



Session 2

You Already Care — How Do You Show It?

Handout Guide

Handout	Quantity Needed
Family Handout 2.1 Express Care: Some Key Ideas	1 per family
Family Handout 2.2 Tips for Parenting Adults: Showing Affection with Teenagers	1 per parenting adult
Family Handout 2.3 Tips for Youth: 15 Ways Youth Can Express Care to Parenting and Other Family Adults	1 per youth
Family Handout 2.3a How Our Family Expresses Care	1 per participant
Family Handout 2.3b Expressing Care by Really Listening	1 per participant
Family Handout 2.4a At-Home Activities Guide	1 per family
Family Handout 2.4b POST IT: A Guide for Your Week	1 per family
Family Handout 2.4c TRY IT: Expressing Care During Shared Family meals	1 per family
Family Handout 2.4d TRY IT: Yes, And . . .	1 per family



EXPRESS CARE

Some Key Ideas

Positive relationships are built on expressing care. When we express care, we respond to this unspoken request:

“Show me that I matter to you.”

88%
of US parents
believe expressing
care is strong in
their family.

Why Does Expressing Care Matter in Families?

Caring parent-youth relationships help us . . .

- **Deepen bonds** with each other.
- Form positive relationships with **other people**.
- **Reduce stress**, so it is easier to focus, solve problems, and reach goals.
- **Feel more confident** about ourselves and the future.

What Does Expressing Care Involve?

Search Institute has identified five actions that express care:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Be dependable | Be someone I can trust. |
| Listen | Really pay attention when we are together. |
| Believe in me | Make me feel known and valued. |
| Be warm | Show me you enjoy being with me. |
| Encourage | Praise me for my efforts and achievements. |

How Expressing Care Shifts as Kids Grow Up

Family members tend to express care less frequently to each other when kids are between ages 10 and 14. Kids spend more time on their own. They often no longer like the ways parenting adults expressed care when they were younger. It’s harder to spend quality time together. Families have to find new ways to express care as teenagers grow up.

There’s also good news: Expressing care **starts to improve** during the high school years. That’s particularly true if families stay connected, even when it’s awkward or hard.



Tips for Parenting Adults

Showing Affection with Teenagers

As kids enter the teen years, they can seem to push parents away. They may bristle or groan with every hug. Or they may pretend to gag with any “I love you.”

What’s Going On?

Around the middle school years, young people are dealing with changes in their bodies and thinking. They are shifting from being children to becoming adults. They are balancing becoming independent and also wanting parenting adults’ affection and encouragement.

As Parenting Adults...

We need to adjust how we show that we love and care for them. How do we EXPRESS CARE when a tween seems to say STAY AWAY? Try these strategies:

1. **Ask** them what they want, and adjust accordingly. What are they comfortable with in different settings? (For example, they may be comfortable with a hug at home, but not in front of their friends.)
2. **Respect** boundaries and privacy. Saying “Love you!” before they head out the door for school may go over better than in front of all their friends.
3. **Spend time** together—and not just doing chores or homework. A few minutes of undivided attention lets them know that they’re important to you. You enjoy being with them.
4. **Do physical things** together. Play basketball. Run. Build something. Work out. Do what works best for your family.
5. **Keep smiling**, joking, and laughing together—even if it means laughing at yourself.
6. **Try not to take it too personally.** Don’t assume that a rejection one day will mean the same thing will happen tomorrow. Remember that kids are working through all kinds of feelings.

Remember:

Each young person is different. The key is to listen to each child. Find **what works to keep you connected**, even if how you connect needs to change.



Tips for Youth

15 Ways Youth Can Express Care to Parenting and Other Family Adults

Ways to Express Care

Here are 15 ways you can let your parenting adults and other close family adults know that you care about them. They're likely to appreciate these expressions. But if you want to be sure they like something you say or do, just ask them!

1. Say "thank you" when they say or do something you appreciate.
2. Send a text or email just to ask how they're doing.
3. Offer to help with a project they're doing.
4. Volunteer to run errands with them—just to keep them company.
5. Give them a hug if they seem discouraged or stressed.
6. Put away your cell phone when you're talking with them.
7. Laugh at their jokes—and tell them your own jokes. Send a funny meme.
8. Show up when you promise. If you can't every time, apologize.
9. Give them a greeting card on their birthday and other special occasions.
10. Leave a note or a picture on the bathroom mirror to let them know you're thinking of them.
11. Offer to hang out with them, even if you could go spend time with friends.
12. Watch a TV show or movie that they'd prefer to see. Listen to their music.
13. Ask them to tell you stories about their life and other things that are important to them.
14. Make time to do an activity together that both of you really enjoy.
15. Say "I love you," even if it's a little bit awkward.



