## Analyzing Our Messages to Teens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What We Say</th>
<th>How Teens Interpret It</th>
<th>Better Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You make me so happy!”</td>
<td>Your job in life is to please me.</td>
<td>You should be proud of how hard you worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Watch your language!”</td>
<td>I’ve tuned out what you’re really trying to say.</td>
<td>Hey that language is offensive to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We can’t afford that.”</td>
<td>Money is the answer to everything.</td>
<td>The store is filled with great things to day but we have lots at home already and we are not bringing home anything more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t worry – it’ll be OK.”</td>
<td>You are being dramatic.</td>
<td>I would like to understand what you must have gone through. Tell me about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Why were you late?”</td>
<td>You messed up again.</td>
<td>My guess is that you are late because you were having fun and did not want to come home, but that is still not Ok.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Make sure you share.”</td>
<td>Give away your stuff.</td>
<td>Your sibling would like to play with your tablet for a while, but it’s still yours and we’ll be sure they give it back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shoulder to Shoulder Conference  
Five tips to parenting teens  
October 2019
Teen Slang (2019)

Fun & Harmless Slang

- Bruh: A casual nickname for "bro"
- Fam: Their closest friends
- GOAT: Acronym for "Greatest of all time"
- TBH: Acronym for "To be honest"
- It's lit: Short for "It's cool or awesome"
- I'm weak: Short for "That was funny"
- Hundo P: Short for 100% sure or certain
- Gucci: Something is good or cool
- FOMO: "Fear of missing out"
- Squad: Term for their friend group

Boots: This is a way to say "very" or "a lot." It's added after the verb or adjective.

Woke: Highly aware of social issues.

Savage: The cool way to say "cool!"

Terms to Keep an Eye on

- Bae: Short for "baby." It's used as a term of endearment for a significant other.
- Ghost: To ignore someone on purpose
- Ship: Short for "relationship"
- Low-Key: A warning that what they're saying isn't something they want everyone to know
- Salty: To be bitter about something or someone
- Straight fire: Something is hot or trendy
- Skurt: To go away or leave
- Throw shade: To give someone a nasty look or say something unpleasant about them
# Slang to Look for in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slang</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THICC</td>
<td>Looking good in your skin no matter your size or shape.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEARD</td>
<td>A deep understanding of a topic being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINNA</td>
<td>Means “going to” or “intend on” doing something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE</td>
<td>Something is “really good” or “cool”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW-KEY</td>
<td>Another way of using the term “sort of”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOUJEE</td>
<td>Rich or Acting rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>Term used in a sentence abbreviated for the term “as f#%@#”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG</td>
<td>Used these days as a quick way to say “original” or “original gangster”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTRA</td>
<td>Describes over the top or dramatic behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>Used as a non-complimentary way to say someone is only interested in trendy or popular things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEET</td>
<td>A very strong word for yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNACK</td>
<td>A way to describe an attractive male or female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANK</td>
<td>Something “really good”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOLE</td>
<td>Extremely buff or physically fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURNED UP</td>
<td>The act of getting drunk and high to the highest degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEFT ME ON READ</td>
<td>When on Snapchat someone opens your snap and doesn’t snap back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Open Crib; meaning no parents will be at home or at a gathering or party.</td>
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</tbody>
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Shoulder to Shoulder Conference  
Five tips to parenting teens  
Adapted from [https://netsanity.net/teen-slang-parents-guide/](https://netsanity.net/teen-slang-parents-guide/)  
October 2019
Supporting LGBTQ Youth
A Guide for Caregivers

There is a lot of misinformation about sexual orientation and gender identity. Here are some things that are important for you to know about LGBTQ youth in your home.

❖ LGBTQ youth are a lot like other youth.

In fact, the similarities that LGBTQ youth in foster care share with other youth in care far outweigh their differences. Most, if not all, youth in foster care have been affected by trauma and loss. They require acceptance and understanding. Making sure your home is welcoming to all differences, including race, ethnicity, disability, religion, gender, and sexual orientation will help ensure that all youth in your home feel safe and that the youth in your care grow into adults who embrace diversity in all its forms.

❖ This is not “just a phase.”

LGBTQ people are coming out acknowledging their sexual orientation gender identity to themselves and others at younger and younger ages. Studies by the Family Acceptance Project have found that most people report being attracted to another person around age 10 and identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual on average at age 13. Gender identity may begin to form as early as ages 2 to 4. Someone who has reached the point of telling a foster parent that he or she is LGBTQ has actually given a great deal of thought to his or her own identity and the decision to share it.

