

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT BODIES, SEX, AND RELATIONSHIPS

one age-appropriate conversation at a
time -and without awkwardness



RIGHT HERE
RIGHT NOW



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one age-appropriate conversation at a
time -and without awkwardness



FOREWORD:

This guide is designed to support parents, caregivers, and trusted adults in having open, evidence-based, age-appropriate conversations about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) with children and teens (3-13 year olds). It recognizes that every child is unique, and that their understanding is shaped not only by age, but also by social environment, exposure, and lived experience. Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all script, this guide provides flexible, practical tools to help you meet children where they are, building trust, encouraging curiosity, and laying the foundation for lifelong wellbeing. Let it be your companion in nurturing safe, informed, and empowering dialogue at home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This guide was made possible through the collective lived experiences and unwavering commitment of parents, caregivers, educators, youth advocates, and health professionals who continue to champion safe, inclusive, and empowering conversations at home. We honor the voices of children and young people whose curiosity, courage, and questions inspire us to create spaces of trust and learning. Special thanks to Terry Gachie (Africa Media Trust, Love Matters Kenya legal entity), Emily Ochieng (Sex-Ed expert), Naijeria Toweett (Consultant) and Christine Mukuhi (Africa Media Trust, Love Matters Kenya legal entity) for working tirelessly to bring together this guide and for always advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights—your dedication lights the way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. Introduction and Purpose Background.....	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why This Guide Matters. • Why Your Voice Matters in Your Child's Sexual Health Journey • You're the Most Important Piece in Your Child's SRH Education Journey • What These Conversations Help Achieve 	
2. Turning Big Talks into Everyday Conversations.....	14
3. Age-Appropriate Conversations.....	17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 6-9 • Ages 10-13 • Puberty Moments – Everyday Conversation Starters • Ages 6-9 • Ages 10-13 • Ages 6-9 - Everyday Conversation Starters • Ages 10-13 • Everyday Moments to Talk About Sex, Intimacy, and Affection 	
4. Digital Media In Facilitating Parent-Child SRHR Conversations.....	37
5. Navigating Cultural Sensitivity and Values.....	40
6. Frequently Asked Questions and Responses.....	41
7. Conclusion.....	42

GLOSSARY:

Consent

A clear “yes” given freely, without pressure. Consent can change at any time

Conversation starter -A word, question, or comment that can help begin a friendly or meaningful conversation with someone. It’s more like an invitation to connect or share ideas.

Identity

A person’s sense of who they are, including gender, values, interests, and how they see themselves in the world.

Modelling

To demonstrate a behavior—like kindness, healthy saying no, eating, or using respectful language—so others can see it, learn from it, and copy it.

SRH - Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) is a core component of overall health that includes health, safety, and well-being in relation to bodies, relationships, reproduction, and sexuality.

SRHR

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) is a core component of overall health that includes the right of all people to make informed decisions about their bodies, relationships, and health, with access to services, education, and protection from harm.

Values

Beliefs and principles that guide how families and individuals make decisions about relationships, health, and life.

WHAT SRHR IS, AND ISN'T



It includes much more, like understanding emotions, relationships, consent, body changes, menstruation, pregnancy, and personal rights

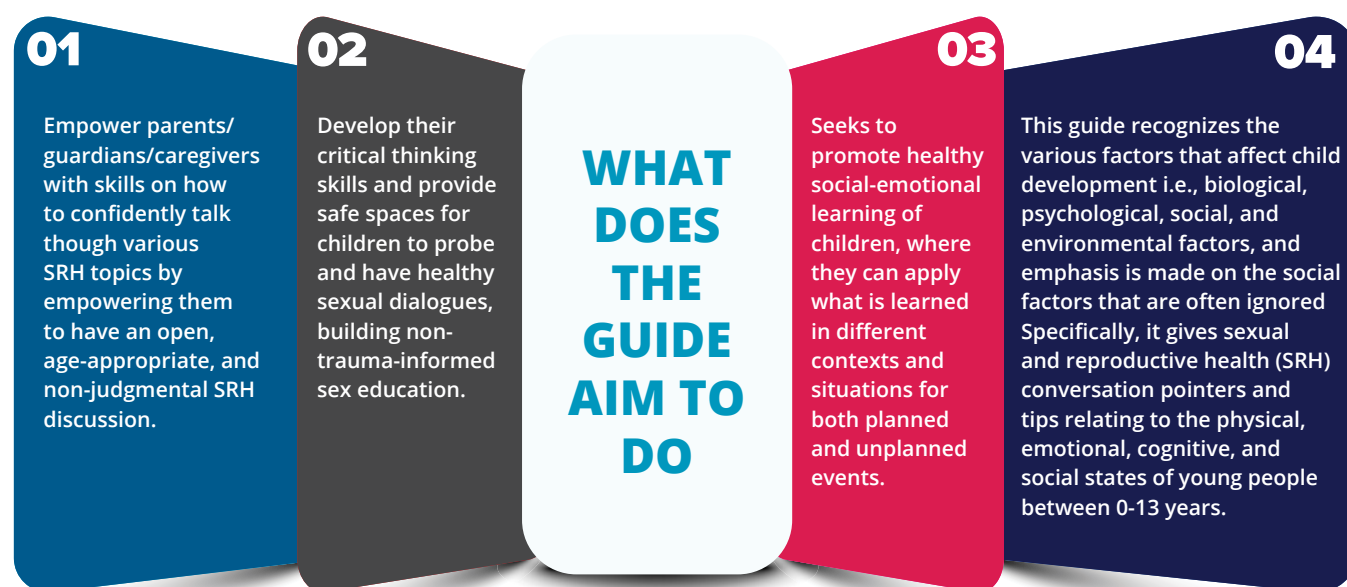
1. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) is “a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction.” It includes topic areas such as safe and healthy relationships, gender-based violence, family planning, fertility and infertility, maternal and perinatal health, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), sexual and gender-based violence, and education on safety.”
2. SRHR is not only about sex, as it includes a wide range of topics, such as puberty, menstruation, consent, relationships, family planning, and access to health services
3. SRHR should be for both boys and girls and not only for the latter because boys also need to understand their bodies, emotions, and responsibilities. SRHR is for everyone, regardless of gender
4. Children are not too young to understand various SRHR concepts; they can understand SRHR concepts when explained in age-appropriate ways. Early education helps them stay safe and informed
5. Various SRHR topics, such as periods, sex, and contraception, are not taboo; avoiding these topics exposes children to misinformation. Open, respectful conversations can help children make healthy, informed decisions
6. Sexuality isn't just about sex. Sexuality covers feelings you have about your body, growing up, identity, sexual feelings and expression, gender, making babies, love and closeness, personal values, and relationships.

1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Parents and caregivers play a vital role in shaping their children's understanding of sexual and reproductive health (SRH). However, cultural taboos, misinformation, and parental discomfort make these conversations challenging. Despite their importance, many parents delay and sometimes avoid discussing SRH topics with their children.

Who is the guide for

parents and caregivers, designed to meet their specific needs and concerns. While the content is most relevant to them, other caregivers—like teachers, facilitators, and peer educators—may also find it helpful in their work.



Recommendation

Start age-appropriate conversations before children experience puberty, peer influence, have access to the internet, or other potentially untrustworthy sources of SRH information and education.

Emphasis should be placed on the fact that SRH conversations should occur during planned and unplanned events.

Example

- A planned event is when a parent initiates the talk with their child.
- An unplanned event is when a child asks questions without being prompted by the parent, e.g., after seeing an SRH message on the television or a billboard.

While the guide offers age-based guidance, it is essential to note that parents and caregivers can exercise their judgment. A child's level of exposure can vary significantly due to social and environmental factors, such as where they live, the school they attend, or being raised around older siblings or peers who may introduce certain topics at an early age. For example, a 3- or 4-year-old may be more exposed to SRH topics than a 6- or 7-year-old, depending on these influences. Therefore, parents should assess their child's context and readiness when deciding how and when to have these conversations.

How to use this guide

Use this guide as a companion, not a complete checklist. It is designed to be a flexible tool that supports ongoing conversations rather than a one-time event. Think of it as a conversation starter, not a script.