Delights & Distractions

What does Express Care involve?

- Be dependable Be someone I can trust.
- Listen Really pay attention when we are together.
- Believe in me Make me feel known and valued.
- Be warm Show me you enjoy being with me.
- Encourage Praise me for my efforts and achievements.

List the ways members of your family have encouraged you in the past few weeks. Include all examples you can think of, whether or not you appreciated them.	STOP! I do not like when my family members encourage me in this way.	GO! I do like when my family members encourage me in this way.	SLOW DOWN! I sometimes like when my family members encourage me in this way.
Cheering really loudly for me in front of a large group of people (such as friends, coworkers, classmates, or teammates)			
Writing me a personal note that recognizes something I worked hard on recently			
Complimenting me on something in front of our other family members			
Praising me in an individual 1:1 conversation			
Add your own example!			
Add your own example!			



Expressing Care

by Really Listening

Listening is a big part of expressing care. Keep these guidelines in mind to really listen to one another when having conversations, especially when you're discussing difficult topics.



Stay focused. Stay on topic.



Use "I" statements: Say things like "I felt embarrassed at the band concert when you cheered so loudly." That's better than, "You embarrassed me by cheering so loudly," which can feel like blaming.



Assume good intentions. Even if someone expressed care in a way that you didn't like, remember that they meant to show that they care about you.



Listen to understand, not to respond. Focus on listening to them while they are talking. Don't plan your response while they are sharing. It's okay to wait a moment to respond. That can give you time to think about what they said before your form your response.



EXPRESS CARE

At Home Activities

OVERVIEW: What Will Our Family Do?

If You Have:	Materials	Activity Name	Description	When Will Your Family Do This?
1 minute	Family Handout 2.4b	Post It: A Guide for Your Week	Post this guide somewhere all family members will see it. The refrigerator is a great spot!	
5 minutes	Family Handout 2.4b	Talk About It	Choose one question to discuss any time you have down time - in the car, waiting in line, over a meal. Put these questions on a sheet of paper in your home - each family member can write their answers to them throughout the week.	
10 minutes	Internet-enabled device	Online exploration	Visit www.keepconnected.info to explore extra resources on family relationships.	
15 minutes	Handout 2.4d	Try It: Yes, And...	Play a game that comes from improv theater to practice having conversations that build on each other's ideas. Don't be afraid to be silly!	
30 minutes	Handout 2.4c	Try It: Expressing Care during Shared Family Meals	Have a shared family meal where you discuss highs and lows for the day. Choose a time for your shared meal when distractions are minimal. Try to find a day when people are not in a hurry or have other tasks competing for their attention. If a shared family meal is unrealistic, pick another activity you can do as a family, like going on a walk.	
5-15 minutes	Handout 2.4e	Try It: Colorful Conversations	Play the "Colorful Conversations" game (adapted from the youth session) as a family. Take turns answering a variety of questions and listening to each other's answers.	
10 minutes	Internet-enabled device	Online Exploration	Visit www.keepconnected.info to explore extra resources on family relationships.	



POST IT

A Guide For Your Week

Display this page where you will notice it through the week (such as on a refrigerator).

1. Think about it

Key ideas to remember

EXPRESSING CARE involves showing each other that we enjoy being together and want the best for each other.

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

2. Talk about it

Discussion starters

- Who is someone you know who is really good at showing you that they care about you? What do they do that you really appreciate?
- What do you enjoy doing together as a family that you haven't been able to do lately? What do you enjoy about it?
- What's one thing someone does (in or outside your family) that they think is expressing care, but that you don't like? How might you let them know what you would prefer instead?

3. Try it

Tips for families

- Pay attention. Focus on each other when someone is talking about things that matter to them. Avoid distractions such as your cell phone.
- When family members tell you they're dealing with something hard, don't wait for them to follow up. Ask them about it so they don't have to bring it up again.
- Make time for lightness. Share in some humor, fun, and laughter amid the practical tasks.



Visit www.KeepConnected.info

Find ideas, quizzes, activities, discussion starters, and more to strengthen family relationships.



