

FACT SHEET • SECONDARY

Helping Your Adolescent Child Handle Peer Pressure

Fitting in matters more in the adolescent years than at almost any other age, because the brain places a high value on what the peer group thinks, sometimes higher than what a parent thinks. That's not a character flaw; it's a normal part of learning to be part of a group. The aim isn't to remove peer influence but to help them notice it and choose well within it.



TIP 1

Talk about it before it happens

Discuss a tricky scenario in the calm of a car journey, not in the middle of one. Ask what they'd do if a friend pushed them to do something they weren't sure about.

TIP 2

Give them a ready-made excuse

A simple line like "my mum will kill me" lets them say no without losing face in front of their friends. Having the words ready matters more than having the willpower.

TIP 3

Ask about the friendship itself

If a friend keeps pushing them towards things that don't feel right, that says something about the friendship. Widen the conversation beyond the single incident.

TIP 4

Praise them when they push back

Notice out loud when they've stood up for their own choice, even in something small like what they wear. It tells them you saw it and it mattered.

TIP 5

Keep their circle wide

Friendships outside one tight group, through clubs, sport or family friends, give them somewhere else to belong if one group turns difficult. Don't let their whole social world sit in one place.