1

Start by going through the guide on your own. Familiarize yourself with the key messages and highlight sections that feel most urgent or relatable for your child's current stage.

2

Keep the talks bite-sized incremental pieces. You don't have to cover everything at once. Use simple language and repeat key ideas over time to build understanding.

3

While questions from children can start conversations, don't wait for them to ask.

Sometime you may need to initiate the conversations - use everyday moments as conversation starters

4

If you're unsure about something, that's okay. Say so—and look for the answer together. You can use a notebook to track questions or topics you want to explore further.

5

Reflect and adapt as you go. Notice what worked, what felt off, and what your child responded to, then adapt and revisit as needed.



The topics covered in this guide are not exhaustive. There may be other relevant issues or questions that aren't explicitly addressed here. However, the approach outlined in this guide—gentle, honest, and responsive—can be applied to a wide range of conversations beyond what's included.

Why This Guide Matters

Talking to your child about sex and relationships can feel difficult, and that's completely normal. For many of us, these conversations weren't part of our upbringing, so it's understandable if they feel awkward or unfamiliar now. In some families, topics like these were surrounded by silence, discomfort, or even shame. And not every home has felt like a safe space to ask questions or speak openly.

This guide is here to meet you where you are.

Whether you're feeling unsure, nervous, embarrassed or simply don't know where to start, you're not alone.

This resource is here to help you have open, honest, and age-appropriate conversations with your child, at your pace, in your voice, and with the guidance to ensure those conversations are grounded in care, accuracy, and trust.



Why Your Voice Matters in Your Child's Sexual Health Journey

As a parent or caregiver, you are, and should be, your child's most trusted guide — especially on topics like sex, relationships, and body changes. In a world full of online content and misinformation, silence or vague answers aren't enough.

Your honesty matters

Children often know more than we think. If they don't get any or clear answers at home, they'll turn to other sources such as peers or the internet, which may be inaccurate or not age appropriate. Avoiding talking to them about these topics doesn't protect them; it leaves them unprepared.

Many parents worry that talking about sex encourages risky behavior such as encouraging children to have sex early. The opposite is true. When children have honest, age-appropriate information, they're more likely to make thoughtful choices about consent, boundaries, and relationships.

Without guidance, children may feel confused, not because they lack innocence, but because they haven't been given the tools to understand and navigate the world safely.

"Guidance doesn't take away innocence; it gives children knowledge, skills, and confidence to protect it."

if you have not started having conversations with your child, you can start today: It's better to have the conversations later than never at all.

"Research shows that open, honest, and accurate comprehensive sexuality education delays sexual debut, reduces risky behavior and encourages safe sex"

You're the Most Important Piece in Your Child's SRH Education Journey

You play a unique and powerful role in helping your child learn about sex, relationships, and values. Just like a plant needs ongoing care to grow strong and healthy, your child needs consistent guidance to thrive. That care day by day, conversation by conversation starts with you.

Why You Matter Most:

- Your connection is unique. Everyday moments like mealtimes, car rides, or watching TV naturally open the door to meaningful talks.
- You know them best. You understand their personality, readiness, and learning style. You can revisit and reinforce lessons in ways no one else can.
- You shape their values. Your personal, cultural, or faith-based beliefs provide a foundation they can carry for life.
- You're there when it counts. Classroom lessons may fade, but your words in important moments will stick.
- You set the tone early. Before school ever addresses these topics, your words and actions teach boundaries, trust, and respect.
- You are the constant. Teachers, friends, and trends may change — you remain their lifelong guide.



Nurture these talks with patience, presence, and care. Over time, you'll help your child grow confident, resilient, and deeply rooted in values that last

Fostering open and supportive dialogue—especially around sensitive topics such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)—may require reflection on certain beliefs or practices.

Some values, though well-intentioned or culturally rooted, may unintentionally create barriers to meaningful parent-child communication or limit a child's ability to access accurate information and support.

As such, it is helpful for parents and caregivers to ask themselves:

- Is this belief true in science?
- Is it true in life?
- Is it true across generations?

These questions invite thoughtful engagement and can help parents align their values with approaches that support their children's well-being in a changing world without losing sight of their guiding principles.

What These Conversations Help Achieve

Curiosity Is Natural Be Their Safe Source



Children are naturally curious about their bodies, friends, and what they see or hear. They want to know what is happening to them, their friends, or just understand what they have seen or heard. Parents and caregivers. **Ignoring their questions doesn't stop curiosity — it redirects it.** Open dialogue builds trust and makes it more likely your child will come to you, not peers or the internet.

Normalize the Conversation



Treating sexuality as a normal part of life **reduces shame and stigma.** Talking openly at home helps children feel more comfortable and better prepared for real-life situations. It removes shame from sex dialogues—shows it's okay to talk.

Equip Them With the Right Information



You're in the best position to provide **clear, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive guidance.** Speaking early and honestly helps shape healthy attitudes and protects them from misinformation.

Promote Safer Choices



Conversations about risks — like STIs, unprotected sex, exploitation, or unhealthy relationships — **help children make safer decisions and cope better during puberty and beyond.** Awareness is protection.

Support Self-Esteem and Body Confidence



How you speak about bodies, including your own, shapes how your child sees themselves. Supportive conversations **encourage self-respect and body positivity,** especially during puberty or when they feel different.

Strengthen the Parent-Child Bond



Creating a judgment-free space **fosters long-term trust.** Children who feel supported are more likely to seek your guidance throughout their lives. It shows them that you have their back - are their safety nets.



Including All Children: Every child, including those with disabilities, needs tailored SRHR conversations. These talks build skills, knowledge, and confidence, and help reduce vulnerability to abuse



Your Reflection Box

Theme: Checking in with yourself before you start

1. How did my parents/caregivers talk (or not talk) about sex, bodies, and relationships when I was growing up?
2. What factors e.g. comfort, knowledge or memories might influence how I approach these talks with my child?
3. What do I most want to do differently for my child?

2 TURNING BIG TALKS INTO EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS

1. Mindset: Setting Yourself Up for Success

Before you start, take a moment to reflect on the beliefs and values you're passing on.

Some cultural or generational traditions, while well-intentioned, can unintentionally shut down open dialogue.

Ask yourself

Is it still helpful in today's world?

Is this belief supported by facts?

Does it support my child's well-being?

Reflecting doesn't mean giving up your values, rather it's keeping them strong while adapting to help your child grow in a changing world.



When you feel uneasy or it gets uncomfortable?
It's okay to tell your child:

"I feel a bit uneasy having these talks because when I was growing up, we didn't have them. But I want to embrace them with you, so we can learn and talk together."

OR

"This feels a little awkward for me, but it's important and I want us to be able to talk about anything."

OR

"We didn't really talk about these things when I was your age, so I'm learning how to do it now."

OR

"I might not have all the answers, but I'll always be honest with you."

OR

"I feel a bit shy bringing this up, but I'd rather you hear it from me than from someone who might not get it right."

OR

"This might feel a bit weird for both of us, but that's okay, we can figure it out together."

OR

"I want you to know it's always okay to ask questions, even the ones that make us both blush."

This honesty not only models openness, but also builds trust by showing that it's safe to talk about anything, even the things that feel uncomfortable at first.



Remember: Feeling awkward is normal, especially if you didn't grow up talking about these topics. You don't need to be perfect, you just need to be present and honest.

"The moment it feels awkward is often the perfect place to start."

2. Approach: Keep It Small and Ongoing

Think less "big talk," more "lots of little conversations."

Everyday moments in the car, walking, watching TV, cooking together are your best opportunities to make the conversation natural.

Try:

- **Co-viewing** a show, video, tiktok short, and talking about what you notice.
- **Storytelling** to make ideas relatable.
- **Gentle humour** to take the edge off.
- **Build your own Go-to phrases** for tricky moments:

Questions can pop up at the most unexpected times, and it's okay to take a moment to gather your thoughts. Having a few ready responses can help you stay calm and keep the conversation open.

