**Guidelines for parent-teenager communication**

Good communication is an important parenting skill. Parenting can be more enjoyable when positive parent – teenager relationship is established. Whether you are parenting a toddler or a teenager, good communication is the key to building self-esteem as well a mutual respect.

**Basic Principles of Good Parent/Child Communication**

* Let the teenager know that you are interested and involved and that you will help when needed.
* Turn off the television or put the cellphone down when your teenager wants to converse.
* Avoid taking a telephone call when the teenager has something important to tell you.
* Unless other people are specifically meant to be included, hold conversations in privacy. The best communication between you and the teenager will occur when others are not around.
* Embarrassing the teenager or putting them on the spot in front of others will lead only to resentment and hostility, not good communication.
* Don’t tower over your teenager.
* If you are very angry about a behavior or an incident, don’t attempt communication until you regain your cool, because you cannot be objective until then. It is better to stop, settle down, and talk to the teenager later.
* If you are very tired, you will have to make an extra effort to be an active listener. Genuine active listening is hard work and is very difficult when your mind and body are already tired.
* Listen carefully and politely. Don’t interrupt the teenager when trying to tell a story. Be as courteous to your teenager as you would be to your best friend.
* Don’t be a wipe-out artist, unraveling minor threads of a story and never allowing the teenager’s own theme to develop. This is the parent who reacts to the incidentals of a message while the main idea is list: i.e., the teenager starts to tell about what happened and the parent says, “I don’t care what they are doing, but you had better not be involved in anything like that.”
* Don’t ask why, but do ask what happened.
* If you have knowledge of the situation, confront the teenager with the information that you know or have been told.
* Keep adult talking (“You’ll talk when I’m finished.” “I know what’s best for you.” “Just do what I say and that will solve the problem”), preaching and moralizing to a minimum because they are not helpful in getting communication open and keeping it open.
* Don’t use put-down words or statements: dumb, stupid, lazy: “Stupid, that makes no sense at all” or “What do you know, you’re just a teenager.”
* Assist the teenager in planning some specific steps to the solution.
* Show that you accept the teenager, regardless of what they have done.
* Reinforce the teenager for keeping communication open. Do this by accepting him/her and praising his efforts to communicate.

Source: <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/communication/#.W2CN49VKjcc>