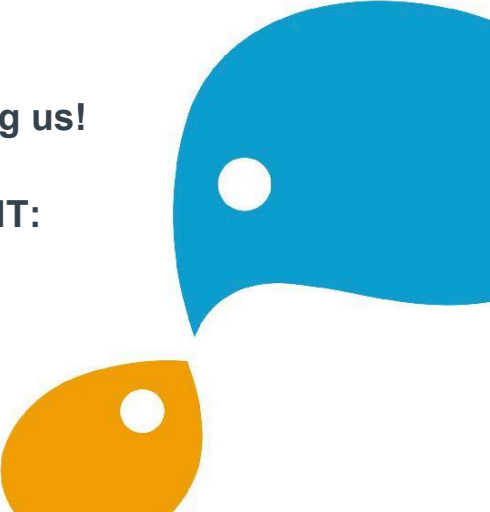
**TRY IT &  
TAKE IT FURTHER**

*Try new activities that deepen your family's relationships. Then create a plan to keep growing.*

Start discovering your family's strengths ▶

A new, interactive resource for families—and organizations that seek to engage families through their strengths

**Thank you for joining us!**

**VISIT AND COMMENT:**  
[www.parentfurther.com](http://www.parentfurther.com)