

Talking With Your Teen

Adolescence is a time of rapid growth and maturity. It's also a challenging time for parent and child. Knowing how to talk with your teen may help lessen the growing pains you both face as you prepare for the adjustments ahead. Here are some tips for talking with your teen:

- › **Talk as a friend first, as a parent last.** By talking to teens on their level, and trying hard to listen, you put them more at ease. Maintain your sense of humor. You'll need it.
- › **Promise you will try to understand.** Most teens are resistant to opening up to their parents and need reassurance. Tell them that they will feel better for telling you and that you cannot help unless they open up. Do not promise to not get mad because you just might. Instead, say that you will listen to everything they say and that you will try to see their side.
- › **Tell your teen you respect his or her point of view.** You may disagree with it, but respect the opinion and credibility nonetheless.
- › **Talk to your teen as you would wish to be talked to.** Yelling, shouting and finger pointing are counterproductive. Remain calm and listen without interrupting. Do not react hastily. Think first then respond rationally and calmly in a voice that is firm, resolute and in control. Talk with, not to, your teen, and avoid turning everything into a lecture.
- › **Do not rush to judgment.** Hear your teen out. Do not make bitter, critical or hurtful comments.
- › **Establish common ground.** Recall the embarrassments or failures of your own adolescence. Teens need to hear that they are not alone in their awkwardness. Explain why you made the choices you did earlier in life and what their consequences were. Try sharing these stories when your teen is relaxed or during a spontaneous moment, like when you are riding in the car together.
- › **Avoid repeating yourself.** Try to not use the same metaphors or retell timeworn stories with the same morals. Be creative and relate new, interesting situations that can teach a lesson.
- › **Admit when you are wrong.** A strong person can say he or she is sorry. Apologize after losing your temper or going back on your promise. Stress that you are not perfect and that your teen need not be, either. Reinforce the lesson that the best way to learn about life is to make mistakes, pick yourself up and try again.

Words and actions from parents and parental figures help a teen feel secure. Let your teen know you love him or her and that you are available emotionally. Even if your teen does not come forward to share information, it comforts him or her to know a parent is available.

Additional Information

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TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN



Being able to express both positive and negative feelings and solve problems together are keys to a successful and happy family. It is never too late to learn to improve your communication skills with your teen.

- > Think before you speak
- > Be as clear as possible
- > Stay on topic
- > Maintain consistent eye contact while talking and listening
- > Make your tone match your message
- > Refrain from judging or disagreeing while listening
- > Give each person an equal say
- > Stress the respect of differences

March

MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH – NUTRITION MONTH – RED CROSS MONTH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

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