Here are some you can adapt in your own words:

- *"That's a great question. Let's talk about it when we get home."*
- *"You've really challenged me, I might need a little time to think about the best answer."*
- *"That's a great question, but I may answer it in bits so you can understand each part before it all makes sense."*
- *"Let me share my own experience first, and then we can discuss your question. If you still have questions, we'll explore them together."*
- *"I'll answer as honestly and clearly as I can. If you still feel unsure, we can look for other resources together to figure it out."*

**Parental Tip:**

These phrases aren't about avoiding the topic. They create space for thoughtful, age-appropriate, and truthful answers while keeping trust at the center. If you promise to answer later, make sure you do — don't break their trust. Especially if you didn't grow up talking about these topics. You don't need to be perfect, you just need to be present and honest.

"The moment it feels awkward is often the perfect place to start."



Important! Approach conversations in an ongoing way rather than a one-time event. Sex education is most effective when delivered through a series of mini, paced, and repetitive conversations that evolve with the child's age, experience, and understanding. This promotes incremental learning, allowing information to be introduced gradually and reinforced over time.

Parents and caregivers should expect to revisit the same topics multiple times, often from different angles, to enhance clarity, memorability, and emotional comfort.

3. Skills: How to Keep the Conversation Safe and Effective

- **Use what's happening around you** — a news story, song lyric, or ad can spark important talks.
- **Be honest and accurate** — name body parts correctly, give clear answers at their level.
- **Pause and pace** — too much at once can overwhelm.
- **Check in often** — "Does that make sense?" "How do you feel about what we're talking about?"

You can invite your child in by using Child response warmers

- » *"Okay... but can I ask you something first?"*
- » *"I don't know much about that — can you explain it in a simple way?"*
- » *"You can tell me if you've heard something different, or if you just want to know more."*
- » *"I've heard something different, can I tell you what it was?"*
- » *"That makes me feel a bit embarrassed... but I still want to know."*
- » *"Can you give me an example so I understand better?"*
- » *"I'm not sure how I feel about that — can we talk more?"*

Here is an example showing how to answer the same child question differently, depending on age, while staying truthful and age-appropriate:

**Question:**

"Where do babies come from?"

Age 3–5

"Babies grow inside a special place in the body called the uterus, not the stomach. It might look like they're in the tummy, but the uterus is a separate part made just for growing babies. They stay there for about nine months before they're born"

Age 6–9

"Babies start when a tiny cell from a man and a tiny cell from a woman join together. They grow in the uterus for about nine months before being born."

Age 10–13

"A baby begins when sperm from a man joins an egg from a woman. This happens through sex or with medical help like IVF. The baby grows in the uterus until it's ready to be born."

4. Understanding Your Child's Perspective

Children don't always ask, but that doesn't mean they aren't curious. Here are a few myths to keep in mind:

- » **Myth:** "If they're not asking, they're not interested."
- » **Truth:** Many kids want to know, but don't know how to bring it up.
- » **Myth:** "They don't want to hear it from me."
- » **Truth:** Even if they seem embarrassed, they value your voice over peers or the internet.
- » **Myth:** "Talking about sex will encourage it."
- » **Truth:** Honest, age-appropriate conversations make safer, better-informed choices more likely.
- » **Myth:** "They're too young to hear the answer."
- » **Truth:** If your child asks, they're ready at least for an honest, age-appropriate response.

A question means they've already been exposed to the idea somewhere. Avoiding an answer leaves space for confusion, misinformation, or shame. Your role is to give them the truth in words they can understand now, and then build on that knowledge as they grow.

Knowing this helps you respond with patience, reassurance, and confidence.

5. Collaboration

Sex ed isn't gendered, any parent can talk to any child. But lived experience can sometimes add depth.

It's fine to invite support from teachers, health workers, or trusted relatives — as long as you remain the main guide in your child's journey.

6. Stay Involved

The best way to keep conversations alive? Be part of your child's world. Show interest in their friendships, hobbies, and daily experiences.

These everyday connections make it easier to talk not just about sex, but also about respect, safety, and growing up.



Important!

It's not about knowing everything. It's about showing up, staying open, and growing together.



Parental Tip:

To avoid information overload, it is recommended that parents pause frequently during these discussions to check in, gauging the child's knowledge, emotional response, and readiness to continue. This patient-centered approach helps build trust and creates a safe environment for children to ask questions, express curiosity, and engage meaningfully.



Your Reflection Box

Theme: Confidence & daily practice

1. Which everyday moments (car rides, meals, bedtime) could I use to start gentle conversations?
2. How do I usually react when my child asks something awkward? Do I pause and listen—or try to change the subject?
3. What can I say to show my child it's always safe to ask me questions?

3 AGE-APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS

What does age-appropriate conversation mean?

Age-appropriate conversations are those that entail talking to children or young people about topics in a way that they can understand. It includes activities, materials, or settings that match a child's age, development, maturity, and level of understanding. It's about giving the right amount at the right time — enough to guide and protect them, without overwhelming them.

Every child develops at their own pace. Use these age ranges as a guide, not a rule — you may need to adjust based on your child's readiness, questions, and exposure to information.

Some topics may overlap across ages and can be taught step by step, based on each child's stage of development or exposure.

Examples:

Topic: Boundaries and consent



General breakdown of topics by age:

**3–5
YEARS**

Body parts, privacy, boundaries, consent,

**6–9
YEARS**

Puberty beginning, friendships, consent, respect, safety

**10–13
YEARS**

Puberty changes, attraction, emotions, online safety, identity, relationships, consent, risk awareness. Puberty changes, attraction, relationships, online safety, risk awareness.

3–5 YEARS

- * Everyday openers may include swimming day – Talking about why our swimsuits cover certain areas (*“These are your private parts — they’re just for you”*)
- * Cartoons showing hugs/kisses – *“Do you think they both wanted that hug?”*



Sample conversation starter

*How many body parts can you name?
Which is your favorite body part?*

- *Your body is special; each body part has a special function, and you can name all its parts.*
- *This is your nose, elbow, ear, and this is your penis/vulva.*
- *If anyone ever touches your private parts or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, asks to touch theirs, or shows you their private parts — or makes you look at anything that makes you feel uncomfortable — please tell me right away. You won't be in trouble.*
- * *Repetition helps these lessons stick.*
- *Say no*



Your Reflection Box

Theme: Meeting my child where they are

1. Do I notice signs that my child might already be curious about their body, friendships, or relationships?
2. Which topics feel easiest for me to explain, and which ones feel hardest?
3. How can I prepare for questions that might come earlier than I expect (e.g., from TV, siblings, or school)?



3 Steps to Stay Safe Say No!

1. **Use Your Words**
Say it clearly and loudly: "No!" or "Stop!" or "I don't like that!"
 2. **Move Away**
Step back or walk/run to a safe space.
 3. **Tell a Safe Adult**
Go to someone you trust (parent, teacher, caregiver) and say exactly what happened.
- * Remember:**
- * Practice these 3 steps in fun role-play. Use different situations — at the playground, during playdates, or in pretend games — so your child learns to respond quickly and confidently.
 - * Revisit body safety and safe-touch rules during key moments — before holidays, when a new family member arrives, at bath or shower time, and ahead of school or kindergarten swim days.



Parental Tip:

At this age, teaching consent is about respect and boundaries, not sexual activity.

Sit down with your child and write a short list of trusted adults they can go to if something feels wrong or uncomfortable. Include parents, grandparents, teachers, and close family friends.

Talk about why each person is safe — for example, "They listen to you, they help keep you safe, and they respect your feelings."

6–9 YEARS

- **Conversation starter:**
Did you know that your body belongs to you?

Your Body Belongs to You

- You're the boss of your body.
- It's okay to say "No", even to grown-ups, if they ask to touch you, whether they're a stranger, someone you know, or someone close to you. Then, tell me or another trusted adult right away
- Your entire body is a private part; no one should

touch or ask to see parts covered by clothes. If they do, say "No!", get away, and tell someone you trust. No one should touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or confused.

- Encourage them not to stay silent if they see someone being harmed or disrespected. Speaking up can make a real difference.

Respect the boundaries of others:

- If a someone does not want to be touched, respect it
- That means you should only touch someone if they say it's okay.
- You should never touch another person's private parts or try to stare at them.
- Just like your private parts are not for others to touch or see, theirs are private too.



Parental Tip:

Encourage them not to stay silent if they see someone being harmed or disrespected. Speaking up can make a real difference.

