

Talking With Your Child About Healthy Relationships



Learning about relationships begins early in life. As children grow they build relationships beyond their family, making friends and interacting with peers and teachers. Relationships are an important part of your child's life and can affect their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Parents, guardians and caregivers can have a positive influence on their children and their decisions. A good starting point is to reflect on your own values and what values you want to pass onto your children. You can then lead by example and teach your children by showing them positive social behaviours such as honesty, respect and openness. With your help, your child will be better able to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships.

What makes a healthy or unhealthy relationship? Healthy relationships include shared respect, honesty and trust as well as equality, support, fun and safety. It is also important in relationships to maintain separate identities and establish clear boundaries. Unhealthy relationships may be characterized by lying, manipulation, put downs, bribes and power issues.

Alberta Health Services developed the website www.teachingsexualhealth.ca to help you find the information you need to have conversations with your child. You will find webisodes, factsheets, FAQs and more. The parent section provides you with:

- Tips on how to start a conversation about healthy relationships.
- Suggestions for topics to talk about with your child such as compromise, anger management and respect.
- Links to reliable resources and community agencies in your area.

Bring the conversation of healthy relationships into your home for the benefit of your child's health and development. We encourage you to check out what www.teachingsexualhealth.ca has to offer!

Cooking – Fun at Any Age

How did you learn to cook? Was it with a parent or family member or someone else? Was it fun to try a new recipe, help in the kitchen and try those foods you helped prepare? To kids, cooking doesn't seem like work and they can be a big help in the kitchen. Little does the child know, they are building cooking and food preparation skills.

The more kids help choose, prepare and learn about food, the more they may be willing to eat what is served for meals and snacks. Here are some ideas to get your child started in the kitchen:

- **Ask for their input.** We all have favourite foods and allowing your child to provide ideas for meals and snacks will make them feel valued. It will also help you plan meals ahead of time.
- **Talk about foods at the grocery store and at home.** You can also have them pick out new foods to try at home. Letting them choose a brightly coloured vegetable or fruit is fun and since they picked it, you bet they will want to try it!
- **Help your child pick out a new recipe that you can make together.** It might become a new family favourite!
- **Try a “make-you-own” family style meal** of sandwiches, wraps, pizzas, salads, pasta or tacos. Kids love to make their own creations as it allows them to experiment with food.
- **Young children can help with lots of tasks in the kitchen.** Start with small tasks such as; washing vegetables, mixing salad, adding ingredients, stirring, setting the table and cleaning up.

Try some of these simple steps to help your little chef learn in the kitchen. You will be helping your child form positive and lasting healthy eating habits!