



HARBOR  
HOUSE

**PARENT'S GUIDE TO  
TALKING WITH CHILDREN  
ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS**

**24-HOUR HOTLINE**

**815-932-5800**

**CHATLINE**

**HARBORHOUSEDV.ORG**

**Engaging in conversations with your children about relationships may not come naturally. However, conversations about relationships with your children should start early and change as they get older in order to build self-esteem, decrease the likelihood of entering into unhealthy relationships, and empower them to make healthy relationship decisions.**

# STARTING THE CONVERSATION

## **Start talking**

Open the door for conversation. Let your child know you care about what they think. Ask them questions and listen attentively to their answers.

## **Help them feel comfortable**

If you think this conversation is going to be awkward for you, think about how your child might feel. Make sure the location and time are appropriate. Then they will be more likely to communicate honestly. For example try having a conversation at the dinner table when their friends are not present.

For **children**, teach them how to make new friends and develop social skills. Teach them how to interact well with others by creating a strong foundation of effective communication. Equip them to engage in conversations and interact well with others.

# CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER

- Teach them questions to ask others when they're developing friendships.
- Role model healthy relationships.
- Foster an environment of compassion and concern for others.
- Talk them through their emotions when they're feeling happy or sad.
- Ask them how they want their friends to treat them.

For **teens**, talk with them about their developed view of what healthy relationships are. Ask them questions and help them think critically about their values. Feel free to offer your perspective in a gentle, kind yet firm way.

# TEENS

## AGES 13-18

- What does a healthy relationship look like?
- Who has a relationship you admire? Why?
- Can you think of any unhealthy relationships you've seen? How do you know they're unhealthy?
- What is a healthy way to argue?
- What is an unhealthy way to argue?
- How do you want to be treated by your friends?
- What do you value in your friendships?

# EMPOWER YOUR CHILDREN!

Empowering your children will help them develop self-esteem which fosters overall emotional health. Empowering them will help your children understand they are worthy of healthy love and enable them to honor their own feelings and set personal boundaries. Have conversations with them about how they feel about themselves and how they ought to be treated by others.



# EMPOWER YOUR CHILDREN

What are things you like  
about yourself?

**You are worthy.**

What are your dreams?

**You are strong.**

How do you feel about that?

**You deserve healthy love.**

What do you want to do?

**I love you no matter what.**