

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Over the last fifty years, the structure of the American family has changed dramatically. Statistics, such as the increase in single-parent households and the rise in the average age of first marriages, reflect this continued evolution. The family, however, remains the basic unit of society and one of the most important aspects of a person's life. In this chapter, we will study the structure of the family and how it affects the physical, mental/emotional, and social health of its members.

Some questions your teen will explore in this chapter include: *How does the family help children meet physical, mental/emotional, and social needs? How do shared culture and traditions benefit families? What are the roles and responsibilities of family members? How do families adjust to meet changing circumstances? Where can families go for help in a crisis? What role can counseling play in restoring healthy family relationships? What are some steps that can help maintain healthy family relationships?*

Please reinforce our classroom work by discussing with your son or daughter one or more of the following topics:

- Encourage your teen to interview family members from different generations about the role of the family in their lives. Discuss any similarities and differences in the responses of the different generations.
- If possible, encourage your teen to have a conversation with someone who was a family member during the Great Depression. Ask how the economic hard times affected families and the values and attitudes of family members.
- Consider watching one or two popular television shows with your teen and discussing how the shows portray families. Identify family aspects represented on the show. Discuss whether or not the show deals realistically with family issues.
- Ask your teen to describe some everyday ways in which family members can encourage and support one another.

I hope these activities prove helpful in supplementing the activities and reading contained in this chapter. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss your teen's health education.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher