

# FAMILY OR FRIENDS?

## THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

*"Peer pressure is immense and family values go out of the window due to the pressure kids are under."*

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## INTRODUCTION

The influence of friends on their children is a major concern to parents, particularly during the teenage years. Parents tell Parentline Plus that by the time their children reach the teen years, they feel they are losing any influence they might once have had on their children's behaviour such as how they dress, what they do, where they go. This can cause increasing conflict within the family, which in turn makes it difficult for parents to set limits and to discipline their children, should they take part in what parents and society see as risky behaviours.

Current policy, with its emphasis on punitive measures, makes much of threatening gangs of young people – 'the hoodie element'. Young people are perceived as being coerced into risky and even criminal behaviour through the power of 'the gang' or group, and as such, peer pressure is viewed as a key component of antisocial behaviour.

However, Parentline Plus believes there needs to be a sense of proportion and perspective here. Peer pressure affects most people. People of similar ages and backgrounds tend to dress alike, to want certain consumer items, to watch similar television programmes and so on. For most people it does not interfere with their everyday lives, because in general such pressure is perceived as positive, or neutral.

When it comes to the behaviour of teenagers, it is all too easy for society to talk about negative peer pressure and resultant 'bad' behaviour. For young people, this is generally considered to consist of delinquency, drug or alcohol abuse, and promiscuous or early sexual activity. Parents also are often concerned or at a loss when the child whom they thought they knew becomes someone quite different in their eyes.

Blaming friends simplifies the issues about why young people act as they do. Moreover, it is important to emphasise from the outset that a child's sociability – their ability to mix with their peers and other children – is a key component in their development. Social skills and a positive sense of their 'social self' comes from this interaction. The experience of positive peer relationships contributes to the development of skills such as social self-confidence, empathy, communication skills, friendship, anger management and interpersonal problem solving.<sup>1</sup>

**"We need a society that does not stereotype everyone into tick boxes and label young males as jobs in need of asbo's because of the clothes they wear, language they use, and posture they adopt to be deemed acceptable by peers."**

## 1. THE RESEARCH

So, do parents really believe that they have lost their children to their friends? When does sociability impact on the family? At what age do parents begin to worry about peer pressure and is the influence different for boys and girls?

To find out more, Parentline Plus has conducted focus groups with parents and teenagers, undertaken a web-based survey, analysed call data on what parents are saying when they ring Parentline and looked in depth at social policy research on this issue. We looked in particular for evidence that peer pressure is directly linked with bullying behaviour.

**"To some degree, I feel sure there is a decent boy there and he will come back at some stage but what is important is how he looks to his friends. They know everything and he has to work out what is best for him, but it is very difficult."**

However we must emphasise that where parents have the confidence to talk, listen, negotiate and set boundaries with their teenagers, there is change, and with that change comes mutual respect within the family and within the community.

When we asked families to share their stories, many parents who have gone through their children's teenage years are very keen to tell others that it gets better, making the hard slog and conflict worthwhile. Such positives need to be got through to the parents who have virtually given up the struggle.

### 1.1 The call data

Calls to Parentline from parents offer a wealth of evidence on parents' concerns. Nearly half of all calls are from parents of teenagers and the majority present with many concerns about their children's challenging behaviour. For this research we looked at what parents were saying about their teenagers being in with a bad crowd – an expression we used to describe peer pressure. Looking at 3,238 calls received from April 05-March 06 – all of which registered 'bad crowd' as the first cause of concern, we found that:

- 86% of parents talked about significant conflict between themselves and their child whilst 57% talked of their child's anger.
- 36% accused their children of lying and 27% thought they were stealing.
- A quarter said their children were smoking and over a third talked about them using drugs or drinking.
- Well over a third of parents worried about their children either threatening to leave or having actually run away from home.
- 41% of these calls were from lone parents.

When we looked more closely at the data in terms of gender and age, it was interesting to see that it is challenging behaviour by girls at the age of 13-15 which is of most concern, with 22% of callers worrying about their girl's use of alcohol; and that when you get to the age of 16-19, the majority of calls are about boys.

