

Enhancing Caregiver Comfort and Communication Skills Around Kids' Sexual Development

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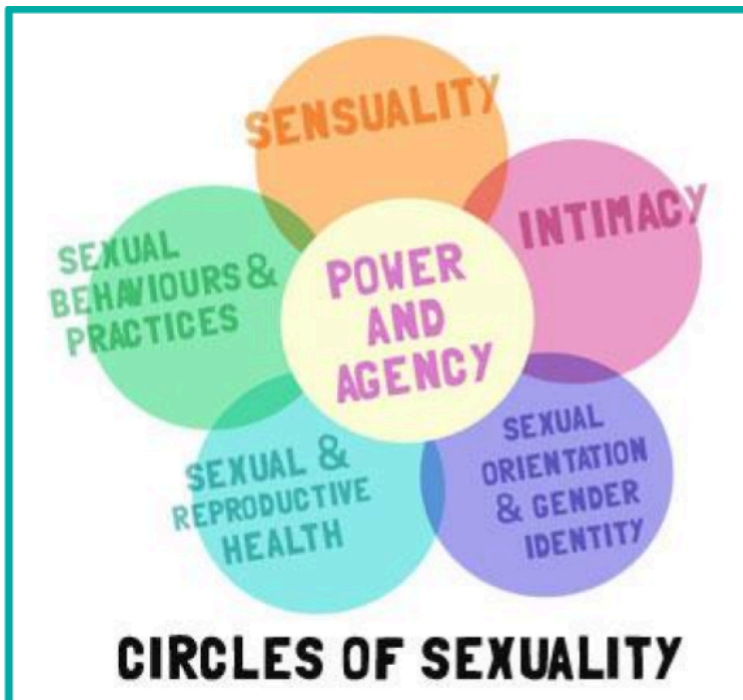


Objectives:

- Learn about the stages of sexual development
- Be able to identify why caregiver/child communication about sexuality is important
- Learn skills to help prepare caregivers to engage in effective communication about sexuality with their children

Parents/Caregivers are influential

“We know from science that teens rely heavily on emotions when making decisions. This is where parents can help. Studies show that adolescents with involved parents have much higher emotional regulation when it comes to decision-making. Particularly open parent-adolescent communication about sex and contraception has been linked to delayed sexual debut and condom use.” Power to Decide



Sensuality

Intimacy

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Sexual and reproductive Health

Sexual Behaviors and Practices

Power and Agency

Barriers to Effective Communication

- Struggles in matching approach to child/teen developmental age
 - Focusing on risk and danger
 - Lack of knowledge/comfort/skills
 - Underestimating when teen will engage in sexual behavior
-

Notes:

Components of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Biological
Sex

Our biological sex (chromosomes, hormones, genitalia, etc.)

Female

Intersex

Male

Gender
Identity

One's own understanding of themselves regardless of what they were assigned at birth

Woman

Neither. Both. Non-Binary

Man

Gender
Expression

How we communicate our gender to the world

Feminine

Androgynous

Masculine

Orientation

Who we have the potential to be attracted or not attracted to.

To Men

Both. No One. Anyone.

To Women

Behaviors

Individuals who we are or aren't intimate with

With Men

With "Both". With No One. With
Anyone.

With Women

Sexual Development

Children:	Caregivers can help aid development by:
Birth to age 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn about love and trust through caregivers ● Learn about their bodies through touch ● Explore their genitals ● Experience lubrication or erections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using correct terms for body parts ● Model comfortable touch/ consent ● Talking about boundaries as opportunities happen
Ages 2 to 5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop language for genitals ● Identify body parts ● May ask about human reproduction ● Show curiosity regarding genitals or adult bodies ● No inhibitions about nudity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce correct terms for body ● Teaching body safety, boundaries, privacy ● Touching yourself is ok, can feel good, done in private ● Use opportunities to teach children fundamentals of sexuality
Ages 5 to 8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use “potty humor” ● Deeper understanding of gender roles and identity ● More deliberate with masturbation ● May talk about sex with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respecting privacy ● Masturbation is okay and a private behavior ● Clarity about boundaries ● Teach about puberty at ages 7 to 8
Ages 9 to 10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased interest in privacy ● May want more independence ● Worry around puberty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teach about puberty- social, emotional, physical ● Continue to provide info on sexuality
Ages 11 to 13	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have rapid physical, emotional, and behavioral changes ● Greatly influenced by peers ● Highly value privacy ● Develop romantic feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage and practice open communication ● Educate on healthy relationships ● Ask kids what they think ● Provide accurate information

