



Talking About A Positive Future

Helping your Little think about a positive future is a powerful way to create the motivation she needs to make good choices. Later you will talk about what can help make this future a reality and what might get in the way – for now, you are simply trying to help your Little develop a positive vision for herself and her future!

Every Little is different, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach to talking about positive futures. Some Littles will have trouble thinking even into next year (especially Littles under the age of 12 or so), others may already be dreaming about their life years down the road. This Resource Guide should give you some starting points and tips- your job is to create the unique conversations that fit your Little.



Tips for talking about a positive future

Talk about how her Spark relates to her future: If your Little has a Spark that really matters to her or that she sees as an important part of her future...

- Ask how she sees her Spark being part of her life down the road- next month, next year, as an adult, etc.
- Talk about what that would look like, help her envision the ways that exploring her Spark could positively impact her life, the opportunities it creates, the exciting ways her life might be different if she continued to develop her Spark.

Explore your Little's vision for the longer-term future: Maybe your Little already has a lot of positive ideas of what he wants in his future- you may not know until you ask.

- Ask your Little what he wants his life to be like when he's an adult.
 - Help him develop this vision by asking about details- what kind of job or career he wants, what kind of lifestyle, where he might want to live, if he has his sights set on college or further education after high school.
- Ask your Little what kind of person he wants to be when he is older.
 - Ask your Little about the positive personal characteristics he hopes to have when he's older. Does he value being caring, responsible, hardworking, happy, a good friend, assertive, disciplined, adventurous, fun-loving, wise?
 - Ask him if he has role models – a person or persons he wants to be like? If so, what personal characteristics of theirs does he admire? In what ways does he want to be like them?

Explore your Little's near-term future: Some Littles (especially younger ones) will have a hard time thinking too far beyond the present.

- Ask your Little how she wants her life to look in a few months, in the summer, in the next school year.

- Explore things that are happening now in your Little's life that she would like to experience more of, or make a bigger part of her life.
- Ask about things that are going on in her life now that she would like to change or have less of in the near future.
- Ask your Little about things she would like to do, or ways she would like to behave, or characteristics she would like to strengthen in herself in the near future.

Explore specific areas of your Little's life: Sometimes it's hard for young people to have conversations about big topics like "the future". It can help to get more specific.

- Ask your Little how he would like his school life to look next year or further down the road.
 - Does he want his grades to improve?
 - Does he want to be more involved at school, in activities like clubs, sports or after school programs?
 - If so, find out whether your Little knows how to find and access these opportunities. If not, you may be able to give him some guidance and help.
 - Does he want to improve his behavior or stop getting in trouble?
- Ask your Little if there are ways she would like her social life to change.
 - Ask whether she feels like she has friends. Does she think he would like to change her peer group or make new friends?
 - Is she concerned at all that her friends might be influencing her in negative ways?
 - Is she being the kind of friend she wants to be?
- Ask your Little if he would like to be more involved in his community
 - Is there a community center, afterschool program, or organization like Scouts or 4-H that he would like to join?
 - Remember, you may be in a position to look for opportunities your Little and his family may not know about.
 - Is your Little part of a faith community that he values? Are there ways he wants to explore or involve himself more in that community in the future?
- Talk to your Little about her Family. For many young people, making their family proud, or not disappointing their family can be very important.
 - Explore with your Little whether her family's values and expectations are an important and positive part of how she thinks about her future.
 - See if your Little can identify specific things she wants to do in the future in order to show respect to and please her family.

