

Loving Your



Tween

It's easy to look at your 9 to 12 year old and see hints of the baby you once cuddled, but most children in this age range are eager to leave babyhood behind and spread their wings.

If you're the parent of a "tween" – a child between early elementary school age and the teenage years – accept that no two are alike. One child in this age range might still enjoy playing with dolls and snuggling, while another finds you embarrassing and craves time with friends.

There can be a big gap in the interests and behavior of kids ages 9 to 12. However, most tweens do have some things in common:

Tweens like feeling independent, but still want to know that you care enough to monitor their activities and give them structure.

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Tweens may be insistent about making their own decisions, but they may secretly want you to advise them on how to choose wisely.

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Tweens may appear disrespectful or defiant, when in reality, they're struggling with mood swings or with insecurity. Try to determine what may be the underlying issue, then brainstorm with them about how to react more appropriately.

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Tweens want to fit in, yet they long to be different in a positive way, by having an impressive quality or talent recognized. Help nurture your child's strengths in art, music or sports, or in behaviors like kindness and honesty.

