

## Talking to Your Teens About Dating<sup>1</sup>

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Talking to teenagers about dating may seem like a daunting task to some parents who are thinking their teen will assume the “Oh no, not another parent talk again” posture. You know the one—head cocked, eyes rolled, and arms crossed. However, talking about it can be very important in determining how your teen approaches dating and his or her future relationships.

According to family and adolescent researchers, peers may influence a teen's dating life, but parents and families should have the final say. Begin by maintaining a loving, supportive relationship with your teen and keeping open lines of communication.

Be willing to discuss your own relationship experiences with your teen. Share how you define a healthy versus unhealthy relationship. If you're currently in a significant relationship, serve as a role model for healthy relationship behavior to your teen. Also, consider joining your teen in watching his or her favorite television programs, especially those that involve teens having romantic relationships. Refrain from commenting during the show and take time for discussion when the show is over. Let her or him know your views and values on dating with an optimistic attitude.

Overall, it's important to provide a safe and secure base for open communication with your teen and guide your teen with open-ended questions to help them think about their own expectations and values in relationships. Parents can use their knowledge of both the promise and pitfalls of dating in the teen years to discuss dating openly with their children.

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## Reference

Fogarty, K. (2006, July 1). Teens and dating: tips for parents and professionals. Retrieved August 15, 2006, from the University of Florida Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences website: <http://fyas.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletters/rnycu06/2006/07/teens-and-dating-tips-for-parents-and.html>.