

11 Tips for Communicating with Teenagers

All families communicate differently. If you've tried to communicate with your teens before and it hasn't gone exactly the way you want, don't give up. Keep trying for your sake and theirs.

1. First and foremost, your relationship is the most important thing. Find time to have connected, relaxed conversations with your teen. It sounds easy, but making time in our busy lives is sometimes a struggle. You may have to put a date on the calendar.
2. If communication hasn't come naturally, be diligent as you take on this aspect of your relationship. Be patient as you try to engage him/her.
3. Be a good listener. If there is a conflict, try letting them begin. Don't interrupt. Insist that they speak respectfully. Be consistent. Your rules, reactions and the like should be something they can depend on.
4. Pick a non-threatening place if possible. Maybe grab a bite to eat. Find something you both enjoy doing.
5. Practice having conversations by talking about non-threatening/neutral things so that every conversation isn't a battle.
6. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
7. Try not to be an interrogator or interviewer.
8. Give value to your teen's feelings/concerns.
9. Keep issues in perspective. There are big things and small things. Try to distinguish between the two.
10. If your teen is a reluctant communicator, ask them to write you a letter about their issue or problem.
11. Allow choices whenever possible but as the adult, you have the final say.

