

How to Show Your Youth You Care!!!

This handout is to help remind you of the ways you've shown love and appreciation to your youth and to offer suggestions how to further build that important relationship. Your youth may be experiencing challenges associated with being a teenager and will likely be looking to you for both encouragement and guidance. It can be confusing or overwhelming for parents to define how "to best" facilitate their youth's growth while building a strong relationship. This is a guide filled with some tangible tips on how to improve or maintain the connection with your youth, but also offers room to come up with your own ideas.

Catch Your Youth Doing Something Good

Youth sometimes believe that you are only noticing or paying attention to their negative behaviors or looking to "catch them doing something wrong". Catching them "doing something right" shows that you recognize and respect them as a whole person and notice their efforts. When youth are praised and rewarded verbally, it reinforces the behavior and encourages the behavior to increase.

It may feel as if your youth never does anything that you'd like, especially during a time of argument or crisis, but it is important to understand that even youth who are always in trouble are displaying positive behaviors as well.

Consider These...

- Recognize when your youth helps a sibling or family member by saying "That was really nice of you."
- Give your youth a fake "ticket" when they ride their bike or drive responsibly, such a coupon redeemable for a movie.
- Recognize when they naturally engage in positive behaviors without being asked, such as thanking them for unloading the dishwasher, greeting you pleasantly, showing affection (hug), or telling a funny story or joke.
- Send a Thank You card in the mail outlining why you're thankful for a specific act of kindness they displayed.
- Pat them on the back for attending school daily.



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