

# Parenting 2.0: Safeguarding Our Children in Challenging Times



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# Challenging times

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- ❑ The leading causes of death for children are accidents, homicide and suicide
  - ❑ In recent years more young people have died from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, HIV/aids, congenital birth defects, and diabetes COMBINED.
  - ❑ Many children have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences
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# Recommendations for parents

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- ❑ Bring back the family meal
  - ❑ Don't let technology steal your child
  - ❑ Avoid setting their room up to be a kingdom
  - ❑ Know where your child is and know their friends and their parents—Network
  - ❑ Support the school and let your child experience consequences
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# Current Issues:

## Driving and riding in cars

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- ❑ Approximately 3000 U.S. teens die in car accidents every year and most were not wearing seatbelts
- ❑ Graduated driving laws when enforced save lives
- ❑ Don't let your teen be "INTEXTICATED"
- ❑ Contract for life [www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org)



# More recommendations

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- ❑ Avoid putting children in the middle of divorce
  - ❑ Importance of modeling—Gandhi quote
  - ❑ Enjoy your children and let them know they are the children you always wanted
  - ❑ Make family the priority but don't try to be best friends with your child
  - ❑ Separate the deed from the "doer"
  - ❑ Teach restitution
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# Tips for Parents

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- ❑ Online activities are not just your child's business
  - ❑ Discuss online behavior with them and what information is appropriate to share
  - ❑ Be up front that you will investigate their postings, profiles, website etc. because you care!  
Take Charge!
  - ❑ Numerous programs allow parents to monitor cell phone and internet activity
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# Fathers need to be more involved

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- ❑ Reality is that “parent” is still a code word for Mom in most families
  - ❑ The supreme test of a society is can it teach men to be good fathers?  
Margaret Mead
  - ❑ Positive association between father involvement and child well being and academic success
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# Current Issues: Bullying and Suicide

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- ❑ Children who have been bullied have reported a variety of problems.
  - ❑ Studies reported positive associations between all bullying types and suicidal risks.
  - ❑ High risk groups include: LGBT and Special Education Students
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# Current Issues: Childhood & Teen Depression

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- ❑ Not a weakness and can't just "snap out of it"
  - ❑ More than sad, a mood disorder that affects a person thinks, feels, behaves
  - ❑ Depression may run in families but it is still not known if it is genetic or learned.
  - ❑ Estimates are that by end of teen years that 20% of adolescents will have suffered from depression
  - ❑ The majority do not received treatment
  - ❑ Untreated depression can lead to substance abuse, academic failure and even suicide
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# Symptoms of Teen Depression:

Present for more than two weeks and affects daily functioning

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- Persistent sad, irritable mood
  - Sense of hopelessness
  - Withdrawal from friends, family, activities
  - Lack of energy and enthusiasm
  - Changes in appetite & sleeping patterns
  - Suicidal thoughts
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# Depression is treatable

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- ❑ Depression may be related to brain chemicals and medication can be effective
  - ❑ Depression may be triggered by a stressful events such as loss or humiliation
  - ❑ Most effective treatments involve therapy and medication
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# Current Issues:

## Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents

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- Do not be afraid to talk to your child
  - Know the risk factors and warning signs
  - Act immediately to get help
  - Turn to school and community mental health resources
  - Tighten the circle of care that surrounds your child
  - Remove all lethal means: Get the gun out of the house
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# Warning signs of youth suicide

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- Suicide notes/social media posts
  - Threats plan/method/access
  - Depression (helplessness/hopelessness)
  - Giving away prized possessions
  - Making out a will
  - Dramatic changes in behavior
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# Protective factors

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- Good relationships with other youth
  - Seeks adult help when needed
  - Lack of access to suicidal means
  - Access to mental health care
  - Religiosity
  - School environment that encourages help seeking and promotes health
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# Protective factors

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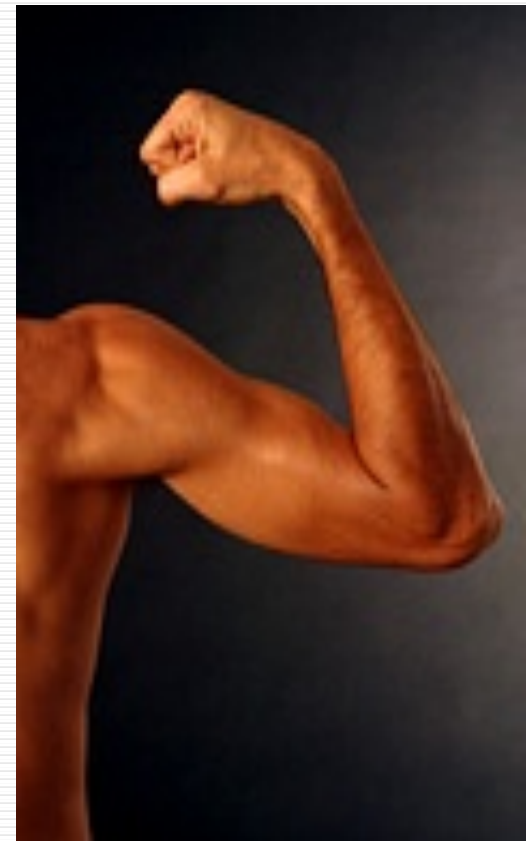
- ❑ Family cohesion and stability
  - ❑ Coping and problem solving skills
  - ❑ Positive self worth and impulse control
  - ❑ Positive connections to school and extracurricular participation
  - ❑ Successful academically
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# Resiliency

