



TALK LINE
FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

10 Helpful Hints for Talking to Your Teenager

Although it may seem like you and your teen are speaking a different language, it is important to keep the lines of communication open. Your teen may need you now more than ever. Important tips for talking with your teen include:

1. **LISTEN more, and talk less.** Listening helps parents to understand their teens better, work with their teens on solutions to problems, and show their teens they are concerned and interested.
2. **Keep your conversations respectful.** Kids learn to speak respectfully by modeling the way you communicate. Also, teens are much more likely to listen if you treat them with respect rather than embarrassing, criticizing, or lecturing them.
3. **Create times for your teen to talk to you.** Do things one-on-one. Eat dinner with the entire family. Sometimes it's easier for teens to talk when they don't have to look directly at their parents like in the car or on a walk.
4. **Reflect the feelings, and respect the ideas of your teen.** You don't have to agree with your teen, but when you show your teen you understand and respect his/her feelings, he/she is more likely to open up to you.
5. **Your tone of voice should show that you care and respect your teen.** Yelling will only cause your teen to shut down communication. Take a break if you want to yell.
6. **Make limits and expectations clear.** Writing down expectations and creating an action plan can help. When you give your teen instructions, write them down.
7. **Cool off before giving a consequence for rule-breaking or failing to meet expectations, and don't shut out your teen when you disapprove of behavior.** If you are too upset to talk in a reasonable way, tell your teen you need time.
8. **Ask open-ended questions rather than questions that will get a "yes" or "no" answer or questions to which you already know the answer.** You will get much better responses.
9. **Admit your mistakes.** There is no better way to set a good example.
10. **Keep your sense of humor.**

For more information, see
Parenting.Teens.About.com