

2. YOU ALREADY CARE — HOW DO YOU SHOW IT?

BACKGROUND

Most people agree that “expressing care” is key to a strong relationship. But it can be harder to express care when children grow into teenagers. They may be embarrassed by the hug that they didn’t hesitate to give just a few months ago. It’s important for them to show and receive care in ways that fit who they are and who they are becoming.

WATCH this [1.5-minute video](#) to learn about the main ideas behind “Express Care,” the first key in youth-parent (and other) relationships.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIGS

An important way to show care to young teens is to respect their boundaries and listen to ways they value. This includes finding ways to listen, show appreciation, and offer encouragement in ways that they value—not just in ways that make you feel good or that you liked when you were a teenager.

REFLECT ON IT

- In what ways have you and your Little already expressed care to each other (in small or big ways)? How have those expressions of care influenced your relationships with each other and with others?
- How might you reinforce these keys to strong relationships within your Little’s family without imposing your own culture or values?
- How might “express care” also enrich in other relationships in your life, including within your own family?

TALK ABOUT IT

Remember to respond to the questions, too, so it becomes a conversation.

>> With your Little

- What are ways you show people that you really care about them?
- Who are people you really trust? What do they do that helps you trust them?
- What do you enjoy doing that you haven’t had a chance to do lately? What do you enjoy about it?

>> With your Little’s parent or guardian

- Did something surprise or particularly interest you during the workshop on expressing care?
- Have you seen changes in how your kids like you to show care—or how they show you they care?
- What are some things your family really enjoys doing together?

TRY IT

- **Long Listen:** Play this game: Have your Little **talk for 3 minutes** without stopping (time it!) about anything they want. You just listen—really listen. Then switch roles. When you’re both done, talk about what it was like to talk uninterrupted, and what it was like to just listen. What would have made it more enjoyable? What could you learn from that game about what makes listening—and talking—most meaningful?
- **Free Care:** Get together with your Little and, depending on your relationship, with your Little’s parent/guardian. Each of you makes a list of FREE things you like to receive **when someone wants to show you they care**. These could include a note on a Post-It, a hug, a high five, a public (or private) thank you, or many other things. Then copy the list so you each have reminders of what each other likes most.



WHAT FAMILIES EXPERIENCE

As young people grow up, they often shift in the kinds of care they appreciate and need. This session encourages families to explore what’s already working and what they might adjust in how they show each other that they care.

KEY IDEAS

- All of us care about each other in our families.
- It can be harder to express care as kids grow up. So we have to find ways to adjust so it works for everyone.
- Expressing care begins with really listening to each other.