

A Letter to Parents: Navigating the Teen Years

SAFESITTER

Advice and encouragement from Dr. Sara LP Ross, Medical Director, Safe Sitter, Inc.

Then vs. Now



- Unsupervised neighborhood play
- Limited TV/media (PG-13 max before 9pm)
- Little contact during the day
- Parents knew your friends and their parents

- Constant communication via screens
- Social media & GPS tracking
- Greater sense of danger
- Friends may be online, not local



**BEING A PARENT OF A
TEEN THESE DAYS IS BOTH
DAUNTING AND HUMBLING.**

— Sara LP Ross, MD

What Hasn't Changed

Some things about the teen years are timeless.

Puberty & Emotional Growth

- Their bodies and feelings are changing
- Teens need empathy more than fixes
- Normalize all emotions: sadness, anger, joy
- Listening helps them develop emotional intelligence



Independence & Risk Taking

- Expect boundary-pushing
- Mistakes help teens grow
- Don't rush to fix — unless safety is at risk
- Let them build resilience



Social Connection

- Belonging is a basic teen need
- Help them navigate friendship changes
- Discuss healthy online behavior
- Set screen time boundaries
- Promote in-person conflict resolution



Safety & Presence

- Teens want to feel safe and seen
- Your presence is more powerful than any app
- Be available emotionally and physically
- Celebrate wins, and offer support after losses



**Parenting a teen is one of life's biggest challenges — and greatest joys.
Be present. Be supportive. Be proud.**

— Sara LP Ross, MD, Medical Director, Safe Sitter®, Inc.