

Small Talk–Tips for Parents

Some parents feel more comfortable when they lecture or have “something meaningful” to say to their teens. Instead, try these tips when you want to talk *without lecturing*.

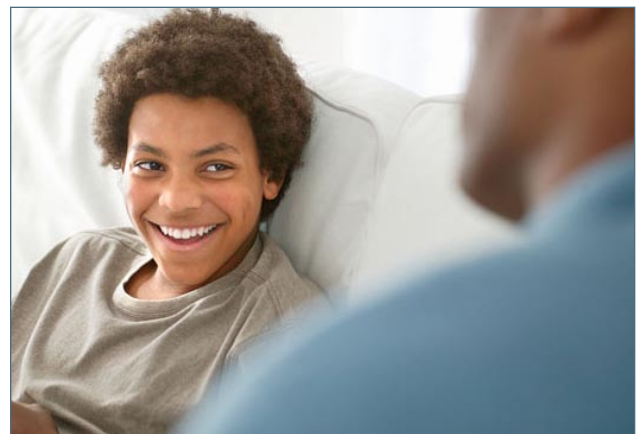
1. Talk to your teen as they enter a room or walk down the hall. Keep it simple and short. Do not get into a discussion.
2. Allow your teens to have their friends visit your home. *Listen* to what they say. Make notes, on a 3 x 5 card about topics they discuss. When you are alone with your teen, talk about something you wrote on your card.
3. Watch a movie, the news or a TV show together. Talk about what you see. Share ideas. Do not judge what your teen says.
4. Do not use the language and slang that your kids use. They do not like it. It is not natural, and it turns kids off. It actually embarrasses kids if you talk like a teenager in front of their friends.
5. Do not gossip or use profanity when you talk to your teen. Do not put others down or make fun

of people or groups of people. Be respectful and dignified. Teens want to be able to look up to their parents.

6. End your conversation with something positive. “Great idea. I’ll remember that.” “Wow, this was fun.” “Thanks for sharing.” This will make your teen want to talk again.

If this seems unnatural, remember – *practice makes perfect*.

Ideas taken from Dr. Glen I. Latham’s The Power of Positive Parenting.



Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John’s Children’s Hospital



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