



Expectations v Reality

"You don't get what you deserve you get what you expect"

Parent involvement continues being a positive and powerful source of influence for the achievement of adolescents and young adults. Many parents might be surprised to learn that research shows that they have a strong influence on their teenagers.

Parents with high, and realistic expectations for their teens who communicate them clearly and encourage their adolescents to work hard in order to attain them, can make a difference in students' success.



Often, both parents and teachers misinterpret the teens' desire for autonomy as the cause of their detachment. Research has shown that adolescent students believe that they can do better at school if they know that their families are interested in their schoolwork and expect them to succeed, thus challenging the prevalent view that adolescents do not want their parents involved at all.

Expectations can ease our way through life when they roughly fit the next reality we encounter. They can facilitate our capacity to adjust to the new and different. Although we may not like the reality we anticipate, at least expectations can help us get prepared. Unprepared, we can be blindsided by what occurs. Realistic expectations can help develop resilience by providing the teen with an experience they can bounce back from with even more self-confidence having "learnt the lesson".

If parents can keep their expectations about adolescence realistic, then they reduce the likelihood of overreacting to some situations. This includes not unduly pressuring the adolescent by pushing them for unrealistic expectations of performance and conduct (all A's and no mistakes) or criticizing anything less than perfection as a relative failure.

Call to action:

- Aim for effort rather than perfection
- Encourage your teen to DO their best - they don't have to BE the best
- Reinforce a mind-set "there is no failure only feedback"
- Encourage them to try new things with your support
- Help them recognise what they can change and what they can't

[Source: Harvard Family Research Project](#)

"Keep high aspirations, moderate expectations, and small needs"

William Howard Stein