

2006 UCAN Teenage Report Card

Summary of Notes & Teen Recommendations

Why do you believe the grades dropped in so many areas?

Adults have a hard time listening to us and struggle with understanding our feelings and emotions.

Adults are stuck in the past and sometimes are too selfish to give us a chance to grow.

Many adults refuse to grow up, they act the way they were raised by their parents.

Many adults try too hard to live through their kid's lives (sports, education and arts)
This can be SUPER EMBARRASSING

Nowadays, adults are too busy trying to provide financially for their families, no balance in other areas..

Adults aren't willing to put in the time to build loving, trusting relationships with us

Discussions on Teaching Positive Values

Youth stated that the biggest part of communicating with teens is listening toward understanding. Many youth stated that it is difficult to open up because they don't believe adults are willing to do the hard work of listening to their point of view. Youth stated that there are many topics that are difficult to discuss with adults. For instance, youth were clear when they said:

We know you are listening when... you turn off the TV or don't answer your cell phone, ask follow-up questions, look at us, are attentive, affirming and accepting. Additionally, youth wanted answers to tough questions and for adults to ask their opinions.

Relating to what adults positive values adults are teaching, youth are being told to do what you love to do, pursue your goals and dreams and to further your education.

Discussions on Anxiety & Depression

Overall, youth believe that adults are not equipped to handle the complexities of this mental health area. Adults often jump to conclusions and give in to the negative societal stigma associated with depression and anxiety. Adults tend to minimize the problems youth face during these emotional ups and downs. Adults say "It can't be that bad", "There are more fish in the sea", "You'll get over it" These are HUGE concerns for youth that participated in the focus groups. Youth believe that the problems are bigger than drugs and counseling. This isn't the only answer. Also, this is not the time for catch clichés or simple solutions. There was a mention to the rate of suicide amongst youth.

When talking to us about issues of depression and anxiety, don't blame us or shame us. We want to be encouraged, supported and led towards solutions. Help us find ways to come out of our shells. Empathize don't minimize.

Discussions on Building Healthier Relationships with Youth

Adults should work harder to understand that times are really different today. How we see life is different, when you were our age life was slower and less technologically advanced. For us, life is moving and changing so fast. We want adults to be more open to our perspectives, interests and ideas. We would like to see adults admit that they make mistakes. We know you are not perfect but you often shield us from your past. Don't force awkward/superficial conversations or we will likely shut down. Don't stop reaching out to us, we need you to set boundaries that are fair and expectations that are real. Youth stated the following specific details about care and concern. Youth stated that there is a sense of relief that comes with having a loving, caring and supportive adult in their lives. Youth want parents and responsible adults, not adults who try to fit in and be their friend.

Adults show us they care when... they validate us as people, create a sense of family and belonging, genuinely praise our accomplishments, make our lives less burdensome or stressful.

Discussions on Leadership

Youth were aware of the many corporate, political and various scandals involving adults in positions of leadership. Youth stated that they understand their limited power to impact adult leaders. Many youth believed that even though adults are trying; they are falling short as leaders. Many youth stated that they want to be better leaders as they grow older.

Don't tell us what we want to hear, tell us the truth.

Leaders must be willing to change their ways and admit when they are wrong.

Government leaders continue to do whatever it takes to get elected...even lie.

Do what you say you are going to do and don't abuse your power.

We want to see leaders who are honest, trustworthy, cooperative, motivating, open-minded, of service to others, charismatic and well spoken.

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Teen Recommendations

Teach us how to be more confident and self-assured.

Don't force us into events and activities that we do not enjoy.

Learn to love us unconditionally, it will help us over the years.

Make yourselves more approachable, we want to feel connected, not rejected by you.

Give us your full attention, you'll see we want to make you proud of us.

We are changing and growing so fast, let us know you will always be there for us.

Take the time to tell us how you feel, we value your opinions.

We have a hard time trusting adults who don't trust us.

If I trust that you care, I will be more willing to listen and open up to you.

Challenge us to attain our goals and build successful lives.

Figure it out...how long have you been an adult?

Stop trying to prevent teen sex. Teach us to be safe instead.

Give us info on the consequences of smoking and drinking and trust us to make the right decision.

Top 5 Quotes from teens

"When I leave home in the morning my parents are asleep; when I get home from school they are at work; when they come home, I'm asleep." "We rarely get a chance to see each other.

"Let's turn the tables, you may learn from one of our lectures"

"Please get rid of the clever clichés and simple life solutions, there is no easy button"

"'A' means perfect. We don't want perfect parents, we want parents who are consistent"

"Adults hate it when we take a page from their young lives"