



Talking with Your Teenager

As children grow into teenagers, conversations can become more challenging. If you're struggling to connect, you're not alone. These tips are designed to help foster open, respectful, and meaningful discussions.

Show interest: Ask about their activities, hobbies, or friendships without prying. Let them decide what to share—pushing too hard may make them withdraw.

Make eye contact: Nonverbal cues matter. Looking at them when they speak shows you're paying attention. Even if they're distracted, staying engaged encourages them to open up.

Demonstrate respect: Sometimes, they just don't feel like talking. Let them know you're available when they're ready. If it's an important discussion, suggest a better time instead of forcing it.

Listen actively: Avoid interrupting or immediately offering solutions. Acknowledge their feelings with simple responses like "That sounds tough" to show you understand.

Avoid lecturing, nagging, or ordering: If they feel talked at rather than talked with, they may tune out. Ask if they'd like your input before offering advice.

Be mindful of your reactions: Stay calm and open-minded, even if you disagree. If they feel judged, they may avoid confiding in you in the future.

Be clear and consistent: Teens pick up on mixed messages. Communicate honestly and explain the reasoning behind rules instead of just enforcing them.

Lead by example: Model the behaviour you encourage. If you talk about the importance of exercise, invite them for a walk instead of just telling them to be active.

Choose the right time and place: Conversations flow more naturally in relaxed settings, like car rides or while cooking together, rather than during high-pressure moments.

Share your experiences when appropriate: Instead of always giving advice, share relevant personal stories and ask if they'd like your perspective.

Talk about a variety of topics: If every conversation is about school or chores, they may avoid talking altogether. Discuss interests, movies, or current events to keep communication open.

Helpful websites:

ReachOut Parents: <https://parents.au.reachout.com>

Raising Children Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au>

headspace: <https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/supporting-a-young-person/mental-ill-health/>



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