

Raising a Tween



Children ages **9 to 12** are often called “tweens” or “tweeners,” because they’re between the “young child” stage and the teenage years.

This period can’t be easily defined because so much emotional and physical growth occurs, and because it unfolds uniquely for every child.

Some remain petite while others experience growth spurts. Some still treasure time with you and play with dolls or action figures, while others giggle at your habits and question whether you know best.

During this period, girls’ self-esteem can plummet as their bodies experience physical changes. Reassure them that their development is appropriate and is happening to their friends, too.

Boys may be self-conscious if they aren’t as tall or as sports-inclined as their peers. Tell them often that being the best at what *they* enjoy doing is more important than fitting a particular mold.

The closer both genders get to age 12, the more likely your voice of reason will be clouded by outside perspectives. This shift is natural, most child development experts say.

The key is to insure that by the time they reach the latter tween years, you have grounded them in your family’s values and expectations. As they wobble between independence and being your baby, this, more than anything, will keep them centered.



