

PEERS AGAINST VIOLENCE

**PAVE**

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR

**7-10**  
YEAR OLDS

ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

## MODEL BEHAVIORS

Before they ask you what to do, they look at your behavior and see if they can figure out how it's done. This applies to relationships too. Model good communication, constructive disagreements and respectful interactions in all your relationships and they will follow your example.

## KEEP IT GOING

Any conversation about relationships should be ongoing. Know that you aren't going to cover all the issues in one sitting. Don't be afraid to revisit topics of conversation. Something they mentioned the last time you talked can be a great jumping off point for the next conversation, plus it shows that you listen.

## DEFINE TERMS

How you define terms like dating, boyfriend, girlfriend and relationship may be very different than how they define it. Compare your definition to theirs during the conversation. Remember, no one is right or wrong, you're just making sure you are both on the same page.

## STRATEGIZE

Brainstorm ways they can remove themselves from uncomfortable situations. Practice refusal skills from saying no to finding excuses to leave difficult situations. Identify trusted adults in their lives. Don't be offended if you're not at the top of their list. Remember, it's important that they feel connected to multiple safe adults.

**Learn more about  
creating healthy  
relationships:**

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781.891.0724**

**HOTLINE  
800.899.4000**



Developed by REACH  
Beyond Domestic Violence

## **WHAT DO THEY WANT**

Encourage them to start thinking about what they want in their relationships. Children are often pushed to include everyone and be nice. While those traits are important, you also want them to be aware that they have choices about the people they let into their lives and how people are allowed to treat them.

## **DON'T BE VAGUE**

Infuse your family's values into this conversation. Don't answer a question with "because I said so." Explain why your family feels a certain way or does certain things. Consider the messages you want them to carry out into the world.

## **DEFINE BOUNDARIES**

Personal boundaries help define expectations about how people want to be treated. Remind them that everyone has the right to communicate how they want to be treated by others. Encourage them to communicate their personal boundaries by sharing with others when those boundaries have been crossed. They should also learn that everyone has different personal boundaries and that a friend's boundaries may be different than their own.

## **EMPHASIZE THE GOOD STUFF**

Teach that in any healthy relationship there is respect, safety, support, individuality, equality, acceptance, honesty and trust. Healthy relationships should also be fun. Use these principles to encourage emotional awareness. Teach them how to express their feelings, both good and bad, appropriately.