

# 5 Strategies to Promote Motivation

Keeping young people motivated can be a big obstacle and cause of tension for families. Whether with homework, chores, or activities, youth often have very different perspectives from adults in their lives about what needs to be done and when things should happen.

Try these tips to boost motivation and cooperation. Keep in mind that these tips work best when everyone is calm. If emotions are high, take a moment to relax with these quick strategies before moving forward together.

1

## “Have To” and “Can Do”

All people appreciate choice more than demands. Identify for youth what tasks must get done (the “have to’s”) and provide places for choice (the “can do’s”).

### INSTEAD OF SAYING

### TRY SAYING

Clean your room!

You have to clean your room today. When is a good time for you to get that done?

Put your toys away.

It’s time to clean up. Would you like to pick the cleaning music?

2

## Co-planning

Youth of all ages value being part of the planning process. Ask youth to share their priorities and create a plan together.

### INSTEAD OF SAYING

### TRY SAYING

Here is our plan for today.

I have a lot of things I need to do today. What is on your list? How can we help each other get them done?

I made this appointment for you.

Let’s write the top three things we each want to do today and decide together how to get them done.

### 3 Noticing

Asking direct questions, especially when they involve something we are supposed to be doing, can cause people to become defensive and reactive. Instead, start a more supportive conversation with observations and open-ended questions.

#### INSTEAD OF SAYING

#### TRY SAYING

Why aren't you doing your homework?

I noticed that you've stopped doing your homework. Is there something you need?

Why are you yelling?

I noticed your voice is getting really loud. Should we take a pause?

### 4 Inviting

Adults can sometimes be overbearing in their desire to support youth. Rather than insisting or taking over, make yourself available to young people and offer them an invitation to go further together.

#### INSTEAD OF SAYING

#### TRY SAYING

Stop. Let me help.

I can see you're trying. What can I do to help?

We need to talk about your grades.

I'd really love for us to talk about how school is going. When is a good time for you?

### 5 Talk less, listen more

When adults are focused on getting their own ideas across, youth perspectives are overlooked and young people are less inclined to engage with adults to solve problems. Avoid this by letting the youth go first.

#### INSTEAD OF SAYING

#### TRY SAYING

Let me tell you what I think.

What do you think?

Here is my concern. Why don't you share your thoughts first.