

Suggested Ideas for Communicating about Sexuality with Your Child

1. Approach conversations with confidence and discuss your child's sexuality as a wonderful gift.
2. Both parents should participate when possible. If you're a single parent, have a support network for your child.
3. Be ask-able. Don't react. Act on questions, situations, and informal opportunities for discussion.
4. When possible, give information ahead of time (before the first wet dream, before the first period begins).
5. Parents can ask questions also. During and beyond the tween years (8-11 years old), ask your child "What do you think about...?"
6. You do not have to wait until you feel comfortable before you begin talking about sexuality. It's alright to feel embarrassed.
7. Be aware that children do not always ask questions nor bring up the subject of sexuality on their own. Don't be afraid to initiate the subject. Let them know by your words and actions you are a trusted resource.
8. Be aware that children do not always ask what they want to know. Repeat back what you think your child is asking to double check, so your answer fits the true question.
9. Take time to discern whether your child is asking fact or feeling questions. Seek to increase your confidence and your comfort zone in discussing both. Usually, younger children are asking for facts; older children may be seeking help establishing values.
10. It's OK to say, "I don't know. Let's come back to this discussion when we have had more time to think about it." Be sure to do so.
11. Be prepared to acknowledge that different points of views exist. Share your family values with your child.
12. As the need develops, create opportunities to teach your child the appropriate private, and public aspects of conversation and behavior regarding our sexuality.
13. Grow in sensitivity to the many informal and natural opportunities to discuss sexuality and model right attitudes and actions. Always reinforce that this is a good and right topic for you and your child to discuss.