Ages 13-17

- Value independence
 - Increased sexual feelings
 - Can express sexuality in different ways
 - Continue to experience peer pressure
- Teaching teens we have options in expressing sexuality and love
 - Discuss what influences deciding to have sex
 - Being a trusted resource

Adapted from

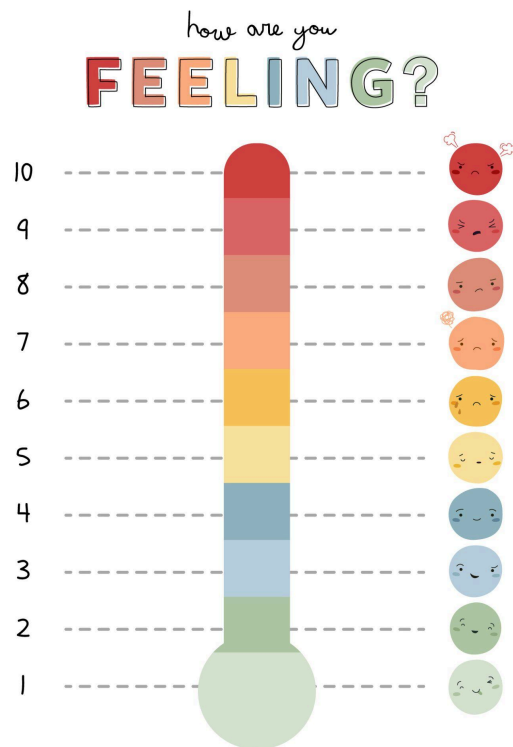
<https://www.choa.org/-/media/Files/Childrens/medical-services/child-protection/healthy-sexual-development-by-age.pdf?la=en&hash=2A3013E8C6071E68EC03B5E4D966B7F7C7B4078C>

Building healthy relationships and safety:

Boundaries and consent

Skills and language to express limits, needs and wants

Building an emotional vocabulary- using feeling charts, feelings rating system



Many children exhibit behaviors that are sexual

Exploration and Curiosity

Looking/Touching

Personal Boundaries

Sexual play is typical when
Close in age/developmental stage
No distress
Peaks around age 5

Good opportunity to reinforce information on boundaries

BEING GENDER INCLUSIVE

Using Body First Language

Minimum amount of information we need to interact with someone respectfully

Using someone's pronouns

Consistent, intentional, respectful

BUILDING BODY IMAGE



CAREGIVERS CAN MODEL

APPRECIATING YOUR BODY FOR WHAT IT CAN DO

**73% of teens 13-17
said that they had
seen pornography**

45%

Of teens who viewed
pornography said it gave
helpful information about
sex

Porn Literacy

Most kids and teens will probably be exposed to pornography, either accidentally or because they seek it out. We can engage kids and teens in critical thinking about viewing porn.

Messaging for younger kids and preteens:

- Acknowledge curiosity and explain what pornography is
- Explain that seeing pornography is unsafe for their emotions at their age
- You want them to tell you if they come across porn so that you can unpack/process their emotions over what they saw with them

Messaging for teens:

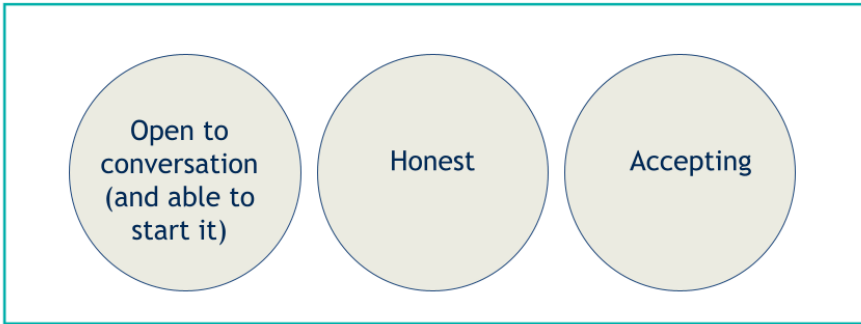
- Educating them on what is pleasurable and safe for people
- Informing them on and steering them toward the best places to get sex ed
- Sharing your views on whether or not you think they should view sexually explicit material