10–13 YEARS

Consent Goes Both Ways

- Consent means you saying yes or no to something that affects you
- Consent means asking for permission and waiting for a clear "yes" before doing something that affects someone else.
- It applies to things like hugs, sharing personal items, or posting photos online.
- A "yes" should be freely given, not pressured or guilted.

Boundaries Can Change Anytime

- People can change their minds mid-way, and you should respect that
- You don't need a lot of explanations when you change your mind. Saying "I don't want to do this anymore" or "I would like to proceed" is valid
- You have the right to set boundaries about your body, space, and feelings.
- Others have the right to set boundaries toward you on their body, space, and feelings

It's Okay To Say No Without Feeling Guilty

- It is normal to feel like you have let someone down when you say no
- You can, and should, say no to anything without feeling guilty
- You don't owe anyone physical affection, attention, or explanations.
- Saying "no" doesn't make you rude—it makes you confident, honest, and safe.
- When Someone Crosses Your Boundaries, Speak Up & Get Help

Boundaries Apply Online As Well

- The same rules for offline boundaries apply to online
- You have a right to say no when someone, or a platform, asks you to share personal or other information that you're uncomfortable with. This includes your name, home and school address, photos,
- Similarly, do not share someone's photo, message, or personal info without asking.
- If someone sends or asks for something inappropriate, block them and tell an adult.

If anyone crosses your boundaries or makes you feel unsafe, let me know at that point

- If you feel that you need help, tell a trusted adult
- If someone told you to keep it secret, do not. Talk to a trusted adult instead

One critical area is consent. The foundations of consent culture are laid at home, where children first learn how to give, withhold, and respect a 'no.'

Parents have a responsibility to create safe spaces where children feel empowered to set boundaries and make choices about their comfort and autonomy. This includes allowing children to say no to certain requests or physical interactions without fear of punishment or shame, and modeling how to respond respectfully when someone else declines.

By normalizing boundary-setting and mutual respect at home, parents equip children to replicate these healthy behaviors in peer relationships and other social settings.

E.g., as a parent, ask before you touch

- Always ask: **"Can I give you a hug?"** or **"Do you want to play like this?"**
- If someone says **"No,"** respect it. That's called consent.

To foster understanding practice real-life scenarios

Example: Role-play saying "no" in tricky situations —

"I don't want to do that."

"Stop, that's making me uncomfortable."

"No thanks, I've changed my mind."

Include online examples, like refusing to share personal photos.

Q&A Guide On Bodies, Body Awareness & Safety:

Everyday Conversation Starters & Sample Responses

AGE 3-5 | AGE 6-9 | AGE 10-13

Bath time or changing clothes



Why do I have a penis and she doesn't?

Age 6-9

"Boys usually have a penis and girls a vulva, but some people are born different. All bodies deserve respect."

Age 10-13

"You're noticing body differences — that's normal. They're part of how bodies work for things like peeing, growing, and making babies."



This is your penis. Girls have a vulva. Everyone's body is special.

Someone tries to peek in changing room



He tried to look at me.

Ages 3-5

"That's not okay. Your private parts are only for you. Tell a grown-up right away."

Ages 10-13

"That's a violation of privacy. It's important to speak up and get support."



It's not respectful or safe to look at private parts. You can say 'stop' and tell a trusted adult.

Hearing body comments from peers



They said my body is weird.

Age 3-5

"As you grow, your body needs different things to take care of it."

Age 6-9

"Puberty brings changes like new hair growth or breast development, so we start using things like deodorant or bras."



Bodies grow in their own way. What matters is being healthy, not looking like someone else.

New hygiene routines



Why do I have to wash there?

Ages 3-5

"We wash to keep our bodies healthy and clean"

Ages 10-13

"Good hygiene prevents infections and helps you feel fresh and confident."



Washing private parts keeps them healthy, especially as you grow.

**Parental Tip:**

Talk about bodies in a matter-of-fact way. Use correct names for body parts, reinforce that private parts are private, and remind your child they can always come to you if something feels wrong or confusing

Q&A Guide On Consent & Respecting Boundaries:

Everyday Conversation Starters & Sample Responses

AGE 3-5 | **AGE 6-9** | **AGE 10-13**

Playing with friends



She didn't want to play the game I wanted.

Age 6-9

"A good friend respects when you say no, and you respect their no too."

Age 10-13

"Respecting boundaries is part of healthy friendships. You can choose what you're okay with, and so can they."



It's okay — friends can say no. We listen when they don't want to.

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Someone hugs without asking



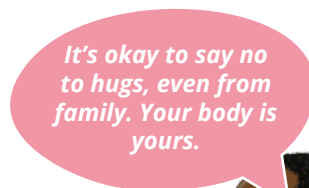
I didn't want a hug.

Ages 3-5

"You can say 'No thank you' if you don't want a hug."

Ages 10-13

"Consent means you choose what happens with your body — and others choose for theirs. No one should pressure you."



It's okay to say no to hugs, even from family. Your body is yours.

Child tries to hug/touch someone else



Why didn't they want a hug?

Age 3-5

"Sometimes people don't feel like being touched, and that's okay."

Age 6-9

"Not everyone likes to be touched at the same time. We always ask first."



Everyone has the right to say yes or no to touch. It's important to respect that.

Learning to ask for help with clothes/hair



Can I help you with that?

Age 6-9

"Asking first shows respect and care for someone's body."

Age 10-13

"Getting consent before touching shows you value the other person's comfort and boundaries."



I'll ask if I need help. You can ask me too before touching.

**Parental Tip:**

Practice “asking first” at home — for hugs, tickles, or help with clothes. This teaches that consent is an everyday skill, not just about sex.

**Your Reflection Box**

1. How do I model consent and respect at home (e.g. asking before hugging, respecting “no”)?
2. Do I allow my child to say no to physical affection, even with relatives?
3. What can I do to show them boundaries are real and safe?

Topic: Puberty and body changes**Ages 3–5****Important!**

For this age group, the goal of this conversation is not to explain puberty and body changes in detail. They have a few more years before they can experience any changes, especially physical changes. The goal of this conversation is to lay the foundation for body awareness, safety, and self-respect. At this age group, they are curious about their bodies and others', so it's important to use simple, positive, and age-appropriate language.

**Parental Tip:**

Use simple pictures or cartoons to start conversations about body differences.

Try asking:

“What’s the same or different about these two bodies?”

“Does their body look like yours?”

“What’s one thing you like about your body?”

Your Body Is Growing—and That’s Amazing!

- Your body is changing because you’re growing up, just like a tree gets taller or a puppy becomes a dog.
- One day, you’ll grow as big as me or your brother/sister/cousin/father/mother
- When that time comes, new things like growing taller, getting stronger, and maybe even growing hair in new places, but that happens slowly and later.

Everyone’s Body Is a Little Different

- Some people have different body parts, and that’s normal. For example, boys have penises while girls have vaginas.
- Differences are good, and we should embrace them as they make the world a beautiful place
- It is important to take care of our bodies by keeping them clean, eating healthy food, and getting rest.

It’s Okay to Ask Questions

- If you’re curious or concerned about your body or someone else’s, you can always ask me or an adult you trust. We will help you understand in a way that makes sense.
- Some things may not make total sense now, but they will with time, especially when you start to experience any changes

Ages 6-9**Sample conversation starter**

Soon your body will start changing — you may notice hair growing in new places, starting your period, voice changes, breast enlargement, sweating more, and body odor. It's all normal and part of growing up. Everyone experiences these changes at their own pace, and that's completely okay. If you ever have questions or concerns, you can always ask a trusted adult.

Puberty Is a Natural Part of Growing Up

- Puberty is when your body starts changing from a kid's body to an adult's body. It happens to everyone, but at different times.
- Some kids start earlier, some later—and that's okay.
- It's normal to feel a bit different or unsure about your body as it grows; that's just part of puberty. It might feel strange at first, but it means your body is doing exactly what it's meant to. Your body is amazing, and with time, it will feel more familiar and comfortable.
- Your feelings change too: Puberty doesn't just change your body—it can also affect your feelings. You might feel happy one moment and upset the next. That's normal, and talking about it helps.

