

19 May 2010

## Clue into kids

**This Families Week (May 15 – 21) Kids Helpline is helping parents identify and navigate child and adolescent behaviours that cause conflict.**

Kids Helpline General Manager Wendy Protheroe said that last year the national counselling service connected with almost 300,000 children and young people, with concerns about family relationships making up 17 per cent of those contacts.

“For children and young people up to 18 years of age concerns about family relationships featured more prominently than for older ages,” she said.

“Counselling sessions are often about family conflict or disruption and family break down or separation.

“Teenagers striving to create their own identity and decide who they are and what they believe can also come into conflict with their parents.

Ms Protheroe said shouting, stubbornness, irrational behaviour, sulkiness and crying are all normal ways teenagers deal with the anxiety of things changing.

“Good relationships with your children and teenagers will help you and them to weather the ups and downs of this period.”

Tips to assist relationship building include:

- Spend time with your child – try listening to some of their music, watch their TV shows or take them to a movie you would both like.
- Listen to them – Parents can often give advice before letting children have a chance to say how they feel. It is important for parents to show interest in what their child says and invite them to talk more.
- Respect their privacy – Give them space of their own, don't go into their rooms without permission and don't pry for information except when you are making sure they are safe.
- Show your love for them – tell them often that you love them, hug them as much as they will allow and let them know that you think about them.
- Make special memories – Doing special things together can have lasting effects so create a new tradition, go to a special show you normally wouldn't attend or make a photo album of family and friends.
- Have faith in them – Let them know they are special, ask their advice about something they know about like programming the television or keep a scrap book of their special achievements.

Kids Helpline, Australia's only national children's counselling service, provides 24 hour counselling services to young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call 1800 55 1800 or online at [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

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