



KATIE BROWN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Promotes Respectful Relationships by
Teaching Relationship Violence Prevention

10 Tips for Talking to Kids About Relationships

1. Think about the things you value in your own relationships – then share them with your kids.

How do we, as adults, expect men and women to act? How should people behave if they disagree? How should decisions be made in a relationship? Be sure that you can explain your reasoning and can support it with examples.

2. Reveal the “Unspoken Rules of Dating”

Don't assume that your son or daughter knows how to behave in a dating relationship. Give them clear examples of appropriate manners, actions, etc. It's important to talk with them about what you expect of them, rather than letting locker room or slumber party talk be their only source of information.

3. Tell the whole truth... good and bad.

Young people generally view dating very romantically – they are excited and expect their relationships to be filled only with pleasure and happiness. Support these expectations, but discuss some of the less positive things that may happen. It can be challenging to know how to act when strong feelings are involved, but give them a few suggestions or phrases to help them get out of difficult situations. For instance, “I'm not comfortable with this – can we talk about it?”

4. Teach assertiveness, not aggressiveness.

One of the most powerful things we learn from our parents is to speak up for ourselves – to state our feelings, opinions, and desires clearly. Compliment your kids when they respectfully assert themselves.

5. Teach anger control.

It's not realistic to assume that everyone will get along all the time. Help your kids recognize when they're getting angry and teach them to take a moment to stop and think before they act on that anger.

6. Teach negotiation.

Help your teens to understand that compromising and “taking turns” are positive steps to healthy relationships. Also help them to understand that violence, threats, and insults have no place in respectful relationships.

7. Teach problem solving.

When your teen is confronted with a tough issue, have them talk through exactly what happened and what may have caused the situation. Work with them to identify several different ways in which the situation may be resolved. Follow up with them to see which solution they chose and how it is working out.

8. Explain the warning signs included in the handout section.

No relationship goes smoothly at all times. However, there are signs that a relationship has more than the usual ups and downs. Know the warning signs, teach them to your kids, and help them to understand that any incidence of violence in a relationship is a predictor of very serious problems.

9. Keep no secrets.

Let your kids know that while special shared thoughts are okay in a relationship, sometimes secrecy – particularly when it isolates them from other friends or family – can be the first sign of manipulation and coercion.

10. Be the ultimate role model.

Talk the talk and walk the walk. If you want your kids to respect themselves and others, let them see your relationships as the ultimate examples of healthy relationships.