

Connection Cafe

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
(541) 389-5468 - FRCONLINE.ORG

SUPPORTIVE STARTERS

LISTENING LUNCH

Listening is a crucial part to any conversation with your adolescent. Listening communicates respect, makes youth feel heard and valued, and facilitates deeper connection.

TELL ME MORE TURNOVER

Choose a few of these phrases to show your dedication to listening and learning:

- Tell me more about that.
- I'd like to hear more.
- I'd be interested in your point of view.
- Would you like to talk about it?
- How do you feel about that?
- Let's discuss it.
- I am listening.
- This seems important to you.
- Sounds like you have strong feelings about that.
- Is there something you would like help with?

SAY WHAT?? SOUP

When we become trusted listeners, our adolescents may share unexpected information. If your adolescent describes something you think is negative or concerning, make sure you order...

EMOTIONAL EGGROLL

Take a few minutes to think about the mental and physical changes that happen when you are upset (e.g., more negative thoughts; increased heart rate). **Identify what it looks like when you are probably too angry to engage in positive two-way communication.** Pay attention to that line when you are starting to feel too upset to use active listening. If you reach that point, the next step is to calm down before interacting further with the person or thing that's making you angry.



Science Tip: Adolescents often interpret harsh words, such as shouting, as rejection. Even when that is not what is meant, this may result in a teen having a hostile or negative view of their parent-child relationship and a negative view of themselves.

DEEP-DISH BREATHING

Take a few deep breaths and count to 10. Breathing deeply sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. Doing so helps your heart rate and blood pressure decrease, and you will put less physical strain on your body as it relaxes. **Taking a deep breath gives you time to collect yourself and think about what to say next.** If you are still too worked up to continue the conversation, give yourself more time. Instead say, "I want to have this conversation in a way that is supportive, but I need to step out and calm down first."

Flip over to
see the rest
of the menu!



EVERYDAY ENTREE

BONDING BURGER

Bonding is warmth, affection, attachment, and commitment. It's the sense of feeling a part of something, whether it's with peers, family, school, or other relationships. **Family bonding helps your teen feel connected and motivated to be invested in your family.**

OPPOR-TUNA-TY

Providing ways for teens to contribute to their family and community sends the powerful message that they are **necessary and important**. Provide opportunities that fit your teen's age and abilities. For example:

- Help with shopping or cooking
- Plan a vacation activity
- Research a major new family purchase
- Find volunteer opportunities for the whole family

FRESH OFF THE SKILL GRILL

Your adolescent needs help building skills to prepare for the world after they no longer live with your family. When they learn from you, your connection is strengthened. For example:

- Explain how to develop and use a budget (ex: shopping trip)
- Show your adolescent how to keep both their physical and digital materials filed in an organized way
- Give your adolescent a calendar and show them planning techniques
- Talk with your teen about the challenges you face on a daily basis (e.g., work stress, making tough decisions, parenting choices). Model talking about how you feel and how you are managing your emotions.

RIPE RECOGNITION

Science tells us that adolescent brains respond differently to rewards and punishments than adult brains. Adults learn equally well from both reward and punishment. Adolescents learn from reward, but are less likely to learn well from punishment. **Recognizing your adolescent's contributions at home gives them incentive to continue to help.** Use a simple thank-you, smile, offer sincere words of appreciation, or try a more formal reward system (e.g., allowance).

DEDICATION DESSERTS

FAMILY-STYLE VALUES

Every family has a different set of values that guide what is and is not acceptable for family members to do. It is important for you and your family to **verbally identify** what those are so when the time comes for your adolescent to make decisions, they know where the family stands. Here are some value-based topics to discuss:

- Sex
- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Social Media
- Religion
- Dating
- Health

TIME-TESTED TRADITION

Traditions help us bond with those we love, learn about family culture, and create positive memories. Below are some times of year where you could create your own family traditions:

- First and last day of school (go out for ice cream, buy a journal, call a relative)
- Make one meal every week together
- Celebrate half-birthdays
- Have daily "no-phone" hour and spend time together