

How To Talk To Your Kids About Sex

Sex is not a four letter word

- Curiosity about sex is natural
- People of all ages (especially teens!) have questions about sexuality
- Understanding how their body works and how to take care of it is part of building a healthy life
- Accurate information about sex and sexuality is a good thing

Three Key Messages

- Look for “teachable moments”
- Be an “askable parent”
- Do not censor information

- Trust yourself - you know more than you realise

Today kids live in the “information age”
They are exposed to so much more information - and misinformation - because of the media and the internet

Parents are the first and primary sexual health educators of children

Most Common Concerns

If I talk about sex, will this encourage them to “do it?”
Study after study has shown that sex education DOES NOT lead to an increase in sexual activity . . .
But it does lead to safer and more positive interactions now and in the future

When to tell?

She's way too young for me to answer any questions about sex

My son will find out soon enough, so I will wait until he asks

She's too young and innocent to understand . . .

These days kids and discovering sex and sexual behaviour younger and younger

You don't have to rush your children into sexual education, but it's a good idea to play it by ear early

There really is no way of knowing how much your child knows or does not know without talking to them

It's better to talk to them a year earlier than a minute later!

My son will find out soon enough, so I will wait until he asks

Talking about sex can be embarrassing for anyone, especially for kids - and for their parents!

You need to protect your child! Many sexual problems which can mar their life - STDs, sexual abuse and unintended pregnancy

It is important to talk to your child and make sure they feel comfortable coming to you

How much to tell?

This depends on:

The age of the child

Maturity

Previous knowledge

Your own values and comfort level

The answers should be appropriate for the age
COMMON SENSE is the best guide

Who should tell?

The talk should be initiated by whichever parent is more comfortable communicating with the child

The answers should be appropriate for the age

COMMON SENSE is the best guide

How to tell?

Make the most of “teachable moments”

These moments are all around you

When you and your child

- see a woman pregnant
- See a TV commercial about condoms or sanitary towels
- see a love scene on TV

It's not really that important what you talk about, as long as you are talking

This way, when your child needs to talk to someone, they'll know that it is OK to come to you

How to tell?

Don't expect your child to come to you - they may feel too embarrassed to bring up sex issues with you, even if they have a problem they want to talk about

How to tell?

Answer questions honestly. Your child will probably know if you're not being straight with them

Use the right language

Don't get embarrassed

You are your child's primary sexual educator

You need to reassure your children that their sexual thoughts are natural and normal, not causes for guilt or shame

You need to understand your own feelings about sexuality

You also need to correct misinformation

The Key to success?

Open, frank, honest communication

Barriers to communication

Most children are embarrassed to raise the topic with their parents

Some parents are even more embarrassed

Some children feel guilty about having sexual thoughts

Parents and children may have difficulty seeing each other as individuals with sexual needs and desires

Barriers to communication

Many parents feel shy, embarrassed and uncomfortable with the subject

Parents often lack the communication skills needed to openly discuss sexuality

Parents often think that they don't know enough about sexuality to give their children accurate information

What one needs to do is to overcome these barriers by being an "askable parent"

Who is an "askable parent"

Someone who . . .

Can be approached for information and guidance . . .

Listen to a child and answers questions accurately

Knows what the child is capable of understanding at different ages

Who is an "askable parent"

Has a sense of humour

Shares feelings that sexuality is a valuable part of being human

Encourages a child to ask for information

Is willing to repeat answers until the child is satisfied with the information given

Being an askable parent does not mean waiting to be asked

Do's and Don'ts

Do try to relax

Do listen to your child's question

Do keep your answer simple

Do pick the right time

Do realise the question may not always be what the child really wants to know

Do be prepared for repetition

Do's and Don'ts

Do educate yourself about child development

Do try to realise your child's individual style

Do investigate your own feelings about sexuality

Do expect to feel uncomfortable

Do's and Don'ts

- Don't think you have to know everything
- Don't always wait for the child to ask
- Don't think it's harmful to tell too much too soon
- Don't make fun of your child's fanciful ideas
- Don't overload your child with information

10 Tips To Remember When Talking To Your Teen About Sex

- Use natural opportunities for discussions about sexuality
- Communicate your values
- Discuss handling peer pressure
- Respond with understanding to awkward situations
- Encourage responsible behaviour

Important issues

- How should I react to "dirty words"?
- How should I respond when I find my child in a sexually awkward situation?
 - masturbating
 - kissing a boyfriend
 - viewing porn on the internet
 - reading sexually explicit material

Important issues

- When and how should I warn my child about child molestation?
- How can I teach my children to protect themselves from sexual abuse?

Common Questions asked by Four to Nine Year Olds

- Where did I come from?
- Why can't daddies have babies?
- Can children have babies?
- Why do girls have breast?
- Why do boys have penis and girls don't?
- Do you and daddy make love?
- How do you make babies?

Common Questions asked by Nine to Twelve Year Olds

- What is a period and why does it happen?
- What is masturbation and is it bad?
- What is an orgasm?
- What does puberty mean?
- When can boys start shaving?
- What is a wet dream?
- Why do kids get acne?

Common Questions asked by Twelve Year Olds plus

What is sexual intercourse and how do you do it?

What is contraception?

Can you get AIDS by kissing?

Is it OK to be gay or lesbian?

Who are "Hijras"?

What does abortion mean?

Is it OK to have oral sex?

**Keep quality books in
your house - your
children will find them!**

**Remember the question is not
whether our children will get
information about sex, but HOW
and WHEN?**