Parenting Sex Education Questions

How to answer your child's questions

Responding to children's questions is an important part of sex education. Making time and answering questions helps a child clear of any confusion concerning the information being present

"Am I Normal?" Questions

These questions usually focus on concerns about emotional and physical changes young people may be going through. Validate their concerns e.g. "Many people worry about that... " And give information about what they can expect to happen during this time in their life.

Permission seeking questions

These questions come into common forms, both seeking permission to participate in a particular behaviour (e.g. "Is it normal to...?" Or "Did you... When you were growing up?") What is normal for some may not be normal for others.

People have different values and morals. Present factual information (what is known medically), any legal issues, and risk factors and consequences. Always give positive reinforcement that looking for more information and talking about issues is an important for them to learn and make healthy decisions. Be cautious of using the word 'normal'.

Shock questions

These questions may be due to embarrassment about the topic, or an underlying concern or simply to divert attention from the topic.

1. As soon positive intent, as seemingly silly questions can be a way to communicate more complicated questions.

2. Try to re-address the underlying concern or user segment of the question for discussion. For example, "It sounds like you are asking a question about respect in a relationship".

3. Reword any slang to focus on the question. For example, if your child asks, "Should your balls hurt for days after being hit?" Could be addressed by saying, "BY balls you mean testicles. Testicles are very sensitive and do hurt when hit. If your testicles or saw for more than a day or so you may need to see a doctor to rule out any problems."

4. When you are uncomfortable with the question, you could defer it until you have time to think about it, and how to address all reword it ("let me think about that and we can talk it through tomorrow when we have more time").

Illustrations by Michael Emberley

Positive

"That is a great question, tell me what you know about that?"

'I'm really pleased you came and checked that with me...'

Try not to react negatively. Project a positive and happy attitude to questions about sex and relationships

Its ok to have a laugh - A negative reaction is worse than an inadequate answer

Information

"Our family belief is that..." Or

"Other ways a baby can be born are..."

Give additional information if it is relevant to the topic

Explain your expectations, values, beliefs. They need to know what is expected and appropriate

Otherwise they will form their opinions from the School yard or unsupervised internet

Accurate Answers

"Mummy accepted the seed from Daddy's penis into her vagina, where it travelled up to meet the egg"

We often joke to avoid the embarrassing truth - Don't avoid it

Use real terminology - bottom, penis, vagina, testicles - Normalise words

Respectful Relationships

"The reason we don't say that word to someone is because it is offensive to their way of life..."

Core of all Sexuality Education and answering your children questions is positive social relationships. Base all your discussions on respect to others

Simple

"There are many types of families, her family has two mummies who love each other...and her dad lives-in a different house..."

How much to give? Keep the answer simple brief and factual, only what they ask for

They will ask for more if they want it

Empowering

"If something appears on the screen that you should not see, turn the iPad over and come and get an adult" Or "You can say to your mates - searching 'boobs' on the internet is boring let's look up goal of the year instead," ...then come and tell me about it when you get home.

Give solutions i.e..... Turn off the screen, press the back key. If it does not feel right .... Its ok to say no

Confidence in developing their own values and believes. Gives them other behaviour options

Remind them: 'You can ask/tell me anything...'

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