



## Top 10 Discussions to Have with Your Child about Sex and Relationships

1. **Ages 1+:** Teach the anatomy, using correct names, not slang. Empower her by giving her the ability to talk about her body. Avoid passing on any same you feel about private parts.
2. **Ages 2+:** Teach your child about boundaries and consent. Ask your child if she wants to hug and kiss. Help her feel and voice that uh-oh feeling so that she knows where her boundaries are. Have her practice talking about and defending her boundaries. Teach her to ask for and insist upon consent.
3. **Ages 3+:** Have safety conversations about private parts. Help your child to independently care for his private parts, from bathing to toileting. Teach a simple rule, for example: only a parent or doctor is allowed to touch your private parts. Plan what to do if the rule is broken.
4. **Age 5 ideally, or by age 8:** Explain sex and conception. Find a children's book you like and read it with your child. Answer all his questions. This is a great time to introduce the terms "sex" and "pornography" and lay down some rules – and what to do when the rules are broken.
5. **Ages 5+:** Discuss the differences between media messages and real life (including the differences between porn and real sexual relationships). Kids don't have the experience to know what's real and what's not. You have to tell them.
6. **Ages 9+:** Discuss and celebrate puberty, both the physical and emotional changes. Have this discussion *before* your child enters puberty. As bodies change and feelings spark, you'll also want to discuss flirting online and sexting.
7. **Ages 11+:** Discuss gender identity (what you feel like on the inside) and sexual orientation (who you're attracted to). There are many kinds of people and families, all equally deserving of respect.
8. **Ages 11+:** Encourage intimacy over intercourse. Feeling close to your partner is what will make sex pleasurable, not mimicking whatever the porn stars did. Slow touching and kissing of the hands, face, and neck and talking about fantasies can be much more intimate than having sex. Emphasize values, not acts.
9. **Ages 14+:** Teach how to have safe sex conversations. Teens need to be able to discuss sexually transmitted infections, contraception, and how their relationships will change if they have sex, how they'll state their boundaries, ask for consent, or gracefully respond to a No.
10. **Ages 14+:** Prevent sexual assault. Explain what sexual assault and sexual harassment are. Educate your teen about how adult sexual predators "groom" their victims. Teach the early warning signs of date rape. Make sure your teen knows the signs for both and has exit strategies for both.

NONE of these are one-time conversations!

All will need to be revisited, tailored to your child and their maturity.

If you know your family is ready to start having these conversations, but you're not sure how to go about it, I can help! [Click here](#) to schedule a free 30 minute phone conversation with me, an *Open the Communication strategy session*. We'll get really clear about what's important to you, and I'll be able to give you some ideas and strategy for your particular situation.

