



WE CAN DO MORE

Parents should be the primary sex educators of their children; however, many parents do not talk with their children about sex. Here are some practical tips to help you get these important conversations started:

Start early and talk often

Your child is never too young to start having age-appropriate conversations about sex. Once these conversations start, they should continue throughout your child's development. In addition to the risks associated with sex, it is important to define what sex is and explain the characteristics of healthy relationships during these conversations.

Be "askable"

Your child may have many questions about sex, so make time to genuinely listen to him or her. Emphasize that all questions are welcomed, so he or she can always come to you with any questions, without the fear of being reprimanded or judged.

Be open and honest

Be willing to admit when you don't know something. You're not expected to know everything there is to know about sex. When confronted with a topic that you're unfamiliar with, help your child to find medically accurate information on it. Be sure to also communicate your own values and expectations about sex, as well as relationships, to your child.

Take the initiative

Look for opportunities to talk with your child, such as while driving in the car. Create "teachable moments" by bringing up issues related to sex that you heard about in a news story or from another parent. Along with helping to get the conversation started, talking about sex in a general fashion will help you and your child become more comfortable with this topic.

Ask questions

Ask your child what he or she thinks or knows about sex. This is a good way to find out what topics you need to discuss and to get him or her to start thinking about establishing personal rules related to sex and relationships.

Be a coach

In addition to information, your child needs the skills to get out of a risky situation or to deal with peer pressure. Role playing with your child is a great strategy to equip him or her with these skills before he or she is in a risky situation or dealing with peer pressure. Role-playing activities, as well as other skills-building strategies, are also an excellent way to reinforce your values and expectations.

Did you know?



Nearly 9 in 10 teens say that it would be much easier for them to delay sexual activity if they had open, honest, and ongoing conversations with their parents about sex.¹

Source	Sponsor	Topics Covered
Healthy Children http://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/default.aspx	American Academy of Pediatrics	Tips and resources for parents on a variety of sexual health topics including how to talk with your teen about sex, making healthy decisions about sex, and resisting pressure to have sex.
I Wanna Know http://www.iwannaknow.org	American School Health Association	Information and resources about sexual health for both parents AND teens.
Parents' Sex Ed Center http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=108&Itemid=206	Advocates for Youth	Information and resources to help parents begin talking with their children about sex and sexuality.
Talk to Your Kids About Sex http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=77	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	Communication tips to teach your children about their bodies and sex, as well as tips for starting the conversation about sex and healthy relationships.
Talking with Kids http://www.childrennow.org/index.php/learn/talking_with_kids//sex.html	Children Now	Resources for talking with your kids about tough issues including sex and relationships.
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy Parent Site http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/parents/default.aspx	The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy	Resources for talking with your children about sex and relationships, as well as various surveys and reports about teens' opinions on sex and communicating with their parents.



The University of Texas Prevention Research Center is dedicated to impacting child and adolescent health through a collaboration of academic, public health, and community partnerships engaged in scholarly, community-based prevention research, research translation, and education.

**For more information on teen pregnancy and adolescent sexual health,
or to find out more about our research, contact us at:**

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REFERENCE

1. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. (2012). *With One Voice 2012: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, D.C.: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

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