

# Talking Tips for Parents and Caregivers

**1. You are the primary sexuality educator of your children.**

They want to talk with you and hear your values.

**2. Find “teachable moments.”**

Make use of TV shows even if you believe they send the wrong message. Say, “I think that program sent the wrong message. Let me tell you what I believe.”

**3. Remember that it is okay to feel uncomfortable.**

It is often hard to talk about sexual matters.

Relax and tell your children that you are going to talk to them because you love them and want to help them.

**4. Don’t wait until your children ask questions.**

Many never ask. You need to decide what is important for them to know and then tell them before a crisis occurs.

**5. Be “ask-able.”**

Reward a question with, “I’m glad you came to me.” It will teach your children to come to you when they have other questions.

**6. Become aware of the “question behind the question.”**

The unspoken question, “Am I normal?” is often hiding behind questions about sexual development, sexual thoughts, and sexual feelings.

Reassure your children as often as possible.

**7. Listen, listen, listen.**

Ask them why they want to know and what they already know. That may help you prepare your answer.

**8. Remember that facts are not enough.**

Share your feelings, values, and beliefs. Tell your children why you feel the way you do.

**9. Talk about sexuality as a part of life.**

Tell your children that intimacy is a wonderful part of adult life.

**10. Remember that you are telling your children that you care about their happiness and well-being.**

You are also sharing your values. This is one of the real joys of parenthood.

**11. Know what is taught about sexuality in your schools and faith communities.**

Other groups can help.

**12. Realize that it's okay if you don't know all the answers.**

Tell them you are not sure, but you will check on it and let them know.