

# SCAFFOLDING

## HELPING YOUR TWEEN OR TEEN BECOME INDEPENDENT



Scaffolding refers to the process in which parents and other trusted adults provide just enough temporary, targeted support to help tweens and teens develop new skills, solve problems, tackle challenging tasks, and develop independence by gradually reducing support as their skills grow and they gain competence.



Scaffolding increases independence, fosters self-discipline, reduces anxiety, improves well-being, builds resilience and strengthens relationships.

### ASSESS THEIR NEEDS

Identify areas where support is needed and adjust the level of assistance based on their ability.

### PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE

Foster autonomy by allowing tweens and teens to try new things on their own and make decisions.

### CELEBRATE EFFORT

Acknowledge and praise their attempts and improvements, not just the outcomes and achievements.

### CREATE CHALLENGES

Encourage them to tackle new tasks and take risks slightly beyond their current capabilities.

### OFFER GUIDANCE

Provide advice, feedback and reassurance while being careful to not take over. Help them break big goals into smaller steps.

### PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Give them chances to develop and practice their skills in various situations. Let them struggle (safely) - it's part of the learning process.

### MODEL

Model how to calmly handle challenges, as well as problem-solving and reflection, by talking things through. Ask "What worked? What didn't? What would you try differently next time?"

### INVOLVE THEM

- Encourage input on rules, goals, decision-making and problem-solving.
- Provide reasoning - explain limits and the values behind your decisions.
- Respect their opinions.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Set clear expectations and boundaries.
- Be there when they need advice or help - offer empathy and validation.
- Avoid over-monitoring and micromanaging.

### AUTONOMY- ENCOURAGING PHRASES

- "You've got this - what's your first step?"
- "Would it help to talk through the options?"
- "Tell me what you're thinking."
- "I'm here if you need support."

### RESOURCES

- [bstrongtogether.org](http://bstrongtogether.org)
- [searchinstitute.org](http://searchinstitute.org)
- [aap.org](http://aap.org)
- *Scaffold Parenting* by Dr. Harold Koplewicz