

Stop, Listen and Talk with Teens about Sex

It is never too early to start talking with your child about sex. By starting early and making time for good communication, you can build trust and give them the information they need to be safe.

Teens learn from you.

Teens learn from your actions and words. Be honest with your teen about your own feelings about relationships and sex.

Build self-confidence.

Self-confidence helps children overcome peer pressure. Praise is the best way to build self-confidence.

Tell your teens you love them.

Find opportunities to "catch" your teen doing something good. Letting your teens know you love and respect them builds their self-esteem.

Keep talking.

Talking with teens about sex is not a one-time event. Take advantage of everyday opportunities or plan an activity for just the two of you. Keep listening and keep talking.

Foster positive feelings about sex.

Young people who have positive feelings about sex are more likely to discuss these issues with their parents or other trusted adults. They are also more likely to be able to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and sexual abuse.

Help your children practice making decisions.

Create opportunities for your children to make choices and decisions, no matter how small, from their earliest years.

Listen—be there for them.

Make sure your teens know that *no matter what* they can come to you and you will be there to help them.

Assure them that their feelings are natural.

What your teens want to know most is that they are "normal." You can help them understand that everyone is different.

Keep your sense of humor!

Remember how you felt when you were their age.

You are not alone.

Don't hesitate to talk with other parents, friends, your family doctor, clergy or school counselors for help on how to talk with your teen about sex.

Tell your teens about places they can go for help.

Teens need a safe haven of professional, caring support when they can't talk to their parents. For the health and safety of all teens, we need to ensure that they can go to a doctor or clinic for medical treatment and know that it will be confidential.



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