

YOU GOT THIS

Tips for parents talking to their kids about puberty and sex



Talk early, talk often

It's never too early and it's never too late to start talking about sexual health with your child. Like many life lessons, once isn't enough. The conversation will grow along with your child.



Use "teachable moments"

TV, movies, social media, the internet, books and daily conversations can all provide endless opportunities to bring up topics related to sexual health. Use these to offer lots of little conversations over time from toddlerhood to teenhood, not just one "big talk."



Open communication is key

Good communication needs two-way talks, not one-way lectures. If you're feeling self-conscious, start conversations when you're doing the dishes or in the car. Take time to listen and ask your kids what they think.



It's about the music, not the lyrics

Don't worry about saying everything "right." Focus on the values that you want to share with your child and keep that as your goal. People don't often remember every single word that is said, but will remember how they felt about the conversation.



Talk about the joys of sexuality

Talking about sexual health is not just talking about sex. It's talking about relationships, love, bodies, gender, feelings, values, babies, growing up, and more. This might include telling them that sexuality is natural and healthy, and that loving relationships and intimacy can be some of the best parts of life. Talk about the positive things you want for your child.



Don't assume that every child is heterosexual

Many people identify somewhere along the LGBTQIA spectrums. Often, family rejection (or the fear of rejection) can lead to poor health outcomes for LGBTQIA young people. If you want your child to talk with you about their identities, let them know that you love them no matter what.

EXPLORING YOUR VALUES

1. What messages did you receive about sexuality as you were growing up? (From parents, friends, school, media, religion etc.)
2. What effect did these messages have on your life?
3. What messages do you think your kids are getting about sexuality as they grow up? (From you, friends, school, media, religion etc.)
4. What messages/ values do you want to give your children about sexuality?

ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS

Keep your face and voice calm. Try to smile.

Affirm the question.

“I’m so glad you asked me!”

“I wondered about that when I was your age, too.”

Ask the question back to them.

“What do you think that means?”

“Where did you hear about this?”

Give a simple but accurate answer.

“Wet dreams are when a person has a little bit of semen come out while they are sleeping”

Ask what they think.

“How does that make you feel?”

Tell them how you feel about the subject, without sounding judgmental.

Check in.

“Does that answer your question?”

BOOKS FOR PARENTS

Changing Bodies, Changing Lives
Ruth Bell

From Diapers to Dating: A Parent’s Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Youth
Debra Haffner

Sex & Sensibility, The Thinking Parent’s guide to Talking Sense About Sex
Deborah M Roffman

Breaking the Hush Factor: Ten Rules for Talking with Teenagers about Sex
Dr. Karen Rayne

ONLINE RESOURCES

Talking tips and new research about having difficult conversations

childrennow.org/parenting-resources

Information and resources about media (apps, tv, internet, etc..) for parents

cmch.tv/parents/askthemediatrician

BOOKS FOR KIDS ABOUT PUBERTY AND SEX

Sex Is A Funny Word
Cory Silverburg

It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Sex and Sexual Health
Robie H. Harris

Wait, What? A Comic Book Guide to Relationships, Bodies, and Growing Up
Isabella Rotman and Heather Corinna

Online resource for information about bodies and puberty for kids

kidshealth.org

Videos and talking guides for parents and kids of all ages

amaze.org/parents