



Your 8th grader is no longer a tween. You've got yourself a bonafide teenager. All parents have concerns regarding attitude, emotional lability, and social pressures. The beauty of a 13 year old is their increased sophistication cognitively. Your teen is right in the middle of [Piaget's formal operations](#). This means they are able to solve problems abstractly and use logic without the need for concrete examples. Your 8th grader is capable of metacognition; the ability to think about their own thoughts and others. 13 year olds also have the ability to imagine scenarios and outcomes without having had to experience the result previously.

Although your child has the ability to think in this manner, it is important to note that emotions, social situations and hormonal changes may at times take precedence in your child's ability to act on those logical thoughts that you know they are capable of doing. Because they did it last week for goodness sake! Why not this week? How do we have empathy for their attitude and moods? Understanding that since your child was five years old, they have been asserting their autonomy in different ways; this is bigger. Their brain is wired in a way in which they are now crystallizing that sense of self and incorporating those values and attitudes they have "tried on for size" and have found fit. Your 13 year old is supposed to push their parents away and reach out and connect with a group or groups that best fits their view of themselves. This is not easy to take when they have needed us for so long, but they need to take this step in distancing themselves so that they can be successful and self sufficient adults. That doesn't mean you are out of the picture. It just means you become the [consultant parents](#). Myself and my husband still look to our [parents as consultants](#) in our lives even in our 40's and 50's. That won't change for you either as long as you keep those safe, empathetic and loving boundaries to support your child as they make decisions for themselves.

For more on developmental stages and parenting information, contact your Thrive Parent Liaison, Lori Swenson at lswenson@bssd72.org or 995-4281.

