

IOWA HHS COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAMS SERVING IOWA TEENS

- Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention
- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Care for Kids
- Family Planning Program
- Healthy and Well Kids in Iowa (Hawki)
- Iowa's Personal Responsibility Education Program
- Iowa's Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
- I-Smile
- Title V Child and Adolescent Health Program



ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Tips for Talking with Teens



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STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
Health AND **Human**
SERVICES



TEENS STILL WANT PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Talking with your teenager may be scary, but being present and initiating conversations is very important to their health, their sense of safety and their emotional development.

Teenagers *want* to talk with their parents and trusted adults about health, relationships and other difficult topics.

Your child's friends do influence their social behavior but it's you, the parent, who most influences their decision-making when faced with risky situations.

Connecting to your teenager can help promote healthy behaviors and help them make good choices as they gain more and more independence.



HAVING EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS



PREPARE

Know your values and be ready to clearly communicate them. Think about your own lived experiences and explain what you learned. Think about trusted resources your teen can turn to and remind them of other trusted adults who will support them.



CALMLY LISTEN

- ▶ Above all else, stay calm and listen.
- ▶ If a teen is already engaging in risky behavior, reacting with anger may push them to not seek your help in the future.
- ▶ Acknowledge their feeling.
- ▶ Keep it conversational and don't interrupt.
- ▶ Be mindful that lecturing can shut down the conversation.



ASK QUESTIONS

It's okay to not have all the answers. Work with them to find answers together.

- ▶ Ask questions to help decide a smart solution.
- ▶ Share facts and debunk myths with specific details.
- ▶ Talk through risks and how they will impact their goals and values.



IDENTIFY THE BEST TIME TO HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS

- ▶ Talk to your teen early and often.
- ▶ Identify calm opportunities to have conversations, such as in the car, while watching a TV show, while fixing dinner, or by text.
- ▶ Use real-life events such as what is happening in your community, the news or other media.