

“[Sandwich generation](#)” describes baby boomers caught between caring for their aging parents and their children. The term now applies to whichever generation is grappling with the problem, today most commonly Generation Xers and older Millennials.

If you’re in the middle of the sandwich, it may be time for honest discussions about pressing issues. These may involve financial matters, such as funding children’s higher education and paying for a parent’s long-term care.

Download the Sandwich Generation Conversation Checklist.

Start with the “bottom” of the sandwich: your children.

What’s appropriate to discuss with them will depend on their age. You’ll have the most control over their significant decisions if they’re still minors. By the time kids are in high school, you should be discussing their post-graduation plans and how much you’ll be able to fund college or help with other financial needs.

The “top” half of the sandwich can be more challenging.

Depending on their health status, finances, and other factors, your parents may not welcome your involvement in their decision-making. They might minimize or dismiss your concerns and be highly resistant.

To initiate a family meeting, invite all the key players—your parents, siblings, and their spouses, if appropriate. If possible, hold the meeting face-to-face. An online video chat can work if distance or other factors make this unrealistic.

What should you discuss?

Cover the entire tax and financial planning gamut. The dialogue should be frank. Many issues can be sensitive, and emotions may run high, so be prepared.

One session may not be enough to accomplish your objectives. You might need to include additional family members to resolve the issues. You may even want to broaden the circle to include [someone from our team](#) or an attorney.