❖ No one caused your youth’s LGBTQ identity.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are the result of complex genetic, biological, and environmental factors. Your youth’s LGBTQ identity is not the result of anything you or a birth parent, or any other person did. LGBTQ people come from families of all religious, political, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Experiencing childhood trauma or reading about, hearing about, or being friends with other LGBTQ people did not “make” the youth become LGBTQ.
LGBTQ youth are no more likely than other youth to be mentally ill or dangerous.

These unfortunate myths and stereotypes have no basis in truth. Gay or transgender people are not more likely than heterosexuals or gender conforming people to molest or otherwise pose a threat to children. And although it is true that LGBTQ people experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, and related behaviors including alcohol and drug abuse than the general populations, studies show that this is a result of the stress of being LGBTQ in an often hostile environment, rather than a factor of a person’s LGBTQ identity itself. Professional mental health organizations agree that homosexuality is not a mental disorder and is a natural part of the human condition.

Your youth’s LGBTQ identity cannot be changed.

Medical and psychological experts agree that attempting to change someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity does not work and often causes harm.

Many religious groups embrace LGBTQ people. Some people fear that they will have to choose between their faith and supporting their youth’s LGBTQ identity – but this is not always the case. Many religious communities welcome LGBTQ youth, adults, and their families. It may be important to know that there are other options if your family does not feel welcomed or comfortable at your place of worship.

Source: Child Welfare Information Gateway/Supporting Our LGBQT Youth Guide for Foster Parents
Talking About Sexuality and Values  
For Teens and Parents

Note to teens and parents: As you do this exercise and discuss your responses, please listen to each other. Ask the other person to talk about why s/he feels that an age is appropriate or acceptable for the particular behavior. Remember that these are values, not truths. You can be open to different views and avoid being critical or judgmental.

Parents: It is important that you share your values. Remembers that as your teen moves into young adulthood, s/he will make private decisions about sexuality. You will have no control over those decisions.

Teens: It is important to listen to your parents and consider their opinions carefully, even as you express your own values. Their experiences and wisdom may help you to make difficult decisions.

When is it OK to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preteen/Teen</th>
<th>Parent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold hands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiss on the lips</td>
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<tr>
<td>French Kiss</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Make out” (kiss for a long time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Touch the other person’s body</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go out in a group of friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have sexual intercourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Live with someone without being in a committed relationship</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter a committed relationship with someone</td>
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Adapted from Barbara Huberman, Advocates for Youth, Washington, DC
Talking with Your Teens about Sex: Going Beyond “the Talk”

Parenting a teen is not always easy. Youth need adults who are there for them—especially parents* who will connect with them, communicate with them, spend time with them, and show a genuine interest in them. Talking with teens about sex-related topics, including healthy relationships and the prevention of HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and pregnancy, is a positive parenting practice that has been widely researched.1 A number of programs in a variety of settings (e.g., schools, parents’ worksites) have been shown to increase the amount and quality of communication between parents and their teens.2-4

This fact sheet offers practical actions for parents to help strengthen their efforts to engage positively with their teens and to have meaningful discussions with them about sex. This information complements other available parent resources (see selected list on page 3) by emphasizing the importance of talking with teens about sex and healthy relationships.

* In this fact sheet, “parent” refers to the adult primary caregiver(s) of an adolescent’s basic needs. These caregivers could include biological parents, other biological relatives, or non-biological parents.

Does talking with teens about sex make a difference?

- According to teens, the answer is “yes.” In national surveys conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, teens report that their parents have the greatest influence over their decisions about sex—more than friends, siblings, or the media. Most teens also say they share their parents’ values about sex, and making decisions about delaying sex would be easier if they could talk openly and honestly with their parents.5

- According to many researchers, the answer is “yes.” Studies have shown that teens who report talking with their parents about sex are more likely to delay having sex and to use condoms when they do have sex.6 Parents should be aware that the following important aspects of communication can have an impact on teen sexual behavior:7
  - what is said
  - how it is said
  - how often it is said
  - how much teens feel cared for, and understood by, their parents

What can parents do?

When parents communicate honestly and openly with their teenage son or daughter about sex, relationships, and the prevention of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy, they can help promote their teen’s health and reduce the chances that their teen will engage in behaviors that place them at risk. Following are some actions and approaches parents might take to improve communication with their teen about these challenging, hard-to-discuss health concerns.

■ Stay informed about—
  ▪ Where your teen is getting information
  ▪ What health messages your teen is learning
  ▪ What health messages are factual and medically accurate

Your teen may be getting messages about sex, relationships, and the prevention of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy from a variety of sources, including teachers, friends, health care providers, television, and social media. Some of these messages may be more accurate than others. Don't assume that your teen's health education class includes the information you want your child to know—school-based curricula vary from state to state.

