

Teens who express own views with mom resist peer pressures best

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Teens who more openly express their own viewpoints in discussions with their moms, even if their viewpoints disagree, are more likely than others to resist peer pressure to use drugs or drink.

That's one of the findings of a new [longitudinal study](#) by researchers at the University of Virginia. The study appears in the journal *Child Development*.

The researchers looked at more than 150 teens and their parents, a group that was racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse. The teens were studied at ages 13, 15, and 16 to gather information on substance use, interactions with moms, social skills, and close friendships.

Researchers used not just the youths' own reports, but information from parents and peers. They also observed teens' social interactions with family members and peers.

They found that teens who hold their own in family discussions were better at standing up to peer influences to use drugs or alcohol. Among the best protected were teens who had learned to argue well with their moms about such topics as grades, money, household rules, and friends. Arguing well was defined as trying to persuade their mothers with reasoned arguments, rather than with pressure, whining, or insults.

"The healthy [autonomy](#) they'd established at home seemed to carry over into their relationships with peers," suggests Joseph P. Allen, Hugh P. Kelly Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia, who led the

study.

The study also found that teens who had formed good relationships with their parents and their peers were more likely to resist peer influences related to [substance use](#).

"It may be that teens who are secure in their ability to turn to their mothers under stress are less likely to end up feeling overly dependent upon their [close friends](#), and thus less likely to be influenced by their friend's behavior when it's negative," notes Allen.

Provided by Society for Research in Child Development

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