



Raising teens poses enough challenges in itself – parenting a teen in a new culture adds another level of complexity. Chances are, your teen years were very different than your child’s will be living in America. Here’s a few things to keep in mind as you guide your teen into young adulthood:

We may not like it, but this is normal. Sometimes it means they will dress in strange ways or “reject” their culture. Peer pressure is a big deal to kids at this age, and they’re just trying to fit in with the rest of their friends and schoolmates at this time.

Your teen should know your family’s traditions, beliefs, religion and language, as well as the story of your journey to America. Right now, teens may not be interested or even “rebuff” their culture. As they grow up, they will learn to appreciate their language, food and customs – and take pride in these traditions.

It's hard to grow up in two cultures. Teens need support to help understand their roots, while you may need their help to understand what it's like to grow up in America. Talking and listening to each other will help you both succeed.

There are many “standards” that may be different from your culture. For example, friendships outside the family may be more common than they were in your childhood. Or, you may be concerned that your children aren’t obedient or respectful. Your teens are growing up in two cultures. To help your teen succeed in America, decide what expectations you need to keep and what you can change.

As private as parenting is, we all need ideas – especially when we are raising our teens in a new culture. Get together with other parents to share advice and stories, and **www.shoulder-to-shoulderminnesota.org** for culturally-specific parenting resources

Source: Helping Youth Succeed: Bi-Cultural Parenting for Southeast Asian Families, University of Minnesota Extension Service, 1999.



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