■ Identify unique opportunities to have conversations with your teen, such as
  ▪ In the car. The car is a private space where your teen doesn’t have to look at you but can hear what you have to say.
  ▪ Immediately following a relevant TV show/movie. Characters on TV shows and movies model many behaviors, and certain storylines may provide the opportunity to reinforce positive behavior or discuss the consequences of risky behavior.
  ▪ Through text messaging, which may provide an easy, acceptable way to reinforce messages discussed in-person.

■ Have frequent conversations.

Although you may know that having “the talk” with your teen about sex and HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention is important, having a series of discussions that begin early, happen often, and continue over time can make more of a difference than a single conversation.

■ Be relaxed and open.

Talking about sex, relationships, and the prevention of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy may not always be comfortable or easy, but you can encourage your teen to ask you questions and be prepared to give fair and honest answers. This will keep the door open for both of you to bring up the topic. It’s OK to say you’re feeling uncomfortable or that you don’t have all the answers.

■ Avoid overreacting.

When your teen shares personal information with you, keep in mind that he or she may be asking for your input or wants to know how you feel. Let your teen know that you value his or her opinion, even if it is different from yours.

■ Provide opportunities for conversations between your teen and health care professionals.

By taking your teen to regular, preventive care appointments and allowing time alone with the provider, you create opportunities for your teen to talk confidentially with doctors or nurses about health issues that may be of concern, including HIV, STDs, and pregnancy. Be prepared to suggest that you step out of the room for a moment to allow for this special time, as not all health care providers will feel comfortable asking you to leave the room.
What topics should parents discuss with their teens?

It’s important that your conversations with your teen not focus just on the consequences of risky sexual behaviors. Many teens receive these messages in health education class or elsewhere. As a parent, you have the opportunity to have discussions with your teen about other related topics. You can

- Talk about healthy, respectful relationships.
- Communicate your own expectations for your teen about relationships and sex.
- Provide factual information about ways to prevent HIV, STDs, and pregnancy (e.g., abstinence, condoms and contraception, and HIV/STD testing).
- Focus on the benefits of protecting oneself from HIV, STDs, and pregnancy.
- Provide information about where your teen can speak with a provider and receive sexual health services, such as HIV/STD testing.

How can parents improve their communication skills?

Various organizations have developed programs to help build parents’ skills and improve parent-adolescent communication. These skill-building programs may be implemented in schools, health clinics, community-based settings, and even places where parents work (see Table 1 for selected examples). Parents, educators, health care providers, community-based staff, and employers can work together to promote positive communication between parents and adolescents about sex.

Where can parents get more information?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Positive Parenting Practices
  www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/positiveparenting/index.htm
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Teen Pregnancy: Parent and Guardian Resources
  www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/parents.htm
- Office of Adolescent Health. Talking with Teens. Teens and Parents Talking
  www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/info/parents/get-started/quiz.html
- Advocates for Youth. Parent-child communication: Promoting sexually healthy youth
  www.advocatesforyouth.org/the-facts-parent-child-communication
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Parent-adolescent communication about sex in Latino families: a guide for practitioners
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthfinder.gov. Talk to Your Kids about Sex
  www.healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/parenting/healthy-communication-and-relationships/talk-to-your-kids-about-sex
Table 1. Selecteda Programs for Parents to Improve Parent-Adolescent Communication about Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the program called?</th>
<th>Which parenting practices are addressed?</th>
<th>Who has participated?</th>
<th>Where has the program been implemented?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Parent-teen communication about sex  
• Parental monitoringb | • African American parents and/or guardians of pre-teens 9- to 12-years-old (4th and 5th graders) | • Community-based organizations |
| Families Talking Together (Linking Lives) [www.clafh.org/resources-for-parents/parent-materials/](http://www.clafh.org/resources-for-parents/parent-materials/) | • General parent-teen communication  
• Parent-teen communication about sex  
• Parental monitoring | • Parents and/or guardians of African American or Latino youth | • Pediatric clinics  
• Schools |
| Talking Parents, Healthy Teens [www.childtrends.org/?programs=talking-parents-healthy-teens](http://www.childtrends.org/?programs=talking-parents-healthy-teens) | • Communication (general and about sex)  
• Parental monitoring | • Parents and/or guardians of 6th to 10th graders | • Worksites |

a These programs have been evaluated and shown to improve parent-adolescent communication about sex.8-10 The selected examples illustrate different audiences of focus, including parents of elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as the variety of settings in which programs can be implemented, including community-based organizations, schools, and worksites.
b Parental monitoring occurs when parents make a habit of knowing about their teens (e.g., what they are doing, whom they are with, and where they are), setting clear expectations for behavior, and regularly checking in with their teens to be sure these expectations are being met.

References