

TIPS for TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS

- **Don't make a "sucker's choice."** Parents go wrong when they decide to focus on either maintaining the relationship OR helping their child lose or gain weight. Focusing on the relationship only leads you to dance around the delicate discussion of your child's weight, while focusing only on "getting them to lose weight" forces you to be the food-warden or the exercise police.
- **Listen—a lot.** Ask your child what's important to him or her in terms of health and appearance, and truly listen to what he or she says.
- **Become a coach, not the boss.** If your child is interested in becoming healthier, offer to become a coach. Negotiate ground rules for signs that your assistance is no longer wanted. The important thing to understand is that your child needs to take the lead.
- **Motivate through natural consequences.** If your child is not interested in changing his or her health, ask for an opportunity to challenge his or her point of view on the topic. Carefully present information that might motivate your child to value maintaining a healthy weight.
- **Maintain respect.** Through all of this, demonstrate your unconditional love for your child and your continued respect for him or her regardless of what he or she chooses to do.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey of 392 individuals in May of 2006. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

LEARN NEW SKILLS. To learn how Crucial Conversations® Training can help you talk to your children about their weight, visit www.vitalSMARTSindia.com or call 1800-1021-345.

According to our study of more than 375 people, **66 percent of parents are unwilling to speak up and talk openly about their child's weight.**

The research shows that, when it comes to holding these risky conversations with their children, many parents don't know how to speak up in a way that is helpful. They may voice their opinions, but they do so in ways that make their child defensive or angry. Since most parents expect this is how the conversation will go, they opt to say nothing.

In addition, parents who did not speak up and share their concerns in an effective way were more likely to coerce their child to change behaviors using various forms of manipulation. For example, of the survey respondents who didn't speak up about their child's weight problem, 68 percent said they tried to change the child's eating patterns or activity level without getting his or her full commitment. Alternatively, parents who did speak up effectively to their child about weight issues saw greater success—and their relationship was strengthened in the process.

Communicating with your child in the right way, combined with a solid program of healthy eating and physical activity, is essential to helping him or her make and keep important commitments and form habits that contribute to lifelong wellness. And by applying a few simple skills, parents can effectively speak up in a way that enables change and minimizes defensiveness or anger.

About VitalSmarts—An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts is home to multiple training offerings, including Crucial Conversations, Crucial Confrontations, Influencer, and Change Anything Training. Each course improves key organizational outcomes by focusing on high-leverage skills and strategies. The Company also has four *New York Times* bestselling books: *Change Anything*, *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Confrontations*, and *Influencer*. VitalSmarts has been ranked by Inc. magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in America for six consecutive years and has trained more than 650,000 people worldwide. www.vitalSMARTSindia.com

KEY RESULTS

66% of parents are unwilling to talk openly with their child about his or her weight problem

68% of parents who didn't speak up about their child's weight problem tried to manipulate or coerce their child to change their behavior