### 1.2 Web survey

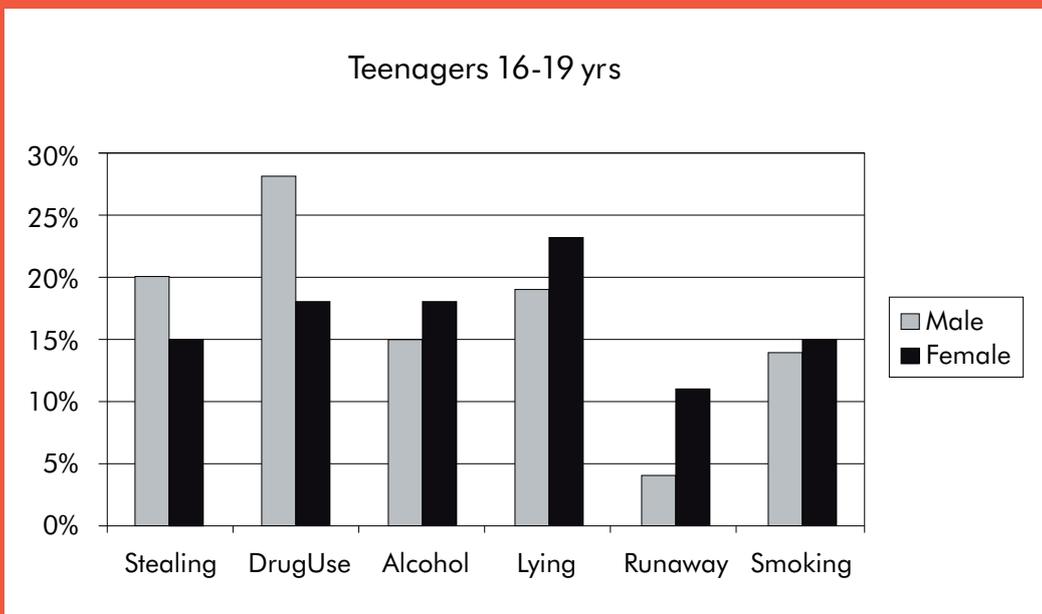
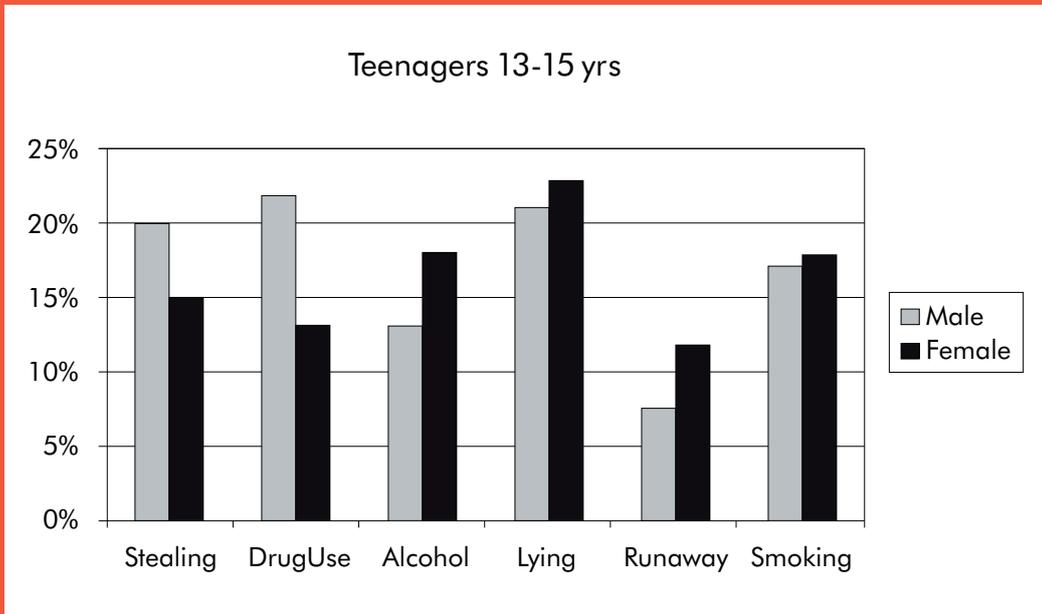
The survey was featured on the Parentline Plus website for a month. We had 88 replies, with many parents going into great detail about their experiences. *(Please see appendix 1 for the questions asked.)*

### 1.3 Focus groups

In July 2006 we undertook four focus groups with parents of teenagers aged 13-17 and two groups of young adults aged 18-21. The interviews were held in Staines, Greater London and Nottingham. We asked parents about peer pressure and how they felt it had impacted on their child's behaviour. We asked the young people to look back on their childhood and early teenage years and see how they felt they were influenced by their friends and peers.

