



## COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR TEENAGER

### **Tips for Communicating with Your Teen**

#### **What Can You Do?**

- \* Teens deserve respect, and adults should give it to them and expect it from them. This includes a show of respect for their friends. Never berate or belittle teens in front of their peers.
- \* Think about how often you ask teen-agers question and seek their opinions.
- \* Understand that the bravado and boasting displayed by some teens can be a cover-up for insecurity. That *adolescent* boy or girl with the know-it-all attitude may be unsure of himself or herself and in search of your guidance.
- \* Know it's never too early to talk. When should parents start *talking* about "tough issues," like sex, violence, drugs and respect? Experts, say the earlier the better. Because, the reality is that if you don't, someone else will. The only way you can ensure that your child knows what YOU want them to about these issues is to tell them yourself.
- \* The little talks really add up. Don't focus on having really big meaningful talks with your teens. Focus on having smaller talks - and try to find everyday opportunities to talk at informal times. This will encourage your child to tell you what's going on in their lives and the tough issues they may be facing.
- \* Know your *family* values. Before you begin to talk to your teen , ask your self a few questions. Like how do you feel about these issues and what do you want your kids to know? What are YOUR "family's values," your religious beliefs, your learned lessons in life? What did you learn from your parents that you want to pass along to your child? This is important to do because it will make your job a lot easier to do. Your values will give you the framework that you need in order to help your child to understand why you feel strongly about certain things.

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