

Talking with Kids

How to engage youngsters in productive dialogues

1. Create the context for dialogue

Create a private space and a climate where the youngster can feel it is safe to talk

Clarify the value of keeping things confidential

Pursue dialogues when the time, location, and conditions are right.

2. Establish credibility as someone to whom it is worth talking

Respond with empathy, warmth, and nurturance

Show genuine regard and respect

Use active and undistracted listening

3. Facilitate talk: be an active listener

Avoid interruptions

Start slowly, avoid asking questions, and minimize pressure to talk

Encourage the youngster to take the lead

Remember: short periods of silence are part of the process and should be accommodated.