

**SUMMIT COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT**

**FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION**

**TALKING WITH YOUR ADOLESCENT  
COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR PARENTS**

1. To make the effort is more important than to have the exact words-
  - It is OK to be nervous.
2. Review your knowledge base-
  - There are many excellent resources in the parent guide, public libraries and book stores.
3. Understand the question being asked-
  - Ask for clarification if necessary.
4. Make sure your message was understood-
  - “Does that answer your question?”(It is helpful to have your child explain your answer in their own words to determine whether they understood it.)
  - A few days later ask your child to repeat what he/she remembers about your conversation so misconceptions can be corrected.
5. Be honest if you don't know the answer-
  - No one is an expert.
  - Looking up an answer together may lead to further opportunities for discussion.
6. Use Teachable Moments-
  - Watch TV with your child: it will provide opportunities to discuss sexuality and controversial subjects.
  - Use daily events at school, in the news, to initiate conversations.

7. Use Open-ended Questions(that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no" )  
to promote discussion -
  - What do you think about.....?
  - What have you heard about...?
  - What do you know about.....
8. Know When To Stop and Listen-
  - Respect your child's discomfort or need for privacy and try again in a few days.
9. Repeat, Repeat, Repeat-
  - Children forget or absorb information at different rates.
  - Children need more detailed answers as they grow.
10. Communicate Your Values-
  - Clarify them for yourself and with your partner before sharing with your child.
  - A clear sense of family values gives children a foundation for making responsible decisions.
11. Body Language-
  - Facial expressions, tone of voice, jokes, even silence all send messages.
12. Hidden Messages-
  - What children say and what children do not say may carry a message.