The parents' groups consisted of two for mothers and two groups of fathers, all with incomes of £20,000 and under, all with teenagers that were seen by their parents as 'difficult to deal with'. The young adults' groups were made up of one solely for young men and the other for young women. All were at college or working and all came from households of £20,000 or under.

All calls to Parentline that indicated 'bad crowd' as being an issue in the call and also indicated additional challenging behaviours.



## 2. DEFINITIONS OF PEER PRESSURE

Contributed by parents and young people

**"It's about wanting to join in, not being left out."** *Young adult*

**"It's a status thing – he wants to look tough in front of his mates."** *Father*

**"It's all about groups – but they come and go – nothing is that straight. And you have special mates but they are part of the group too."** *Young male adult*

**"Friends egg the children on and the kids do what they say because they don't want to be different."** *Parent*

**"It's about having the latest clothes and things. It's just one long shopping list which starts – but everyone has it!"** *Parent*

**"We used to bunk off, drink a lot, even steal. We were all up to it! It was exciting."** *Young adult*

## 3. THE CONTEXT:

The importance and challenges for young people

The vast majority of parents consulted saw peer pressure as a key influence on their children's behaviour. Both parents and young adults stated that this was more influential than the media or the environment in which the family live. However, by the time a child reached 14-15 the influence of the media was thought to be greater than that of the parents. The influence of peers during these years was largely associated with what was happening at school.

**"We really tried to help our children see the value of themselves. Initially this helped but the strength of peer pressure grew from 13 years onwards until the values provided only had minimal impact – I believe these values will return later in life."**

Calls to Parentline show the same, as many parents talk about peer pressure leading to problems with attendance and school work generally. Research confirms this finding. In the teenage years, the peer group forms the avenue through which the teenager makes the transition from family to independent adult<sup>2</sup>. How a young person feels they are seen through the eyes of others is important to their sense of identity, and is seen as particularly important during the ages of 13 to 15.

Teenagers tend to look to the peer group for notions of what is acceptable, and for the context in which to socialise. The peer group can confirm self-esteem and identity, and act as a source of social activity<sup>3</sup>. It can also act as a safety net for those experiencing difficulties within the family, promote resilience and provide an 'emotional anchor'<sup>4</sup>. However it is significant that an absence of friends or peers, particularly during early teenagehood, can lead to stress and low self-esteem.

### 3.1 The difference between girls and boys

Research confirms that there are gender differences in relation to peer pressure groups. Male-male friendships tend to be based on shared activities, of which having fun and the sharing of views and attitudes are an essential feature. Female-female friendships are likely to be formed on the basis of verbal communication and self-disclosure, with an emphasis on intimacy and understanding<sup>5</sup>.

Other research elaborates on this, by showing<sup>6</sup> that teenagers learn about social relationships by observing and imitating their peers. This research found that young men are more likely to regard physical attributes – being like their friends in behaviour and appearance – as important; whereas young women are more likely to value qualities in the personality of their friends, like honesty, cheerfulness and so on. They also noted class-based differences, with middle-class boys and girls tending to attach more importance to qualities such as 'a good personality' and 'being oneself'.

**"We try to encourage our son to think independently but it has never made any difference. we lost him when he began primary school. Now he lives for the moment and does what his friends want – he tries to resist the consequences and has a very negative life as a result. It's a nightmare."**

### **3.2 When and how – negative and positive influences**

Young people interviewed in the focus groups felt, as did the parents, that the ages of 13-15 were key times for peer influence. It marked a turning point in how influential parents could be. Some parents also thought, however, that it started young, citing six or seven as the age when they thought some children were already showing 'one-upmanship' in the playground.

**"My eldest is 10 we moved from London to the North East and he was picked on because he is a polite well-mannered boy who loved school... he was withdrawn for a long time but then got a rather aggressive attitude which I feel he has adopted due to peer pressure from school 'mates'."**

Both parents and young adults identified the pre-teen years as pivotal – the first time that peer pressure really begins to take effect. It is the time when children will do anything not to be left out.

The influence of peers is often blamed for the onset of risky behaviour ranging from substance misuse to teen pregnancy<sup>7</sup>. Yet it must be emphasised that peers and friends play an important role in both harmful and positive activities. They can play a role in shaping and influencing a value base as to what is perceived as normal, and to highlight risk<sup>8</sup>.