General Changes to Expect**Tip: Use simple, clear language**

- You might grow taller fast.
- You'll start to sweat more and might need to use deodorant."
- Hair might grow under your arms and around your private parts."
- Girls might start growing breasts and get their period.
- Boys might notice their voice getting deeper."

The idea here is to introduce them to the concept of puberty. Introduce the idea that these changes are a natural part of growing up and that different people will experience them at different times.

Hygiene:

- Puberty brings sweat, oil, and new smells. It's not weird—it's biology.
- Hygiene helps you feel confident, stay healthy, and respect your body.

To take care of yourself:

- Shower regularly, especially after sports or sweating.
- Use mild soap and clean all areas—including underarms, feet, and private parts.
- Change clothes daily, especially underwear and socks.
- Maintain oral hygiene: Brush your teeth twice a day and floss if you can.
- Bad breath isn't just embarrassing—it can signal health issues.

Menstrual Hygiene for Girls:**Simple definitions for menstruation:**

- Every month, a girl's body prepares to host a baby, even if she's not planning to have one now. If the body does not create the baby, the baby's warm blanket sheds and comes out of her body.
- The body builds a soft lining inside the uterus (that's a part inside the tummy). If there's no baby, the body lets go of that lining.
- A period is when a little bit of blood flows from the vagina every month to get rid of tissues, blood, and other fluids that it does not need.

Products used:

- They include pads, tampons, or menstrual cups
- The best product for you depends on comfort, flow, and what's easy to access.
- Sanitray products are changed every 3–6 hours, depending on the product
- The change is for the purposes of hygiene, avoiding leaks, preventing infections, etc.
- Track your cycle using an app or a notebook
- Talk about what's normal, what's not and when to ask for help.

**Important!**

At this point, you can demonstrate how to use the sanitary product to their child.

Wet Dreams for Boys:

Simple definition for wet dreams:

- As boys grow up, their bodies start changing to get ready for adulthood. One of those changes is something called a wet dream.
- A wet dream is when a boy's body releases a sticky white fluid called semen while he's sleeping. This can make his underwear or bedsheets wet.
- It's totally normal and it's just the body practicing how it works.
- It doesn't mean you did something wrong or weird—it's just part of growing up.

Remember to indicate that:

- If it happens, just clean up and talk to a trusted adult if you have questions or concern.
- Not all boys have wet dreams, and that's okay too. Everyone's body is different.



Parental Tip:

Share something you love about your own body ; role modelling body confidence.

Talk about differences in body shapes, sizes, skin tones, and abilities in a positive way.

Discuss what to do if someone makes a hurtful comment e.g., speaking up, walking away, telling a trusted adult.

Remind them that if something bothers them about their body or how someone treats them, they can always come to you.

Ages 10-13



Sample conversation starter

What do you think is the major difference between my body and yours?" "What changes have you seen in your body in the past 6 months or one year?

Specific Changes For Boys and Girls:

For Girls:

- Breasts start to grow.
- Hips may get wider.
- You'll start having periods (menstruation)—a monthly bleeding from the vagina that means your body is getting ready to have babies someday.

For Boys:

- Testicles and penis grow bigger.
- You may get erections more often, even when you're not thinking about anything.
- Your voice will get deeper, sometimes cracking along the way.
- You might have wet dreams—when semen comes out while you're sleeping.

How can you take care of yourself:

- Clean your body at least once a day to stay fresh
- You can start using deodorant
- Wear clean underwear and change it daily.
- Learn about periods or erections so you're not surprised when they happen.
- Develop healthy ways of dealing with emotions such as understanding your triggers, developing healthy coping mechanisms e.g. reading, taking walks, swimming
- See help and support when needed

Emphasize:


- * It's okay to feel confused, scared or curious. Just remember that these changes are normal and happen to everyone.
- * If you have questions, talk to a trusted adult—like a parent, older sibling, teacher, or health worker.

Q&A Guide On Puberty

Everyday Conversation Starters & Sample Responses

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Pad advertisement or seeing pads in the supermarket




What's a period?


A Period is when the uterus sheds its lining each month if an egg isn't fertilized. It's part of the menstrual cycle that prepares the body for a possible pregnancy.

Age 3-5
"A period is when blood comes from the uterus. It happens to most girls and women when they grow up, and it means their body is healthy."

Age 6-9
"A period happens when the uterus cleans itself each month if there's no baby growing inside. It's part of the cycle that can lead to pregnancy when someone is older."



Child notices body hair on themselves or others




Why do I have hair here now?


During puberty, hormones tell your body to grow hair in new places, like under your arms and around your genitals. It's completely normal.

Age 3-5
"Hair grows in different places as you get older — it's part of how your body changes."

Age 6-9
"When you grow, your body starts making more hair under your arms and in other places. It's one of the first signs of puberty."



Noticing breast growth (self or others)




Why do my breasts hurt?" / "Why does she have breasts?"

Breasts start growing during puberty, and sometimes they feel sore because your body is changing.

Ages 3-5
"Some parts of our bodies change as we grow — for girls, breasts start to grow when they get older."

Ages 10-13
"Breast development is one of the first signs of puberty. Tenderness or soreness happens because the tissue is growing and changing."



AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Body odour after playing or sports



Why do I
smell bad?

When we run or play,
we sweat, and that
can smell. That's why
we wash and change
clothes.

Age 6-9

"As your body grows, sweat changes and can smell stronger. Washing and using deodorant can help."

Age 10-13

"During puberty, sweat glands become more active and can cause body odour. Daily washing and deodorant help manage it."



Shopping for bras, deodorant, razors



Why do I
need this
now?

Taking care of your
changing body means
using new products — like
deodorant, razors, or
bras — to stay clean and
comfortable.

Age 3-5

"As you grow, your body needs different things to take care of it."

Age 6-9

"Puberty brings changes like new hair growth or breast development, so we start using things like deodorant or bras."



Health class homework or puberty book from school



We learned about
puberty today.

Puberty is when your
body starts changing
into an adult body — it
happens at different
times for everyone.

Ages 3-5

"That's a word for how our bodies change as we grow."

Ages 10-13

"Puberty is a process where your body, hormones, and feelings change as you mature. It's normal, and everyone's timeline is different."





Your Reflection Box

1. How comfortable am I talking about my own body changes when I was growing up?
2. Do I use correct names for body parts when talking to my child—or do I avoid them?
3. How can I prepare myself to answer questions about periods, erections, or wet dreams honestly but simply?

Topic: Identity

Ages 3–5

At this 3-5 years, children do not typically experience identity issues outside of gender, names, and their little roles.

Between 6-9, there may be a deeper interest in social roles and they may start wondering why other genders act/ behave the way they do.

From age 10, they are more aware and may start to question their identity on a deeper level: they may ask questions such as “who am I? “Do I fit in? “Why am I different from my peers?.”

This could be influenced by factors such as peer pressure or physical and emotional changes that lead to deeper self-reflection. It is important for parents and caregivers to understand the child’s self-concept by asking the questions below:

- What are some words that you can use to describe yourself?
- What do you think makes you unique?
- What are things that are you passionate about?
- What are you most proud about yourself?
- What are some things you are not very good at but want to learn?

How to support them:

- Create safe spaces for open conversations.
- Validate their feelings—even if they are unsure or changing.
- Encourage curiosity and self-expression without judgment.
- Offer age-appropriate resources (books, videos, mentors) that reflect diverse identities.

Tips for navigating conversations:

- Be proud of what makes you special.
- Let them know that it is okay to explore and that they don’t have to have everything figured out.
- Identity grows and changes as you do.
- Emphasize that part of who you are may entail trying new things, asking big questions, or feeling unsure sometimes.
- Emphasis should be placed on respecting and embracing diversity because everyone’s identity is unique. That’s what makes the world interesting.
- Emphasis on kindness to people who are different from you.
- Remind them that we are all figuring our identities and that they are not alone.



Your Reflection Box

1. How do I respond when my child expresses curiosity about who they are or how others identify?
2. Am I encouraging self-expression, or do I sometimes shut it down without noticing?
3. What can I say to reassure my child that it’s okay not to have everything figured out yet?

Topic: Relationships

Ages 3–5

At this 3-5 years, children do not typically experience identity issues outside of gender, names, and their little roles.

