

HEALTHY FAMILY COMMUNICATION

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Did you know that you can improve social-emotional health by having meaningful conversations with loved ones? Whether at home, over the phone or virtually, sharing stories across generations is a great way to increase resilience and positive emotions like happiness and empathy. If you have children in your life that you want to connect with but don't know where to start, try striking up a conversation that you can build on with shared experiences and interests. For example, you can ask a child what the hardest thing about being their age is, or what music is their favorite right now, and use their response as a starting point to listen, support, and share similarities from your life.



WAYS TO CONNECT:

Consider these communication strategies:

- Start a conversation when you are both available and not busy with tasks such as homework or chores. Make sure the environment is quiet and free of distractions, such as by putting phones away and turning off electronics. Good times to start a conversation might be in the car, on a walk, and while sharing a meal.
- Approach family conversations with an open mind. Plan to listen without judgment and speak honestly. If a child seems distracted or upset, pause the conversation and try again another time.
- Make yourself approachable so kids feel comfortable coming to talk to you about any topic. Be willing to pause what you are doing to listen to a child or teen who initiates a conversation with you.
- If kids are not super talkative, don't give up! Try sharing a story about yourself that relates to their interests!



FAMILY FRIENDLY QUESTIONS:

1. Growing up one of my favorite family traditions was _____. What is your favorite family tradition? Why?
2. Do you know the story of how _____ [relative, close friend] and I met?
3. Do you know where I was born and where I grew up?
4. The greatest thing I learned from my family was _____. What memorable lesson did you learn from your family?
5. What is your happiest memory? My happiest memory is _____.
6. When I was younger, the bravest thing I did was _____. What's the bravest thing you've ever done?