**"If a child is being isolated/ignored for not participating in smoking, drinking or drug taking or being ridiculed for not having the latest mobile/trainers/mp3 player then yes it is a form of bullying – but can also be a natural part of growing up."**

Perhaps what is key here, are the factors that influence how a young person selects his or her friends. Those factors are likely to relate to their experience of family life, and the children they have been brought up with, or the values of the community in which they were brought up, together with their individual resilience and self-esteem. As children move into adolescence, their friends and peer groups tend to take on more importance at the same time as their independence from the family grows<sup>9</sup>, with the peer group forming the avenue through which a teenager makes the transition from family to independent adult<sup>10</sup>.

Parents experience this as a double loss. Not only do their children seem to have outgrown the need for physical protection and nurturing, they are starting to experiment with a range of risky behaviours. It is all too easy to say this is due to the people with whom they socialize.

**"Parents should live by example themselves, also stand back and let children develop their individuality, and try not to interfere unless the child is in danger etc."**

### **3.3 Risky behaviours – the reality of influence**

Further research in the UK found that teenage girls tended to drink as a result of parental attitudes rather than peer pressure<sup>11</sup> and that setting rigid, non-negotiable boundaries was likely to exacerbate the problem, i.e. if a parent told their daughter not to drink she was likely to drink more. Such findings tend to confirm the view that where the parents' approach is to 'lay down the law', young people are more likely to rebel.

**"We are very open and discuss all issues with the children, we explain the emotional and long-term downsides of drinking excessively and taking drugs as well as the physical effects, we try to behave as we wish them to and have respect for people and property."**

For parents, the push to be the same, to have the latest clothes and trainers becomes a major problem when they are on a low income. The fact that the family cannot afford these 'luxuries', results in conflict within the household, but if they buy a cheaper substitute parents worry about their child being teased.

The Parentline Plus research identified the areas where parents had the greatest concern about the influence of peers and friends. In the focus groups both the parents and young people talked about:

**Smoking:** interestingly, the young adults regretted taking up smoking but talked about how 'everyone is doing it – and they wanted to try it out'.

**Drinking:** parents talked about gangs of friends going to pubs, clubs and bars; girls talked about the competition to drink and be able to handle large quantities of alcohol and boys talked about going out and getting drunk.

**Sex:** parents were certain that their children had tried sex because they wanted to keep up with their friends; girls talked about definite pressure to 'do it' and boys felt that teenage sex was largely controlled by the girls – 'she set the pace'.

What the young people told us illuminates the power of peer pressure – it meant that a minority had taken on a completely different persona at school just to survive.

**"I smoked, took drugs, drank, larked about and so on, just to escape from being a victim."**

**"I felt a sense of relief when it was over – I could go back to being myself."**

Parentline Plus consistently works with, and learns from, parents of teenagers. We point to a more open and negotiable approach and suggest that parents keep channels of communication open to keep talking about responsibility and choice.

Teenagers appreciate when their parents acknowledge that drinking, trying drugs or having sex may be a part of teenage life and are more likely to take note when advised that, if they experiment, they must be responsible and avoid taking undue risks.

Talking about safe choices and options – not going out late alone, knowing how they will get home, keeping in touch by their mobile, letting you or a friend know where they are going – can do much to balance the influence of friends with the care and concern of parents.

#### 4. WHEN DOES IT BECOME A PROBLEM?

Research indicates that many children experience peer pressure problems but, for the majority, they are transitory and parents feel no need to impose sanctions or interfere.

**"I think that allowing peer pressure to affect the way I behave (giving in) sends the wrong messages for the long term future. It is important to me to explain that we can't always have what we want all the time. It is important that a child feels loved and accepted at home to help them cope when they are 'out there'."**

For some children however, peer pressure can be more serious. Where children experience early and sustained difficulties, they may be at increased risk of becoming disengaged with school which in turn is associated with under-achievement and truancy, possibly resulting in unemployment later on. This suggests the importance of positive childhood peer relationships in influencing long-term attainment.

Low self-esteem plays a major role here. Where families are experiencing a range of complex and conflict ridden situations, insecurity can influence the forming of peer relationships, and lead to peer victimisation<sup>12</sup>. An absence of friends or peers, particularly during the early teenage years, can lead to stress and low self-esteem, and research has pointed to lack of friends leading to long-term loneliness, psychosocial disturbance and alienation<sup>13</sup>.