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- ❑ Learned behavior
- ❑ Importance of being surrounded by caring family and friends
- ❑ Utilize coping skills and vent strong emotions
- ❑ Keep an optimistic view
- ❑ [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)



# Recognize that all children need:

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- ❑ Three or more significant adults in their lives in addition to parents.
  - ❑ A sense of safety and belonging in the home, school, and community.
  - ❑ Three or more hours of organized activities weekly.
  - ❑ Adolescents need volunteer work.
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# In Conclusion

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Be involved in your child's life especially outside of school! YOU ARE THE PARENT!

[www.nova.edu/suicideprevention](http://www.nova.edu/suicideprevention)

*Scott's most recent book, [Suicide in schools](#): Routledge Publishing (2015)*

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Stephen Gray Wallace

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# Reality Gap – The Bad News

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- Loomis Chaffee – Things are not always what they seem to be
  - Represents the disconnect between the real world that kids live in vs. the “make believe” world their parents may think they live in!
  - A closer look at what they are doing and what concerns them
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# Reality Gap – The Bad News

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- Compared to what their parents say about them, young people are:
    - 8 x more likely to say they are using alcohol
    - 4 x more likely to say they are using other drugs
    - 2 x as likely to say they are having sex
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# Reality Gap – The Bad News

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- Also a disconnect on what is most important to teens
    - 83 percent vs. 48 percent (impaired driving)
    - 17 percent vs. 5 percent (teen suicide)
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# Reality Gap – Trust vs. Truth

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Los Angeles

Houston

■ 89 percent vs. 40 percent!

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# Reality Check

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- Communication is key
  - Anthony Wolf – *Get Out of My Life, But First Could You Drive Me to the Mall?*
  - Ben's story
  - Decision Types
    - Political analog
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# Decision Types

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- Avoiders
- Repeaters
- Experimenters

What makes the difference?

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# Key Influencers

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- Number one reason why kids make good choices =
  - Number one reason why kids make poor choices =
  - Number two reason why kids make good choices =
  - Tipping point!
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# Reality Gap – The Good News

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- The Good Teen by Rich Lerner

- 5 “Cs”
    1. Competence
    2. Confidence
    3. Connection
    4. Character
    5. Caring
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# Reality Gap – The Good News

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- These may coalesce in a 6<sup>th</sup> “C”

6. Contribution

All require a 7<sup>th</sup> “C” = Courage!

Relationship to resilience

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# Reality Gap – The Good News

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- My research shows that:

- The majority of teens say they feel happy almost every day and perceive themselves as friendly (77 percent), honest (72 percent) and smart (72 percent)
  - Most teens say their relationships with their parents make them feel good about themselves (82 percent), that their parents respect them (68 percent) and that they feel close to their parents (60 percent)
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# Reality Gap – The Good News

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- Additional research from ORCInternational:
    - A significant number of teens say they want to spend *more* time with their parents!
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# Foundations of Development

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- Camp story
  - Today's youth
  - How you can help
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# 4 Pillars of Success

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- Sense of Self
  - Rites of Passage
  - Positive Risk-Taking
  - Mentoring
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# Sense of Self - What to Do

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- Encourage kids to pursue a wide range of interests and a sampling of activities;
  - Support them as they adjust to separation from you and learn to solve problems on their own or to seek help from others; and
  - Teach and role model appropriate social skills that will aid them in establishing and maintaining friendships within the school and broader community.
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# Rites of Passage – What to Do

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- Tune into the things that seem important in their boy's lives, such as friends, sports, and awards;
  - Ask how they feel about transitions at school and at home;
  - Talk about the importance of their own personal milestones (when appropriate); and
  - Watch for signs of happiness, joy, stress, anxiety, or depression around recent or impending change.
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# Positive Risks – What to Do

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- Tune into the things that seem important in their boy's lives, such as friends, sports, and awards;
  - Ask how they feel about transitions at school and at home;
  - Talk about the importance of their own personal milestones (when appropriate); and
  - Watch for signs of happiness, joy, stress, anxiety, or depression around recent or impending change.
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# Mentoring – What to Do

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- Plain and simple, you can be purposeful about establishing supportive, mentoring relationships with our children. One good way to do that is to point out the efficacy of such relationships in producing positive youth outcomes.
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# This I Believe

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- The Power of Presence – Debbie Hall
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# In Conclusion

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Stephen's book and blog/website:

*Reality Gap – Alcohol, Drugs and Sex ...  
What Parents Don't Know and Teens  
Aren't Telling* (Union Square  
Press/Sterling Publishing)

[StephenGrayWallace.com](http://StephenGrayWallace.com)

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# Q & A

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