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- What are things that are you passionate about?
- What are you most proud about yourself?
- What are some things you are not very good at but want to learn?

How to support them:

- Create safe spaces for open conversations.
- Validate their feelings—even if they are unsure or changing.

Ages 6-9

At this age, you can start to explore relationships more deeply. At this stage, they have a stronger sense of who they are and the relationships around them including friendships and family. The recommendation is to focus on empathy, respect, boundaries, trust, and emotional awareness.

Building friendships:

- Friendships are built on and sustained by trust and respect e.g. A good friend listens, shares, and respects your feelings.
- You don’t have to be friends with everyone, but you should be kind to everyone.

Feelings are real and worth expressing:

- It’s okay to feel jealous, left out, or upset sometimes.

- Encourage curiosity and self-expression without judgment.
- Offer age-appropriate resources (books, videos, mentors) that reflect diverse identities.

Tips for navigating conversations:

- Be proud of what makes you special.
- Let them know that it is okay to explore and that they don’t have to have everything figured out.
- Identity grows and changes as you do.
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- Emphasis should be placed on respring and embracing diversity because everyone’s identity is unique. That’s what makes the world interesting.
- Emphasis on kindness to people who are different from you.
- Remind them that we are all figuring our identities and that they are not alone.



Parental Tip:

- Emphasize that learning how to be a good friend and have good friends takes time and practice.

- You can tell someone how you feel without being mean.
- Its okay and healthy to talking about it helps.

Consent and Boundaries are key to a healthy relationship:

- You can say ‘no’ if someone wants to play a game you don’t like or touch you in a way that feels wrong.
- Similarly, respect someone’s ‘no’

- You will play different roles in different relationships:
- You might act and play different roles with your best friend, your teacher, or your cousin—and that's okay.
- Each of these relationship needs care, honesty, and respect.

You will have conflicts -and that's normal

- Sometimes friends will argue, debate, and disagree.
- What matters is how you fix it.
- Saying 'I'm sorry' and listening to each other to

understand why they feel or think differently is important

Love can be expressed in different ways:

- Love isn't just about gifts, hugs and kisses
- It's also about helping, listening, and cheering someone up
- How you love your family may be different from how you love your friends and that's okay



Parental Tip:

- Emphasize that secrets that make you feel bad or unsafe should **NEVER** be kept away from a trusted adult
- Tell them that if anyone makes you feel scared, confused, or uncomfortable—even if they're older—do not keep it to yourself, tell a trusted adult.

Ages 10-13

At this age, conversations about relationships should reflect their growing and evident level of emotional awareness, independence, and curiosity. They're beginning to explore deeper friendships within and beyond family, peer pressure, crushes, and identity—so the message should be respectful, honest, and empowering.

Relationships come in many forms

- You may have relationships with friends, family, classmates, teachers—and maybe even someone you have a crush on.
- Each relationship is different, but all healthy relationships are built on respect, trust, and kindness.
- If someone makes you feel left out, pressured, or unsafe, it's okay to step back or talk to a trusted adult.

It is totally normal to have crushes or romantic feelings

- It's normal to have deep feelings for someone
- It's okay to feel curious about dating, but you don't have to rush into anything.
- Respecting your own feelings and the other person's boundaries is key.



Parental Tip:

- As your child begins to understand puberty, it's a good time to start talking about your family's values and expectations around dating and sexual activity.
- You don't need to cover everything at once — these conversations should grow over time.
- Use real-life examples or everyday scenarios to help them think through different situations and what they might mean.
- This is just the beginning of an ongoing dialogue that will continue as they grow older.



Parental Tip:

- Talking about sexual attraction is important and it should be handled with care and sensitivity.
- No matter your personal beliefs, it's helpful for children to understand that feeling attracted to someone is a natural part of life.
- These conversations give you a chance to share accurate information and your values in a supportive, respectful way.

Your friends should make you feel safe

- Good friends make you feel safe physically and psychologically
- support you, listen to you, and respect your boundaries.

Feelings can be complicated

- You might feel excited, confused, jealous, or hurt—and that's okay.
- Talking about your feelings helps you understand them better and build stronger relationships.

Remember Consent and Boundaries

- You have the right to say 'no' to anything that makes you uncomfortable—touch, conversations, or even jokes.
- Other people have a right to say to you if you make them uncomfortable too. If they say 'no,' respect it.

Remember!

- No one should pressure you to do something you're not ready for—emotionally or physically.
- Healthy relationships make you feel valued, not judged or controlled.



Parental Tip:


- Share stories from your own childhood about a good friend and why that friendship mattered.
- Ask: "What do you think makes someone a good friend?" or "How do you feel when you're with your best friend?"
- Talk about how you choose your friends or why the friends you have now matter to you.
- Role-play simple scenarios where a disagreement happens and work through ways to fix it (listening, apologizing, making a plan together).
- Praise your child when they show kindness, patience, or fairness to others.

Q&A Guide On Relationships

Everyday Conversation Starters & Sample Responses

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13


Seeing friends holding hands or a couple together



Why are they holding hands?


Age 6-9
"They're showing they like each other. Friends or couples can also show care by talking, spending time together, or helping each other."

Age 10-13
"That's a way of showing closeness or affection. In healthy relationships, both people should want to show affection and feel respected."



They like each other. Holding hands is one way to show you care about someone.


Hearing the word "boyfriend" or "girlfriend"



What's a boyfriend?

Ages 3-5
"They're showing they like each other."

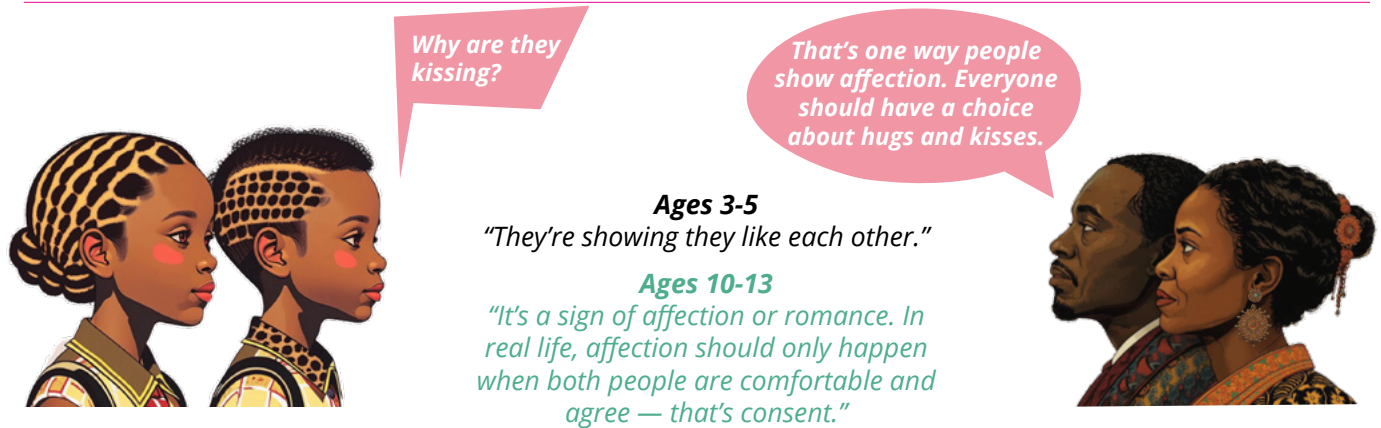
Ages 10-13
"It's a sign of affection or romance. In real life, affection should only happen when both people are comfortable and agree — that's consent."



It means they like each other in a romantic way. At your age, it's mostly about friendship and learning how to treat people kindly.

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Seeing people hug or kiss



Why are they kissing?

Ages 3-5
"They're showing they like each other."

Ages 10-13
"It's a sign of affection or romance. In real life, affection should only happen when both people are comfortable and agree — that's consent."

That's one way people show affection. Everyone should have a choice about hugs and kisses.

Overhearing gossip about who likes who



Why are they saying she likes him?

Age 3-5
"Sometimes people say who they think likes someone, but it's more important to be kind and respectful to everyone."

