

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

The main thing is that they know, from both your words and actions, that you are there for them, and that they can come to you if they need to. It's never - or hardly ever - too late to have a good relationship with your children.

Good relationships

Good relationships and the skills for getting on with others are key to achievement and emotional well-being. Relationships can also be difficult for many people and we've all had some difficult or unhappy experiences in our relationships with others and know how devastating this can be.

How can we build a good relationships with our teenager and, in turn, teach about enjoying better relationships with others?

1. Through their parent-child relationships
2. Through the attitudes and behaviours that you model
3. Through consciously teaching them the things you want them to learn

Relationships-what to teach:

Respect for others

The best way for children to learn respect is to see their parents/caregivers treating them and others with respect and consideration.

Rejecting violence

It's important to give clear messages that violence and abuse are unacceptable. Take opportunities to talk about violence, child abuse and different ways of expressing anger and resolving conflict. If you have a history of anger, violence, or trouble controlling your temper, get help. It's too easy to hand these problems down to the next generation.

Self-respect

The best way to teach children to respect you and themselves is to model self-respect.

Promoting confidence and self-esteem

Adolescents who feel good about themselves are much less vulnerable to peer pressure and find it easier to form healthy relationships. You can boost your child's self-image by making positive comments about their competence, their intelligence, how they look and about enjoying their company.

Communication skills

These skills are an essential part of developing and maintaining good relationships (see *Creating Helpful Dynamics* for tips). Remember - it's important to be open and honest with adolescents if you want them to trust you and be honest in return.

Making time to talk and be together

Find regular time to be together. This might seem impossible at times but it needs to be a priority if you want to know how they are, what they're doing and whether they need help.

Peer relationships

You can model good peer relationships through the way you relate to your own friends and to the friends of your children. Show interest in your children's friends and make them feel comfortable in your home. Be friendly without interfering or pretending to be one of them.

Teach them to feel good about themselves

You can help in many ways through; providing good role models, talking about males and females they admire, telling them about your own life, and encouraging suitable 'mentors' to show an interest in them and watch over their well-being.

Promote a balanced lifestyle

Good relationships don't just happen; they need nurturing with time and energy. It also helps if you have a well-balanced lifestyle yourself.