Being An Askable Adult

- Kids who feel connected to one or two adults in their life have a protective factor that makes it less likely they will engage in risky behaviors, such as early sexual activity, drug use, or violence.
- Adults who care about children show that by being available when a child approaches them. Even though everyone is busy, adults who stop what they are doing and look at the child when they speak are showing that they are open to questions or conversation.
- You don't need to know all of the answers. It's okay to say, "I don't know, but let's look for some information about that and talk again later."
- It's okay to feel embarrassed. Askable adults admit when they are feeling uncomfortable and then go ahead with the conversation anyway.
- Listen more than talk. Listening with an open heart and a closed mouth communicates caring more effectively than delivering a lecture or asking lots of questions. Adapted from <https://pubertycurriculum.com/are-you-an-askable-adult/>

BE ASKABLE

Ask questions and have conversations



Even if kids don't ask, you can start conversations

Talking About Sex with Teens

Focus on joy and responsibility rather than risk and danger

Ice Cream Sandwich Method

Cookie Layer #1

- The Intro
- Unshame if needed
- Thank them for asking

The Ice Cream Filling

- This is the meat of your answer
- Broaden your answer and offer context
- Offer resources

Cookie Layer #2

- Your closing
- Unshame and reassure

Practice! Hey Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa-

Layer # 1 _____

Ice cream filling _____

Layer #2 _____

Interview Your Parent - role play

Take turns being the parent and the child

1. When you were my age what was your favorite?:

TV show _____

Music group _____

(Interviewer free choice) _____

2. What did you use to listen to music?

3. What kinds of things did you like to do?

4. How old were you when you started puberty or when you realized you were going through puberty?

5. What did you start to feel grown up?

6. What was one question that you wanted to ask an adult about puberty but didn't ask?

**IMPROVING
OUR SKILLS IS
A WORK IN
PROGRESS**



What is one support you can access in the next month?

Resources

Askable Parent Challenge, Amaze.org:

<https://amaze.org/askableparent/>

Being Askable

<https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/resources/health-information/are-you-an-askable-parent/>

Talking to Kids

Power to Decide

<https://powertodecide.org/news/establish-yourself-trusted-adult>

<https://powertodecide.org/news/how-parents-shape-teens-sexual-decision-making-for-better#:~:text=This%20is%20where%20parents%20can,sexual%20debut%20and%20condom%20use.>

Sexual Development

<https://www.nationalcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/HealthySexualDevelopmentOverview.pdf>

<https://www.choa.org/-/media/Files/Childrens/medical-services/child-protection/healthy-sexual-development-by-age.pdf?la=en&hash=2A3013E8C6071E68EC03B5E4D966B7F7C7B4078C>

Consent

<https://www.talkwithyourkids.org/lets-talk-about/healthy-sex-talk-teaching-kids-consent-ages-1-21.html>

<https://www.michiganmedicine.org/health-lab/7-ways-talk-your-child-about-good-and-bad-touch>

Digital Safety

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

<https://staysafeonline.org/get-involved/at-home/raising-digital-citizens/>

Healthy Relationships

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/healthy-relationship.html>

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/>

Gender Inclusive

<https://genderspectrum.org/>

Sexual Health info

<https://youngwomenshealth.org/>
<https://youngmenshealthsite.org/>
<https://kidshealth.org/>

Older teens and Adults- sex ed on Scarleteen- Every topic that you can think of!

<https://www.scarleteen.com/>

Birth Control/Contraception Information

<https://www.bedsider.org/>
<https://www.reproductiveaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2020-09-contraceptions.pdf>
<https://www.reproductiveaccess.org/resource/bc-fact-sheet/>

2022 Teen and Pornography Report

<https://www.common sensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2022-teens-and-pornography-final-web.pdf>

Talking to Kids about Pornography/Porn Literacy

<https://www.common sensemedia.org/articles/what-to-do-if-your-young-child-sees-pornography>
<https://www.common sensemedia.org/articles/talking-with-teens-and-preteens-about-pornography>

Kids and teens with Developmental Disabilities

<https://www.respectability.org/resources/sexual-education-resources/>
<https://www.elevatustraining.com/workshops-and-products/talking-with-your-kids/> - fee based workshop, but Elevatus also has free workshops throughout the year

Planned Parenthood Delaware has individual and group services for people with disabilities:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-delaware/local-training-education/sexuality-disability-programs>

Sexual health appointments- free & confidential ages 12-20, ARC at Nemours, Wilmington:

<https://arcappointments.as.me/schedule.php?appointmentType=17812657>
<https://www.cffde.org/arc-education>

ARC Puberty Education at CFF <https://www.cffde.org/arc>

https://www.cffde.org/_files/ugd/46adda_672344265f114ab7a9ce9d86335628a3.pdf