

THE PARENT CONNECTION

a newsletter for parents of Lavaca County youth ages 10 and up



Are you “lowkey,” “skibidi,” or just “6-7”?

by Natalie D. Knesek, Ph.D, CFCS

If your kids were asked to describe their parents/guardians in one or two words, what would they say? Would they pull out the latest slang and assign it to you? Would they strike up a conversation about how cool you are? Or would they simply say you are old? Perhaps they would pull out other adjectives like busy, distracted, or even weird. If you want to strike up a conversation with the kids in your house, ask them to describe you in a few words. Before you do, be prepared for their honest answers. You might be surprised at what they say.

The years we call adolescence (ages 10 and up) can be just as challenging for parents as it is for the kids in the family when it comes to having healthy family relationships. In childhood, the family (regardless of its structure) is the center of all relationships. As we get older, we develop independence and shift our primary relationships away from our families and toward our peers. That shift in communication can be so subtle that we are unable to pinpoint when exactly it occurred. Adolescence is a time of self-discovery and pulling away from the family structure gives youth the opportunity to begin shaping his or her own identity. As this transition occurs, disagreements may arise.

Through future editions of this newsletter and other programming efforts, the Lavaca County Adolescent Coalition hopes to provide dialogue and a place to consider the concerns we have as parents. Our world is rapidly changing and our youth today have experiences that are unlike any of the generations before them. It is increasingly more difficult to have conversations with our kids. In part, we can blame the many distractions of today on our communication challenges. If you are unsure of all of the distractions in your home, simply join another family member or two in a living room or another place where your family has gathered. Do not say anything, just sit down near them. Close your eyes and listen for about twenty seconds. Make a mental note of everything you hear. Challenge yourself to remove any distractions and begin a casual conversation.

The advantages of a rural life! If you are in the car often, consider using this as your place to have those one-on-one confidential talks. Many of our families in Lavaca County live a distance from school, drive often to the various sports and lessons, and just generally spend more time in the car than if we lived in a city. Use this time as your opportunity to get to know your child better.

Conversation Starters

A few quick conversation starter tips:

- Ask open ended and two part questions.
- Start questions with who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Make your tone inquisitive and interested, never accusatory.
- Be fully present. Listen and respond with parts of what you were told.
- Avoid “Did you”, “Will you” and “Can you” type questions that can be answered with just a yes or no.

Cool enough to know your kid's apps??

90-95% of teens are using some sort of social media. The most popular apps that teens are using now a days are:

1. Snapchat - about 55% of teens use
2. YouTube - about 90% of teens use
3. TikTok - about 60% of teens use
4. Instagram - about 61% of teens use

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Who Are We?

The Lavaca County Adolescent Coalition is a newly formed group of professionals who work directly with the youth in Lavaca County. Committed to identifying and addressing the needs of our youth, the coalition seeks to partner with parents and guardians to provide knowledge and resources that are useful to the families in our county. The Coalition is formed as a sub-committee of the Lavaca County Family and Community Health Committee, a program area committee of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. To get involved with the coalition, contact natalie.knesek@ag.tamu.edu.



Ask the Coalition

Have a parenting question you would like answered? Perhaps, you have a concern or issue you would like the coalition to address?

Use this form to contact coalition members:

<https://forms.gle/G7BRQYPft9hUf2H39>



Counselors:

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