

# Transition & change

## The 'tween years'

For most parents, their children grow up too fast. They are facing the pressures of everyday life in our competitive world, they are approaching puberty with all the huge hormonal changes that brings, as well as physical and mental challenges and stress of school work and exams. Along with this, you will both be thinking about senior school.

The pre-teens are an unsettled time and your child will often be more self-conscious and sometimes care more about what their friends think than what you think. This is sometimes known as the 'tween years'. They have a growing confidence in themselves but they still need your support and protection. Provide suitable limits, with some flexibility, for them to explore and experiment with situations safely. It is a time when they can be most vulnerable and also trusting and do not understand many of the potential dangers. As parents it is important to keep a balance, so they stay safe, but are allowed a little more freedom. Mobile phones help tweens develop closer bonds with their peers and, as a result, they push away from their parents at an earlier age. Friends are very important at this age.

Make time to talk to your child and think about how you communicate. Try to avoid constantly nagging or you run the risk of your child 'tuning out' permanently. Your preteen is looking for their own identity, try to be an advisor but set clear boundaries if certain behaviour during the transition from 'tween' to teenager is becoming a major concern. The main thing is to pick your battles, and let some go.

### Moving on

When your child starts senior school, it's a big change for them. They're used to being the oldest in their school - soon they'll be the youngest.

Everything will be brand new and much bigger. They'll have more books, more teachers and more homework. Moving school can be scary but exciting too, so give your child lots of support. Make sure they know what's happening and make your decisions together. Visiting the school with your child to meet their teachers before they start can help. Find out who else is going to their new school - can you go together on the first day?

**1**

One minute he acts like a little boy and the next he's a stroppy, rude 'tweenager'.

**2**

He may be feeling a bit lost and unable to cope with the changes he is going through.

**3**

Try to take some time out with him, where he can talk to you in confidence.