Expressing Care During Shared Family Meals

It can be hard to set aside time to share a meal together as a family. But finding that time can be a **great way to express care**. Pick one day this week when you'll all share a meal. Then talk about these expectations or rules—or set your own—to make it a great opportunity to express care to each other. Begin by asking each family member to talk about a high (good thing) or a low (hard thing) for the day. Then use other conversation starters from Family Handout 2.3b.

Quick reminders to make meals times to express care





TRY IT

Yes, And...

One of the ways improv comedy works is by using a technique called “yes, and...” No matter what other actors say or do, you don’t disagree or take the scene in a different direction. Rather, you say, “Yes, and,...” building on the previous idea. Watch [this video example](https://youtu.be/cSzCfsGwj0), (https://youtu.be/cSzCfsGwj0) which contrasts “yes, and” with “yes, but.”

The same dynamic happens in our families. By saying “yes, and,” we show interest in something that matters to someone else. Then we add to it from our own perspectives.

You try it! Have one family member read a story starter (below). Then someone else says, “yes, and” then adds to the story. The next person does the same thing. Keep going until you’re completely stumped, or you’re laughing too hard to continue.

Try These Story Starters (or make up your own):

- On my way to school/work today, I came across... [complete the sentence, then the next person says, “Yes, and...” to continue the story]
- The person I most admire in the world is _____ because they...
- If I won a \$1 million prize, the first thing I would do is...

When you’re done, think together about how “yes, and” might help you show each other that you’re really interested in what they’re interested in.





TRY IT

OPTIONS:

If you don't have multicolored candy around or prefer not to use it, you can play this game with other objects, such as:

- Roll a die, matching the number you get (1-6) with one of the questions.
- Cut six colors of paper into small squares to distribute. Or cut white paper into six different shapes.
- Use six colors of crayons or markers.







Colorful Conversations

1. Pass a bag of multicolored candies to each person. Each person should take a small handful of candies in as many different colors as possible, but not to eat the candy yet.
2. Choose one of the Colorful Conversation Codes to follow.
3. Taking turns, each person should select one piece of candy and compare its color to the Colorful Conversation Code. Based on that color, that person should respond to the corresponding question. After they answer their question, one other person should ask a follow-up question about what they heard. (You can eat your piece of candy after each turn!)
4. Continue taking turns responding to the questions.







After your colorful conversation, discuss these questions as a family:

- What surprising or interesting things did you learn about each other? Why did you find it surprising or interesting?
- What was it like to talk about yourself? What was it like to hear others talk about themselves?
- What strategies did you use to make sure you were listening actively to the other members of your group?
- Did you hear any really good follow-up questions that helped you feel that others were really listening and interested?
- If you could ask other questions (not just the six listed), what would you ask, and why? (Consider creating your own Colorful Conversations Code with these questions!)

Colorful Conversations Code 1

-  BLUE: Share a talent you have, and how long you have had that skill. What did you do to learn the skill? How do you practice?
-  RED: What is a subject or topic you'd like to learn more about? Why?
-  ORANGE: What is a value or rule you live by? How did you figure this out?
-  YELLOW: Who is someone you really respect? Why?
-  GREEN: Describe your dream job. How did you learn about this job? What excites you about it?
-  BROWN: Where is a place you can really be yourself? Why?

Colorful Conversations Code 2

-  BLUE: Share something you would like to become better at and why.
-  RED: Share a skill or activity that has come naturally to you. How do you use this skill now? How could you use it in the future?
-  ORANGE: What is your favorite celebrity or TV show? Why?
-  YELLOW: Who is someone you aspire to be like? Why?
-  GREEN: Describe your dream life ten years from now. How did you come up with this dream?
-  BROWN: Where would you live if you could live anywhere on the planet? Why?

More Questions You Can Use to Create Your Own Colorful Conversations Code:

- What is one of your favorite places on earth? What do you most enjoy about it?
- Name something you are grateful for.
- What is/was your favorite subject in school? Why?
- What subject in school is/was most challenging for you?
- Name someone at school, work, or in your community who you really admire. What do they do that inspires you?
- If you had a whole day to do anything you wanted, what would you do?
- If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life what would it be?
- Would you like to be famous? What would you be famous for?
- What do you love to do with friends?
- If you could travel anywhere in the universe, where would you go and why?
- Tell us about the last time you tried something new. How did it go?
- What is one new kind of technology you hope to see invented in your lifetime? Why is that important to you?
- Tell us about the last time you laughed really hard.
- If you were an animal right now, which would you be? Why?
- Would you rather own a magic carpet that flies or a personal robot? Why?
- Would you rather be able to fly or be invisible? Why?