##### 4.1 Bullying

**"If they don't have the latest thing then they are not the same as everyone else. This then encourages bullying as the child is then an outsider, children don't take well to difference and things they don't understand."**

The association between peer pressure and bullying is made across all our consultations and the supporting research. There are variations in the severity attributed to peer pressure as parents talked about finding it difficult to distinguish between occasionally being picked on and more persistent behaviour that they associate with bullying. This was not helped by the fact that children fall in and out of friendship groups and the break-ups can be dramatic and hurtful. Others felt that peer pressure in itself was a form of bullying.

The power and influence of the group was a concern raised by the young people in focus groups. Bullying could be about looking good within the group – showing off. They talked of a bully often being a ring-leader and that others bullied just to be admired by them. There was a surprising feeling expressed by the young people that getting bullied was all part of growing up, "Everyone gets bullied and it's something you have to put up with", is how they expressed it.

**"My son is afraid to 'not' do what the rest of his so called friends are doing as he knows they will target him if he does not act like them."**

What was unanimously felt by parents and young adults alike, was that children who were vulnerable or different were classic victims of the peer group. In one study, 85% of bullying episodes were found to occur in the context of a peer group. Peers can give positive attention to the bully, and reinforce bullying behaviour. Peers can also intervene to prevent bullying. Research on peer groups has led to interventions such as 'buddy schemes', 'peer mentoring' and 'pairing schemes'.

**"I believe that if the kids resist peer pressure it sets them apart and makes them targets."**

Peer pressure and bullying can take many forms, and it's not always obvious from an adult perspective. Bullying can be as simple as not including someone in a game. Children can experience socialisation difficulties when beginning nursery or playgroup for the first time.

Even seemingly unimportant details such as the way a child or teenager dresses emphasise difference: simply being different in some way (such as the way you look) was regarded by some as reason enough to bully.

A study of bullying in 19 English schools (primary and secondary) revealed that girls were more likely than boys to deliberately exclude someone from a group. Similarly, a study by Rigby found that girls were more likely than boys to be deliberately and unkindly left out of things. Whereas boys were less likely to admit to being bothered by it and if they did, they said that they felt angry about it, girls said that it made them feel sad and miserable.

### Difference identified in peer groups as reason to bully<sup>14</sup>

#### Child factors

- 'Difference' from peers, such as being of a different ethnic group, looking different, disability, shyness or being new to a school can cause children to be isolated and targeted by bullies.
- Reputation: a child may overcome the initial causes of peer problems, but research shows that peer attitudes can remain negative across school years.
- Sexuality – early puberty, looks and image can trigger bullying.

**"My daughter is harassed by one boy in particular at school. He makes comments about her body (nice tits etc), and stands behind her in the queue to leave the classroom etc, and presses himself against her, he also makes a lot of sexual comments around her. She feels very uncomfortable about it, and has become very shy about her developing body. It is all done very secretly – the boy is careful to make sure that adults don't hear or overlook."**

#### Family factors

- Problems at home can lead to difficulties with peers. For example, divorce and separation can lead to emotional and behavioural problems, and children may be unwilling to invite friends home where there is domestic violence or substance abuse.

#### Race

The common characteristic is that racist bullying is likely to hurt not only the victim but also other pupils from the same ethnic minority group who perceive that a particular child is being bullied who have similar characteristics to themselves.

The most common expression of racism is through racist name-calling, which is often viewed by adults as trivial, although its impact on children can be profound, and that racial bullying frequently involves the use of violence.

## 5. OTHER INFLUENCES ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR IMPACT

### 5.1 Media

In our consultations and surveys, the media was seen by parents as having a significant influence – coming a close second to peers. The issues seen as influencing young people were:

- top brands
- behaviour on programmes like Big Brother
- a cult of sex and violence
- celebrity power
- aspirations – fame is just around the corner

It is interesting to note that the young people themselves dismissed the influence of the media and said that things like 'wearing the right brands' was down to what their peers did.

## 5.2 School life

What happens at school is inextricably bound up with the influence of peers. In terms of behaviour and attainment, where children are struggling – for instance, where there are already emotional and behavioural difficulties – problems can be exacerbated by peer pressure and school work can be affected. In extreme circumstances their disruptive behaviour may lead to exclusion.

