

5 Tips on Talking About Sexual Health with Your Child



Reminder: Routine immunization consent forms were sent home last month with Grade 5 and 9 students.

Also, as the best defense against influenza infection & illness, an annual influenza immunization is recommended for all Albertans six months of age and older. For more information about influenza immunization visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza.asp>

Talking about sexual health topics like puberty and menstruation can be daunting and uncomfortable for many parents. The good news is there are ways to prepare and moments to take advantage of, which will help you talk with your child about these topics.

1. **Start young!** Teach young children the correct terms for their body parts. Talk about puberty before they are already experiencing it. The more you talk about it while they're growing up, the easier it will be to discuss more difficult topics later.
2. **Use teachable moments.** These moments can happen when you least expect them. You may hear lyrics to a song, watch TV together, or your child may tell you a story about someone in school. Ask your child's opinion, and use it as an opportunity to talk about sexual health and family values.
3. **Answer their questions as best as you can.** If your child asks a question and you are unsure how to respond, simply let your child know that you'll get back to them. The biggest struggle for parents is to decide what topics are age-appropriate. The thing to remember is that, if you avoid answering a question, you may be sending the message that it is NOT okay for them to talk to you about sex.
4. **Make it a regular topic.** Think of sex education as an ongoing process. Smaller, frequent conversations are better than a big, one-off talk. Remember that healthy development, including sexual development, is a lifelong process.
5. **Aim for a friendly chat.** Try to see the talks as two-way discussions, not lectures. Ask what your child thinks and feels and be willing to listen. Aim to get a lively discussion going.

For more tips on talking to your child about sexual health, please visit the Alberta Health Services www.teachingsexualhealth.ca

Developmental Assets

Parents and caregivers are a major influence in a child's life and it's normal to feel uncertain at times when it comes to raising your children. The Search Institute has identified a list of 40 research-based, positive experiences and qualities that influence young people's development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults. Below are few examples of developmental assets for you as a parent to consider discussing with your child.

- Supporting and loving your child – Do you and your child communicate openly, respectfully and frequently? Does your child receive support from other non-parent adults?
- Empowering your child - Does your child contribute to family decisions? Is your child given useful roles in the community?
- Setting clear and realistic boundaries – Does your family have clear rules and consequences? Do you monitor your child's whereabouts?
- Helping your child use her or his time in meaningful, constructive ways – Is your child involved in weekly extra-curricular activities?
- Encouraging your child to develop a lifetime commitment to learning – Does your child want to do well in school?
- Instilling in your child positive values – Do you encourage your child's development in recognizing and telling the truth?
- Developing social competencies in your child – Does your child recognize risky or dangerous situations and are they able to seek help from trusted adults?
- Encouraging your child to form a positive identity – Does your child feel good about themselves? Does your child seem curious about the world?

For the full list of developmental assets and to learn more visit www.search-institute.org.