

DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: ADVICE FROM TEENS TO ADULTS

According to the *Teen Voice 2010* findings, too many teens are missing the positive, sustained and meaningful teen-adult relationships they need to thrive. Helping youth find their sparks and voice is not an insurmountable challenge. In fact, individual caring adults—parents, teachers, neighbors, grandparents, mentors and coaches—can have a tremendous impact on the successful development of our nation’s youth by building positive relationships with teens. This starts when each of us takes the time and effort to re-examine the ways we can or could connect with, listen to and seek to nurture teens’ basic strengths.

What exactly should adults do to develop these relationships? Through in-depth interviews with 30 15-year-olds, we asked teens what adults did and didn’t do that told them that adults cared, were paying attention and really understood them. Here is what they had to say:

10 Tips from Teens to Adults

1. **LOOK AT US.** Make eye contact.
2. **SPEND TIME TALKING WITH US.** Ask open-ended questions.
Build the conversation.
3. **LISTEN.** Pay attention. Don’t multi-task or get distracted when you’re with us.
Respond to our messages and texts.
4. **BE DEPENDABLE.** Do what you say you’re going to do.
5. **SHOW APPRECIATION FOR WHAT WE DO.** Give compliments. Show that you’re glad to see us or hear from us. Send us personalized cards.
6. **RELAX.** Don’t feel like you have to be on guard.
7. **SHOW THAT YOU’RE INTERESTED.** Attend our concerts, games and other events.
Ask us to show you what we can do.
8. **LAUGH WITH US (AND AT YOURSELF).** Laugh at our jokes. Show us your humor.
9. **ASK US TO HELP YOU.** Ask us for our ideas. Share your own, too.
10. **CHALLENGE US.** Teach us what you know. Push us to do our best.

For more information and to view the full *Teen Voice 2010 Report* please visit <http://www.at15.com>.