Age 6-9
"It's normal to like people, but gossip can hurt feelings. It's better to talk to people directly and be respectful."

It's natural to have crushes or feelings for people, but spreading rumors can damage trust and respect in friendships.

**Parental Tip:**

Everyday moments to talk about relationships aren't just about romance. They're a chance to model kindness, respect, and boundaries in all types of relationships: friends, family, and romantic.

**Your Reflection Box**

1. What values about friendship and relationships do I want to pass on?
2. Do I model kindness, respect, and healthy conflict resolution at home?
3. How do I handle it when my child talks about crushes or "liking" someone?

Topic: Sex and sexuality**Ages 3-5**

- Conversations should resolve around reproductive organs namely penis and vagina and explaining that boys have different parts than girls. The conversation should also be around consent and boundaries and seeking help from trusted adults
- It is also important to differentiate safe and unsafe touch.

For example:

- A safe touch is something that makes you feel cared for—like a hug from someone you trust.
- An unsafe touch is anything that makes you feel scared, confused, or uncomfortable.
- If you're curious about your body or someone else's, you can always ask me. I'll help you understand in a way that makes sense.

At this age, conversations about sex should be very simple, gentle, and focused on body awareness, safety, and respect—not on sexual activity. The goal is to lay a foundation for healthy understanding, not to explain sexual intercourse and reproduction in detail.

Ages 6-9



What Is Sex? (Simple Explanation)

- Sex is something grown-ups do when they care about each other. It's one way that a baby can be made.
- It involves a special kind of touch between private parts—but it's not something kids do. It's for adults.
- You can adjust this based on the child's curiosity and maturity.

Tip: If they ask how babies are made.

- * A baby starts when a sperm from a man joins with an egg from a woman. This usually happens during sex.

Private parts, Consent and Boundaries

- Your private parts include your vagina, penis, mouth, hands and other body parts and they belong only to you.
- No one should touch, look at, or talk about your private parts in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- If someone does, touches you without consent, tell a trusted adult right away
- Just like you have boundaries, other people do too.
- We don't touch anyone's body without asking, and we don't make jokes about private parts.

At this age, the conversations about sex should be factual, age-appropriate, and rooted in safety, respect, and curiosity. At this stage, many kids begin asking questions about where babies come from or noticing differences between bodies. The goal is to provide honest answers without overwhelming detail, while reinforcing body autonomy and trust.



Remember!

- Do not present sex as this big secret, assure children that it's just something you'll learn more about when you're older.

Ages 3-5



Everyday Openers: 12+

To start conversations without making your teen feel put on the spot, try asking about what they've seen or heard among their peers.

Instead of focusing directly on their actions, ask general questions like:

"Are any of your friends in relationships right now?"

"What have you heard about kids your age and sex or dating?"

"I heard something today about teens sharing inappropriate videos — have you heard anything like that?"

Expand the definition to: What is sex?

- Sex is a very close and private kind of touch, usually involving their private or intimate parts. It's something that happens between people who love, trust and respect each other.
- It's also how babies are made—when a sperm from a man joins with an egg from a woman.
- You can add: There are different kinds of sex, which means involving different parts of the body.

Sex is emotional too!

- Sex involves feelings such as love, trust, and responsibility.
- It's not something to rush into or do because others are doing it.
- It's okay to have questions or feelings about sex—that's part of growing up.

Consent and Boundaries are key

- Consent means both people are in agreement without pressure, fear, or confusion e.g they both clearly say 'yes'
- If someone says no, or changes their mind, remains silent, that means no—and that must be respected.
- You have the right to say no to anything or situation that makes you uncomfortable.
- No one should ever force or trick you into any kind of sexual activity. If that happens, tell a trusted adult immediately.

- In the same way, respect people's boundaries, privacy, and feelings, do not pressure anyone into doing something they're not ready for.

teachers or health educators than from peers or the internet.

- Always ask questions—there's no shame in wanting to understand your body and your choices.

Get your facts from trusted sources

- There are numerous sources that talk about sex but not all can be trusted
- Others do not really understand what you are going through so they don't answer your questions well
- It's better to learn about sex from trusted adults,

At this age, conversations should recognize their growing curiosity, emotional awareness, and exposure to various sources of information, including from peers or media. The goal is to provide accurate facts, reinforce values like consent and respect, and create a safe space for questions.

Q&A Guide On Sex, Intimacy, and Affection

Everyday Conversation Starters & Sample Responses

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Seeing kissing in a cartoon or movie



Why are they doing that?

Age 6-9

"Kissing can be a way to show care or romantic feelings. It's something people usually do when they're older."


Age 10-13

"Kissing can be part of a romantic or sexual relationship. It should always be respectful and wanted by both people."



That's how some people show they like or love each other. Emphasise adults.

News about teenage pregnancy




How can kids have babies?

Age 6-9

"A baby starts when a sperm from a man joins an egg from a woman. She became pregnant before she was ready. Being ready means your body and life can care for a baby. That's why it's important to wait until you're ready to care for a child."

Age 10-13


"Pregnancy happens when sperm fertilizes an egg, usually through sex. Teen pregnancies can be hard because raising a baby takes a lot of resources, support, and maturity. Pregnancy at a young age often means challenges — physically, emotionally, and financially. That's why learning about protection is important."




Babies grow in a uterus. You need to be grown-up to take care of a baby.

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Public display of affection (holding hands, hugging, kissing)



Why are they touching like that?



Holding hands, hugging, or kissing can show friendship or love. People decide what they're comfortable with.

Ages 3-5

"Some people hold hands or hug when they care about each other."


Ages 10-13

"Affection can be part of both friendships and romantic relationships. In healthy relationships, both people agree on what's okay."

Music lyrics about love or sex



What does that mean?



Songs can give mixed messages about sex and relationships. It's important to talk about what's healthy and respectful versus what's not.


Age 3-5

"This song is about people liking each other. That's a grown-up song. The words aren't for kids, but it's okay to like the tune."


Age 6-9

"Sometimes songs talk about love or romance. Some also talk about sex, which is something grown-ups do."

Baby shower or meeting a pregnant person



How did the baby get in there?



Babies grow inside the uterus. Babies grow inside a special place in the body called a uterus. Babies grow inside a special place in the body called a uterus. When they're ready, they come out so they can be cared for.

Age 6-9

"A baby starts when a sperm and an egg join together, then grows in the uterus until it's ready to be born."

Age 10-13

"Pregnancy happens when sperm fertilizes an egg. This usually happens through sex, and the baby grows in the uterus for about nine months."

AGES 3-5 | AGES 6-9 | AGES 10-13

Seeing a condom billboard or ad



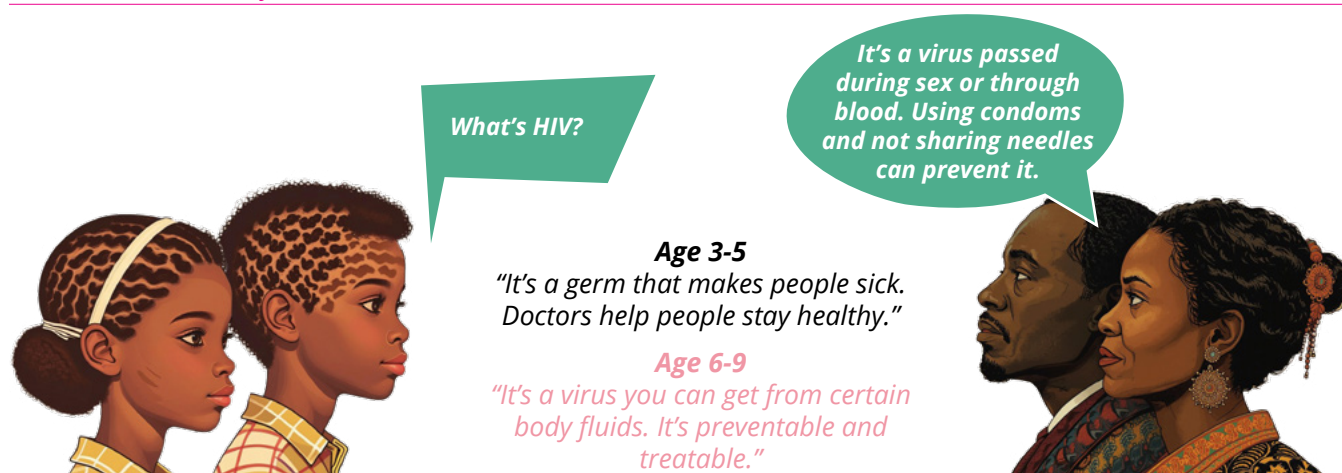
What's that for?

