

Facts Up Front

Children ages 0-7

Talking to your child about sexuality.

- Once your child begins asking questions, find out what your child really wants to know and how much they know about the subject. One good way to do this is to ask what he/she thinks is the answer to the question.
- Use the amount of detail that is right for your child. Children are usually looking for simple how-and-why answers.
- Use anatomically correct terms for body parts, not nicknames. Bath time is a good time for teaching body part names.
- It is normal for children to “play doctor”. They are curious about their body and the differences between males and females.
- Use proper terminology, such as breast feeding, sperm, egg, and fertilization when speaking to your child. By speaking this way, you are laying a foundation for open communication with your child as they grow up.
- Be truthful. For example, telling a young child that the stork dropped off the neighbor’s new baby is probably not a good idea. When the child learns the truth, he/she may not trust you to answer other questions.
- Set your own limits, if your child asks you a question you are uncomfortable with, re-direct it.
- Listen carefully and show interest. Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Building self-esteem is critical and can be hindered if a child feels they have done something wrong by asking a question.
- It is never too soon to open the lines of communication with your child. This will encourage open communication into adolescence.

Remember– How you answer your child’s questions is important. Your child will remember your smile, hug and reassuring tone of voice long after he/she has forgotten your exact words.

Questions often asked by 6-7 year olds:

- Why don’t girls have penises (or boys have breasts)?
- How does a baby get food when it’s inside its mother?
 - Does having a baby hurt?
 - What is sex?
- How does a baby get inside of its mother?

Recommended Reading: But how’d I get in there in the first place?

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