

Children and the family

Exercise 1

Complete definitions 1 – 15 with words and expressions from the box. You will not need all of the words and expressions from the box.

adolescence adolescent adopt authoritarian birth rate bring up
 dependent divorced extended family family life
 formative years foster foster child foster family freedom
 infancy infant juvenile juvenile delinquency lenient minor (noun) nuclear family
 nurture over-protective protective raise rebellious relationship relatives responsible
 separated siblings single parent single-parent family
 strict supervision running wild teenager upbringing well-adjusted

1. _____ is the period in someone's life when they change from being a child to being a young adult. A boy or a girl who is at this stage in their life is called an _____.
2. A _____ is someone who has not reached the age at which they are legally an adult.
3. Your brothers and sisters are sometimes referred to as your _____.
4. A couple (for example, a husband and wife) who are _____ no longer live together. If a married couple get _____, their marriage is legally ended.
5. A _____ is a family that looks after someone else's child in their own home for a period of time. A child who lives with this family is called a _____. The verb is _____.
6. A _____ is a formal word for a young person, and can also be used as a word for a young person who has committed a crime.
7. A _____ child is one who is mentally strong and able to deal with problems without becoming upset. A child who is badly behaved and refuses to obey his / her parents, teachers, etc., can be described as _____.
8. Your _____ are those in your life when your character and beliefs are most strongly influenced.
9. If you bring someone else's child into your family and legally make him or her your own child, we say that you _____ him / her.
10. A _____ is a child between the ages of 13 and 19.
11. An _____ is a baby or very young child. This period in a child's life is called _____.
12. _____ and _____ both mean the same thing: to take care of children while they are growing up.
13. An _____ is a family group that includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. A _____ is a family unit consisting of a mother, a father, and their children.
14. A _____ or _____ parent is one who makes their children follow rules and behave in a very "correct" way. The opposite of this is _____.
15. A _____ is a child or other relative to whom you give food, money, and a home. This word can also be an adjective.

Exercise 2

Use your dictionary to check the meanings of the other words and expressions in the box.

Exercise 3

Complete this case study with appropriate words and expressions from the box in Exercise 1. You may need to change the form of some of the words.

Bob's problems began during his (1) _____. His parents got (2) _____ when he was young, and neither of his parents wanted to raise him or his brother and sister, so he was (3) _____ by a (4) _____ chosen by his parent's social worker. Unfortunately, his foster-father was a strict (5) _____ and often beat him. Bob rebelled against this strict (6) _____ and by the time he was eight, he was already (7) _____ stealing from shops and playing truant. By the time he reached (8) _____ sometime around his thirteenth birthday, he had already appeared in court several times, charged with (9) _____. The judge blamed his foster parents, explaining that children needed (10) _____ parents and guardians who would look after them properly. The foster father objected to this, pointing out that Bob's (11) _____ – his two brothers and sister – were (12) _____ children who behaved at home and worked well at school.

This has raised some interesting questions about the modern family system. While it is true that parents should not be too (13) _____ with children by letting them do what they want when they want, or be too (14) _____ by sheltering them from the realities of life, it is also true that they should not be too strict. It has also highlighted the disadvantages of the modern (15) _____ where the child has only its mother and father to rely on (or the (16) _____, in which the mother or father has to struggle particularly hard to support their (17) _____. In fact, many believe that we should return to traditional family values and the (18) _____ family: extensive research has shown that children from these families are generally better behaved and have a better chance of success in later life.

Exercise 4

Now try this essay. Use words and expressions from the vocabulary box in Exercise 1, and any other words or expressions that you think would be relevant.

Some people believe that children nowadays have too much freedom. Others believe that children are protected too much by their parents. Which of these statements do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your decision.