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Parents of pre-teens and teens need help with parenting, too!

New University of Wisconsin-Extension website offers place for parents of teens to learn, share and connect

As young teens begin to push limits and test their boundaries, parents can feel overwhelmed and question their parenting ability.

“Even though their children don’t require the same sort of hands-on attention that they did when they were small, parents of adolescents face different, but equally demanding, challenges than they did when their children were younger,” says UW-Madison/UW-Extension human development and family relations specialist Stephen Small.

In response to the need for online parenting opportunities for parents of preteens and teens, family scholars from the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension have developed a new website and program called Parenthetical (www.myparenthetical.com) that is aimed at parents of tweens and teens throughout the state.

“Parents feel like they should be experienced, and they may feel it’s a sign of weakness or lack of parenting ability if they seek help,” says Rebecca Mather, outreach specialist with UW-Extension. “However, parents benefit from sharing strategies and the opportunity to process their feelings and information.” Parenthetical combines the functions of a blog, an informational website and a social network. Parents can share problems and ask questions and get the most current information about effective parenting and teens. The site is free and accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Parenthetical features weekly posts about parenting hot topics that are meant to start conversations among users on the site. “We want the site to include not just the latest research on parenting and teenagers, but also the collected lessons and wisdom of parents,” says Anne Clarkson, outreach specialist with UW-Extension. A team of family educators from UW-Madison/UW-Extension will facilitate the site.

For more information on Parenthetical or to join the online parenting community, visit www.myparenthetical.com or contact Michelle Tidemann, Family Living Educator, UW-Extension Fond du Lac County (<http://fonddulac.uwex.edu>) at 920-929-3170.

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