Ages 3-5
"It's something for grown-ups to help keep their bodies healthy."

Ages 10-13
"Condoms help prevent pregnancy and protect from sexually transmitted infections. People use them during sex if they don't want to get pregnant or spread infections."

It's something grown-ups use to stop a baby from starting.

News on STIs or AIDS Day



What's HIV?

Age 3-5
"It's a germ that makes people sick. Doctors help people stay healthy."

Age 6-9
"It's a virus you can get from certain body fluids. It's preventable and treatable."

It's a virus passed during sex or through blood. Using condoms and not sharing needles can prevent it.

Seeing half-clothed ads



Why is she dressed like that?

Ages 3-5
"Sometimes clothes are for fashion, sometimes for attention."

Ages 10-13
"That's sexualized advertising — it's designed to get attention, but it doesn't show healthy relationships."

The ad is using clothes to get attention. Not all images show real life.



Your Reflection Box

1. What messages do I want to give about sex—safety, respect, love, or responsibility?
2. How do I balance honesty with keeping the explanation age-appropriate?
3. What myths or taboos from my own upbringing do I need to unlearn so I can answer openly?

4 DIGITAL MEDIA IN FACILITATING PARENT-CHILD SRHR CONVERSATIONS

- The Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) shows 22.71 million internet users in Kenya in early 2024. The agency further reported a 4.9% increase in total data/internet subscriptions from July-September 2024, which grew to a record 53.7 million by the end of the quarter, with 4G constituting 58.1 percent (CAK, 2025). Additionally, internet usage is higher among younger age groups, particularly those under 34 years old. Specifically, more than half of internet users in Kenya are in this age bracket. While the CAK does not explicitly break down internet usage by specific age groups in the provided search results, their data indicates a strong correlation between younger demographics and higher internet adoption rates.
- The Digital Life of Today's Child: A 2022 report by the CAK and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) shows that younger children below 15 years often use family-shared devices to access the internet for education, entertainment, and connection. Children can access these internet-enabled gadgets from their phones, their parents', peers', cyber cafes, other family members', etc. While smartphones and other gadgets come with mentioned benefits, they also come with cons such as sex predators luring children online and cases of mis/disinformation. Experts say that children owning electronic gadgets is not the problem; the main problem lies in monitoring children's activity due to busy schedules. Additionally, children may look for other means of owning gadgets or accessing the Internet if their parents decline to do so.

Digital Safety Checklist: What to tell your children



How parents/guardians/caregivers can leverage digital media to enhance SRHR conversations at home

SAFE INTERNET PRACTICES



Use strong passwords and keep them private



Ask a parent or caregiver before clicking links



Speak up if something feels wrong—don't stay silent



Don't accept friend requests from strangers



Be careful with photos and videos—think before sharing



Be careful with photos and videos—think before sharing



Keep privacy settings turned on across apps and games




Log out when using shared devices or computers

Note: Be an active digital parent and invest in digital literacy. For example, parents should stay updated on new platforms, features, safety & security measures, new technologies, and their role e.g. Artificial Intelligence, language evolution, emojis, symbols, or any other coded language their children use, with examples, trends, and challenges

Examples of Digital Tools

- **Educational platforms:**
[Love Matters Kenya Sex-Ed Resources](#),
[Amaze-English](#), [Amaze-Swahili](#),
[KidsHealth.org](#)
- **Resources:**
[UNFPA's "Parenting for Lifelong Health, Understanding Adolescent -Kenya Ministry of Health](#)
- **Scarleteen** [Link here](#)
- **Chatbots:**
[Rafikey AI](#), [Wazzii](#)
- **Conversation cards:**
[Youth Changers Kenya card games](#).
- **Television Programs:**
[MTV shuga \(2009\) but recently added to netflix](#), [Bella is dying by docubox](#)



Your Reflection Box

Theme: Digital parenting

1. How do I currently guide or monitor my child's internet use?
2. Do I know enough about the apps and platforms they use?
3. What do I want my child to know about privacy, safety, and respect online?



5 NAVIGATING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND VALUES

- **What if I don't know the answers?** - It's completely okay if you don't have all the answers right away, just be honest about it, ask for more time or and look up the answers together, and keep the door open for further and future questions.
- **What if my child brings up taboo topics?** - Don't assume children are too young to understand. Respond in an open, honest, non-judgmental, and age-appropriate way. It is okay to align your discourse with your family's values while respecting your child's growing independence.
- **What if my child never asks/talks?** - Encourage open dialogue and curiosity, avoid fear-based or shame-based approaches
- **What if my child sees inappropriate or non-age-appropriate content online?** - Remain calm, and engage with them about what they saw in an age-appropriate language. To prevent future exposure, adjust safety and parental controls, and teach them critical thinking skills to empower them to navigate future events
- **How do I start when I never started and my child is, say, 13?** - A conversation heard is better than one never heard. Start by understanding their knowledge, sources of information, concerns, attitudes, values, etc. With this, you will get insights that can help you customize communications solutions
- **How do I keep up with changing dynamics related to sexual issues?** - Follow authority sources, ask the experts, learn from your child, connect with other parents/caregivers
- **What If School Isn't Talking About It?** - Then the responsibility lies with you as a parent or caregiver, and connect with your parents/caregivers to form a support group to share tips, resources, and strategies
- **How do I Reinforce What They Learn at School?** - You can support and expand on those lessons at home in meaningful ways by staying updated on what they are learning, reviewing, and expanding together by connecting to real-life scenarios, and encouraging questions.



Your Reflection Box

Theme: Handling uncertainty with honesty

1. How do I usually feel when I don't know an answer—anxious, embarrassed, or open?
2. What would help me feel more confident saying "I don't know, but let's find out together"?

6 NAVIGATING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND VALUES

- Understanding the context of cultural and religious values and the role they play in shaping values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices around various SRHR.
- Navigating Cultural Barriers and Bias: An acknowledgment of a variety of caregivers and add a note or section for tailoring messaging depending on the caregiver's role or relationship to the child. e.g., attitudes toward father-to-daughter conversations, single-parent dilemmas in conversations,
- In some instances, there may be a need for third-party trusted adults, with emphasis that Sex-Ed not gendered, but where possible some cases may be more effective if someone with lived experiences takes the lead.
- Consider value-based communication that validates various beliefs, values, and attitudes-engage religious views with respect, including how to align SRHR messaging with values-based dialogue.
- Tactfully balance tradition, faith, and modern realities in conversations
- Encouraging respectful disagreement yet acknowledging navigating SRHR in inter-generational conversations
- In some cases, it helps to bounce the question back to children to gauge their understanding, beliefs, attitudes and respond based on these
- Acknowledge the variety of caregivers and add a note or section for tailoring messages depending on the caregiver or relationship with the child.



Your Reflection Box

Theme: Balancing tradition & openness

1. Which of my cultural or faith values guide how I talk about SRHR?
2. Are there beliefs I hold that might make it harder for me to be open with my child?
3. How can I pass on my values without shutting down their questions?

7 CONCLUSION

- This guide is a practical tool for parents and caregivers of children aged 3 to 13, supporting meaningful, ongoing and age-appropriate conversations around various SRHR topics
- While age matters, a child's social environment and exposure also shape how to tailor SRHR conversations to their level of understanding.
- The guide is designed as a companion, not an exhaustive tool or a complete checklist
- For more guidance, including for ages 14 and up—refer to additional trusted resources.
- The guide recognizes that learning is not linear, key topics often need to be revisited multiple times as children grow and their understanding evolves.
- The content is thoughtfully anchored in everyday moments, structured around thematic topics, and tailored to reflect the developmental needs of each age group, making SRHR education both accessible and relevant.
- The guide encourages parents to seek help where needed and emphasizes that it's okay to ask for help.

