



Why is it important to talk about Sex?

Kids are growing up quickly. Movies, TV, magazines, video games, and the internet are bombarding youth with sexual messages every day. Youth are receiving false and unrealistic

FACT: Most people get an STD from someone who has no symptoms.

messages about sex from the media and their peers. Your kids want to know what YOU think. Many research studies have identified the enormous

impact that parents have on whether or not their children remain abstinent. When asked who most influences their decisions about sex, teens say parents are more influential than friends, religious leaders, teachers, and the media. Also, teens say their morals, values, and religious beliefs are the primary factors affecting their decision about whether to have sex. It is crucial for parents to share what they value and believe about adolescent sexual activity. It's never too late to start talking to your kid about important issues such as sex. Parents can make a difference!

FACT: Two-thirds of teens who have had sex wish they waited.



Remember the 3 "E's" of Parenting

1. **Example:** Be the best example for your kids. If you lead a life full of risky, unhealthy behaviors, so will your children.
2. **Expectation:** Let your kids know you expect them to avoid risky behaviors such as sexual activity, tobacco, drugs, and alcohol.
3. **Expression:** Express your viewpoints in a loving, caring manner. Let your kids know often that you love them very much and want them to avoid risky behaviors.

What do you say?

For some of us, walking on hot coals seems easier than talking about sex. Here are a few questions to get the conversation started.

- What do you think about teens becoming pregnant?
- What are your goals for the future?
- What do you know about sexual abuse?
- When do you think it is okay to have sex?



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10 Tips on Raising Healthy, Successful Children

Discussing Sex & Other Risky Behaviors



About Sex and Other Risky Behaviors

Abstinence from risky behaviors means that one has decided not to get involved in sex and other unhealthy activities. Waiting to have sex is the healthiest option and the only 100% effective way to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and out-of-wedlock pregnancy.

Ten Tips To Help Kids Make Healthy Life Decisions

1. Believe the message!

Do you believe abstinence is the healthiest option for teens? Do you know the facts? Do you know all the consequences of premarital sexual activity and of having multiple sexual partners? Do you want your child to avoid all of these problems? Parents who understand the problems of teen sexual activity are more likely to understand the importance of this message.

FACT: Over 18 million new STDs occur in the U.S. each year.

2. Live the message!

How effective can saying one thing and doing the opposite be? Actions speak louder than words. It's important to set a good example. No one is perfect and we've all done things we wish we hadn't. Don't be afraid to discuss the decisions you have made in the past. Your children will respect you for being open and honest.

3. Expect your child to live the message!

Do you believe your kid can refrain from sexual activity? Set the bar high. Teens whose parents encourage them not to have sex are more likely to wait. Give clear and consistent messages. Don't be reluctant to tell your child that you love them, you want the very best for them, and you expect them not to have sex.

4. Make time to be there!

Does the family have at least one meal a day together uninterrupted by telephones, TV, and other distractions? It's hard to talk about sex with someone you barely talk to. Kids who are connected to their families are much less likely to have sex. Set aside time to "connect" with your children. Turn off the TV and find out what is going on in their world. Two easy ways to connect with



your children are by eating dinner together and helping them with homework.

5. Be critical of television shows, music, and movies that do not support the message.

If you regularly watch programs that promote premarital sexual activity with multiple sexual partners and the programs never discuss the consequences, what message are you giving your children? Some TV programs are based on the theme of risky lifestyles rather than abstinence as the "standard." Find acceptable programs to watch with your children. Don't expect your children to live the message of abstinence if your home is constantly bombarded with different messages.

6. Let your children know you care about their safety and well-being!

Are you involved in their activities? Do you know their friends? Friends have a strong influence on each other, especially during the teenage years. Establish a curfew and expect your teen to tell you where they are going. Meet the parents of your kid's friends and set common rules and expectations.

FACT: In the U.S., 1 in 5 people have been infected with genital herpes.

7. Praise your children!

Enhance self-esteem by praising your children for their positive characteristics. Mention specific actions that you notice and appreciate. Let your kids know that you love them no matter what. If your children believe they have your respect, they will try harder not to let you down.

8. Show your kid some winners!

Many young people are impressed with athletes, actors, and musicians, but today's media messages are harmful and misleading. Fortunately, there are some healthy celebrity role models for kids to look up to. AC Green (L.A. Lakers), Erica Harold (Miss America 2003), and David Robinson (San Antonio Spurs) are just a few examples of people who promote abstinence until marriage as the healthiest choice. In addition, many of today's youth say they look up to their parents, relatives, teachers, or coaches. Adolescents who have positive role models are more likely to do well in school and have higher self-esteem.

9. Look for opportunities to discuss sex — again and again!

Know the facts and look for opportunities to talk. Talking to kids about sex is no longer "the talk" given once by a reluctant parent. Talking about sex should be on-going throughout childhood and adolescence. Make time to talk. Use "teachable moments" to talk about sex, such as during a TV show, while reading the newspaper, or in the car. Believe it or not, kids say they want to hear about sex from their parents! Today, sex is everywhere. Sex is used to advertise products, promote music, and sell movies. Let your kids know your beliefs/values regarding sex and how, unfortunately, many people "use" sex.

FACT: Fewer teens today are having sexual intercourse compared to years ago.

10. Help set goals!

These goals might include graduating from high school, going to college, and getting a great job. The likelihood that adolescents will delay sex is greater if their futures are bright. Talk to youth about what it takes to make future plans come true and help them reach their goals. Explain how having sex as a teen can ruin the best of plans.

