

How to Talk to Your Kid About Sexuality and Healthy Sexual Choices

Kids need to hear about sexual health issues in different ways — by talking with their parents and other trusted adults, through books, and in class discussions at school. Books and other resources can give information, but talking things out can help kids better understand this important topic.

Sexuality is about a person's sexual feelings, attractions, and behaviours towards others. When kids start to have these feelings and attractions, they often have many questions. You are your kid's best source of information, guidance, and support in this important stage of their lives.

How can I talk to my kid about sexuality and healthy sexual choices?

1. Be available and easy to talk to.

- Start conversations with your kid about sexuality. Ask them:
 - › What are you learning about in health class?
 - › What have you heard from your friends?
 - › What have you seen and heard in the media (TV, movies, social media, magazines, etc.)?
- You may not feel comfortable talking about topics like abuse, assault, dating violence, sexually transmitted infections, sexual orientation, or gender identity. But it is likely that your kid or someone close to them will face one of these issues at some point. It is important to talk about the tough topics, so your kid knows they can come to you about anything.

2. Listen to your kid without judging them.

- Your kid will be more willing to come to you for information if they know you are willing to listen. Let them know you are open and willing to talk about whatever is on their minds.
- Accept that your kid may see things differently than you. Remind them that they do not need to be afraid of being judged or “getting in trouble” for something they share with you.

- Just listen. You do not need to have all the answers.
- When you share your own opinions, values, and views, do it in a non-threatening way. **Do not make fun of them or put them down if you disagree with their point of view.**

3. Share accurate, up-to-date health information.

The more you know, the more you will be able to help your kid, and the more comfortable you will be with the topic of sexuality.

To find accurate, up-to-date information:

- Visit your local library or bookstore to find age-appropriate books, videos, magazine articles, and information about online resources.
- Ask your local public health nurse, primary health care provider, or your kid's health teacher for accurate, age-appropriate information about sexual health.

Leave the resources where they can find them or ask them if they would like to look at them with you.

Healthy sexuality is a topic for everyone

In the past, sexual health information focused mainly on young women and pregnancy. But sexuality and sexual health are topics for **everyone**, regardless of sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

Kids who have experience making decisions and accepting responsibility for the results of their choices are better prepared to make responsible sexual choices.

Remember

It is never too late to share your values, beliefs, and experiences with your kid or to tell them that you care about them and the choices they make. All parents can offer important views and add to these discussions.

Questions and curiosity are a normal part of your kid's healthy growth and development. If you are not comfortable with this topic, let your kid know that it is OK for them to talk to another trusted adult (like a teacher, counsellor, etc.) about sexual health.

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