As education becomes more competitive, with the current emphasis on expanding university entrance, young people who fail to achieve are left behind. The achievements of their contemporaries can emphasise feelings of failure amongst the increasing number of teenagers who, for a variety of reasons, miss out on the benefits of further and higher education. This in turn impacts on negative behaviour, unemployment and loss of well-being.

Research suggests that school-based intervention programmes may be based on faulty assumptions of the power of peer pressure. For example, research in the US<sup>15</sup> cautions schools to critically examine programmes designed to teach students to resist peer pressure, as a way of keeping them from smoking, using drugs, and becoming sexually active.

## 5.3 How families and circumstances have influence

**"Well if a child feels secure and valued at home then their expectations with their friends are higher and they will feel free to speak their minds."**

Many of the parents consulted felt that the way young people live, and the mores of society as a whole, had a strong effect on children and young people. Parents in the focus group identified a range of influences in daily life:

- The growth of working parents mean they do not spend as much time with their children as they used to and so there is less time to talk to and guide children.
- Other influences step in to fill the gap: TV, PC games, the internet, peers. Parental influence and 'bonding' diminished as a result.
- Parents also feel that children lack the benefit of authority in a range of areas, notably school, where teachers are not sufficiently empowered to impose discipline.
- The close extended family of previous generations no longer exists.
- Loss of local authority figures, such as 'coppers'.
- Young people especially are exposed to risks – such as drink, drug taking, and violence.

They felt that children knew they could 'get away with it' and that there were fewer boundaries for children, which parents felt led to a lack of discipline and respect. A major concern was that their children did not view these dangers as scary – in fact they seemed to welcome it and had a rather cynical view of today's society.

## **"They've got to have insight into today's society."**

The wider community can be seen as a powerful force in shaping attitudes and beliefs<sup>16</sup>, and in forging teenagers' identity, both negatively and positively. Social identity theory<sup>17</sup> argues that delinquent groups are made up of young people who share behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values – they define who they are in terms of their group membership – but it does not exclude other factors such as parenting, family dynamics or education.

The community, as a source of facilities, self-esteem, peers and values, has a part to play in adolescent problem behaviour as well as other factors such as education, but research tends to suggest that, in particular, parenting and unemployment, rather than community factors, will distinguish between those adolescents who may offend<sup>18</sup>, and the ones who continue into adulthood with a life of crime<sup>19</sup>.

In our research many of the parents were certain that through their love, support and strong value base, they were giving their children the tools to stand up to peer pressure and to make choices for themselves.

## **"If you bring your child up to have self-confidence they won't just be a sheep and have their own individual personality and style."**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Too much blame for peer pressure?**

Some of the parents consulted felt that although peer pressure was seen negatively in the end it did not cause long and lasting harm. The young people in our focus groups also took this approach, and talked about regret for being so easily influenced, especially when it meant they had fooled around at school.

Research reinforces this pragmatic approach. A series of interviews<sup>20</sup> with troubled and delinquent teenagers found a difference between teenagers' descriptions and explanations of peer influence and adults' widely held theories about peer pressure. This research suggests that adults tend to give peer pressure too much credit, and that instead of being pressurised to misbehave by their peers, teenagers deliberately choose to be more like their friends. It suggests that they choose their peer groups to escape the labels given to them by adults, and that by becoming part of a group, teenagers gain a sense of personal and social power.

Throughout this paper, research and the views of parents demonstrate that friends are key to a young person's confidence and positive development. In fact more are concerned about the negative impact of being friendless. In many respects therefore, the media and policy makers must put the influence of peers into its proper context. The vast majority of young people thrive because they have friends, and the experimentation that is so often shared in the teenage years is exactly that – experimentation and not a set and negative way of life. It is far more important to look at the external circumstances and the needs and generational lack of attainment in the family as a whole, when looking for reasons for antisocial behaviour.

Because of this, society must respect and build on the essential influence of parent on child. The sense we get from parents' views and the research is that, despite all they may feel at the time, parents are, and always will be, the 'rock' for their children – the people they will turn to for love, comfort and advice.

**"I think the family is the most important influence on the child's way of dealing with peer pressure, however as the child becomes more independent, it will hopefully have taken this experience and learned to deal with it. The support of the family will always be important."**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Reducing the influence of peer pressure

- Listen to the young people's regrets; make more of these to younger children.
- Value and reward the influence and fundamental importance of the way a family lives.
- Celebrate difference.

