

**Chapter****8****Parent Letter and Activities**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our health class is currently studying social health, including family relationships. Since good communication is the cornerstone of any relationship, students begin by identifying and applying effective communication skills. Other topics include how families nurture their members; friendship and the effects of peer pressure; ways to avoid risk behaviors; the benefits of abstaining from sexual activity and from tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; and refusal skills.

Some questions your teen will answer as we study these topics include: *How does verbal communication differ from nonverbal communication? How can I be an effective speaker and listener? How can families manage changes and challenges? What can members of a family do to strengthen their relationships? What are the qualities of a good friend? How can I recognize and deal with negative peer pressure? Why is avoiding risk behaviors important? What will I gain by abstaining from tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs? What are the benefits of abstaining from sexual activity? How can I effectively say no to risk behaviors?*

To support and extend our classroom work, please set aside some time during the next few weeks to complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Discuss the body language, such as facial expressions, that family members commonly use to communicate a thought or feeling. Explore what the sender means by these types of nonverbal communication and what the receiver usually interprets them to mean. Discuss any failures to communicate and talk about how to improve family communications.
- Discuss people you both know who are especially good communicators. What communication skills do they use most effectively?
- Members of families usually play several different roles. Together, identify the roles each of you has in your family, such as mother, brother, uncle, sister, and so forth. Discuss how you fulfill each of the roles you have.

Other activities that will encourage your teen to develop better relationships with friends and within the family are, of course, a welcome addition to our efforts here. As always, do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher