



Being interested in your child means listening!

Talking to your child isn't always easy. Teens often want to be alone or do things by themselves, which is a necessary step on the road to becoming an adult. However, teens still need to feel like you are interested in them and are there to help them.

HOW DO I SHOW THAT I'M INTERESTED IN MY CHILD'S LIFE?

Take advantage of your daily time together (suppertime, car rides, etc.) to talk about things going on in their lives. For example, you can ask:

- How was your soccer game yesterday?
- How was your day at school?
- How's it going babysitting the neighbour's son?

By asking questions on a regular basis, you can avoid any fears your child may have when faced with an official "Honey, we need to talk..."

Listening...

- Doesn't mean understanding right off the bat.
- Doesn't mean tolerating, agreeing with or approving of behaviour.
- Means wanting to understand what your child is trying to say!*

* Based on the "Parenting a teen: a hard journey" program.

If teens want to talk to you, be available when they want.
The timing is important for them.

A FEW TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

- Choose the right time to talk. Ideally, you need to have time, be available to listen, and ensure you won't be interrupted. In daily life, however, discussions can happen at any time, even when we're busy!
- Avoid talking too much, lecturing, arguing, cutting them off, criticizing or jumping to conclusions. Let them finish their ideas. Just listen!
- Show interest and try to grasp what they're saying. For example, you can ask: What do you think? How did you feel? Explain to me what you mean.
- Respect their ideas and opinions, even if these views are different from yours.
- Nod your head and smile to show that you're still listening.
- Show that you understand what they're feeling: "I understand what you're experiencing. I know what it's like to go through that."



Above all, listen to what they mean...
and not just what they say!