**"We have always made our children very proud of who we are as a race and how we will try and be ourselves and be 'different' and that they should stick to the values our culture and religion teaches us, no matter how little it conforms to others."**

- Support for parents: building parenting skills, building confidence and communication skills to underpin their influence on their children's values and sense of responsibility.
- Ensure that special needs' provision and support for parents and children in the early years are available universally, so that early experiences of socialisation are positive and affirmative.

**"As we now live in such fragmented families, parenting support is needed for those who have no example of good parenting to learn from."**

- Ensure that schools and communities, particularly in deprived areas, have the facilities and infrastructure to promote positive peer relationships through the provision of a broad range of work, education and leisure-based opportunities.
- Work with schools to encourage friendships and positive peer relationships in the early years, and to act swiftly to reduce labelling or grouping practices that are likely to reduce self-esteem or reinforce a child's negative self-perceptions.
- Provide opportunities for less academically able students and young people to achieve and to build self-esteem.

## MESSAGES FOR PARENTS FROM PARENTS

### What you can do:

**"I believe the key is to bring up your children with a lot of praise, self-belief and loads of love, so they are strong enough to resist peer pressure and to handle bullying in a constructive way."**

- Be realistic – you can't choose their friends.
- Think of the pressures they are under – things will pass.
- Talk and listen – they will hear you.
- Don't just say no.
- Values and responsibilities.

**"We try to stress to them to be their own person and lead rather than follow."**

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# APPENDIX 1

## PEER PRESSURE – THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS AS CHILDREN GROW UP

Parents are telling us that by the time their children reach the teen years, they feel they are losing out on any influence they might have about their children's behaviour, how they dress, what they do, where they go.

Friends, role models and celebrities seem to have taken over from parents. We are told that this makes parents feel helpless and out of touch taking second place to friends both at school and socially.

We would like to hear your views and experiences about peer pressure – whatever the age of your child. What worries you about peer pressure? Where does it start and when does it finish? Do you think it is all about growing up and happens to everyone or is it something more serious and negative?

Your stories could help other parents facing this particular challenge so any ideas on what pressure points to look out for, what works and what doesn't will help other parents concerned about peer pressure.

**By taking part in this survey you are giving permission for extracts to be used in our work to help other parents. Any material used will remain anonymous and any names used in the text will be changed.**

The survey consists of 10 questions and should only take a few minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this survey; your experience can help other parents.

If you require any further support you will get a secure confidential response via our

- email support
- or if you feel the matter is urgent you can ring our free, confidential, 24-hour **Parentline** on **0808 800 2222**

1. How old are the children we are talking about in this survey?

- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Up to 3 years     | 4-8 years   |
| 9-12 years        | 13-15 years |
| 16 years and over |             |

2. What age do you think children start to be influenced by their friends or peers?

- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Up to 3 years     | 4-8 years   |
| 9-12 years        | 13-15 years |
| 16 years and over |             |

3. How much do you think your child is influenced by his/her friends?

- Very much
- Sometimes
- Not at all

4. What are the things you think are influenced by peer pressure?

Body image

Music

Experimenting with drink

Having sex

Clothes

Going out

Experimenting with drugs

Use of internet and on line messaging etc

Other

5. Which peer group has the most influence on your child/ren?

Friends at school

Both

Friends outside school

Other – please give details

6. Some parents say that if their child resists peer pressure they are then picked on. Do you think that bullying is involved here?

7. Do you think that the way your family lives and the values that your family adopt help your child resist some of the influence of friends and peers?

Please share your thoughts and experiences of coping with peer pressure:

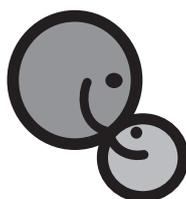
8. What do you think parents can do to make a difference?

9. What messages do you think work?

10. What would help parents get the message across?



Parentline Plus is a national charity and a leading organisation in the development and delivery of support for parents and families. We work to recognise and to value the different types of families that exist and to shape and expand the services available to them. We understand that it is not possible to separate children's needs from the needs of their parents and carers and encourage people to see it as a sign of strength to seek help. We believe it is normal for all parents to have difficulties from time to time.



**Parentline Plus: 520 Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 1TL**  
**Free Parentline: 0800 800 2222 Free textphone (for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment): 0800 783 6783**  
**Email: [parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk) Website: [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)**

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