

# ASKABLE ADULT CAMPAIGN



## Build Skills to be More Askable for Youth

*Sometimes my son says things that worry or upset me. I'm learning to take a breath, slow down, and start with curiosity. When I ask honest questions with love and let him know I respect his perspective, the conversation goes so much better, I understand where he is coming from, and then—miracle!—he's more open to hearing from me.*  
—Parent

Children and youth say they want more approachable adults who “get it,” who they can turn to for help in navigating stress and challenges. That’s where you come in! You can actively enhance your skills as an “askable” adult for the youth in your life.

An askable adult is one who is easy for children and youth to talk to about anything that is on their mind. Askable adults are committed to having affirming relationships with youth, and use positive communication to develop trust and connectedness.

While some people come by these skills more easily, most of us have to work at it. In our [Askable Adult Skill Building Toolkit](#), we offer tips for building skills that focus on four key pillars of “askability”:

- Build Trusting and Affirming Relationships
- Commit to Consistent Connections
- Commit to Caring Communication
- Be a Curious Co-pilot and Resource

Today, we’ll explore the first skill:

### Askable Adult Skill # 1: Build Trusting and Affirming Relationships

Listen [here](#) as Gabriel and his mom Natanya tell their story of a moment that built trust and connection in their relationship.

To trust someone is to feel safe being vulnerable with them. Youth are more likely to come to you with their concerns if they trust you. Trusting, affirming relationships with youth are built in

small moments over time. For adults, they require checking your own agenda and assumptions, letting go of judgment, respecting a young person's privacy, and authentically showing up.

### Trust Tip: R-E-S-P-E-C-T

*"...there wouldn't be any judgment if I ever needed really anything from you that you could do, you would come do it...I feel like you've proven it over time." - Gabriel*

Youth report that feeling respected is central to meaningful relationships with adults. Adults who are askable hold *respect* as a core value and work hard to maintain it. You are respecting youth when you accept them for who they are, regardless of their circumstance or behavior, and without judgment.

*"When you create a relationship with a human...trust is at the core, respect is at the core. If you can do that in a classroom, content will come, proficiencies will come." ~Meg Falby, Health Teacher*

For more tips on establishing trusting, affirming relationships with the young people in your life, check out our Building Relationships tool at [vtnetwork.org/askableadult](https://vtnetwork.org/askableadult) by clicking on "[Toolkit](#)."

For an even deeper dive, check out the Search Institute's work on [Developmental Relationships](#).

Learn more about the campaign and sign up for campaign blog posts at [vtnetwork.org/askableadult](https://vtnetwork.org/askableadult). Then, please help us reach more adults by sharing this blog with your adult community. And, follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to join the conversation!

Thank you for being an askable adult for the children and youth in your life,



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