

# Tips for Parenting Transition-Aged Youth/Emerging Adults

Parents and caregivers play a significant role in the lives of emerging adults. Consider the following tips when making decisions about your participation.

## Listen more than you talk



Instead of questions and advice, acknowledge with fewer words like “Oh, I see”. It’s hard for a youth to think clearly or constructively when someone is questioning, blaming, or advising them. There’s a lot of help to be had from a simple “Help me understand.” or “Can you say more about that?.” Words like these, coupled with a curious and caring attitude, invite youth to explore their own thoughts and feelings, and possibly come up with their own solutions.

## Practice patience



Your emerging adult is in a transition, and any transition requires patience. Remind yourself that human beings learn through their direct experience. Every single thing they go through (good, bad, and ugly) are stepping stones to help them gather, integrate, and use important information that they’ll need now and as an adult.

## Encourage independence

Youth transitioning into adulthood are no longer adolescents and not yet fully mature adults. You give your love, your labor, your knowledge, and your experience—so that one day your child will have the inner strength and confidence to leave you. Emerging adults will often shift needs—one day being dependent, needing you there, and another day being autonomous, needing distance from you.



## Allow learning from natural consequences

Think before rescuing your young adult from making a mistake. You may want to allow the natural consequences to do the talking and let them more effectively learn this way, rather than telling them what to do. Lessons of smaller consequence now can prevent future, more severe errors in judgment.

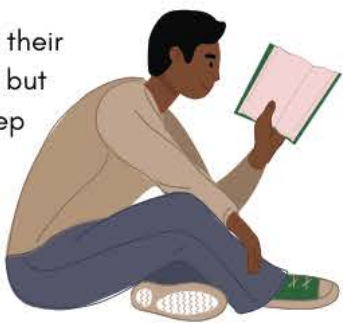
## Take care of yourself and your family.

Managing stress and keeping communication open means slowing down and focusing on what matters most. Don’t try to get through this alone. Take life one step at a time, and keep calm. Time-outs are allowed; communicate when composed and ready to listen. Give each other space. Let anyone – including yourself – walk away if they need to, without making a fuss. Set limits for disagreements.



## Do your own work

Parental expectations and the expectations society has for families and children can influence our experience as parents. Parents/caregivers really want their kids to succeed and be happy, but parenting often requires we step back, reflect, and explore the patterns and beliefs that are keeping us from accepting our youth just as they are.



## Take time for self-care.

For some parents and caregivers, this time of life is harder than anything else they have encountered. Be gentle with yourself and make sure you take time for self-care, whether on your own, as a couple, or with family and friends.



Contributors: Parents of Youth Participating in the Aegis and Healthy Transitions Program at Clarvida (fka Family Preservation Services)(2024).  
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