



The Talk
MADE SIMPLE

By Nicole Richardson

3 Surprisingly Simple Ways to Start Talking to Your Kids About Sexuality

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It's really easy to get overwhelmed and just avoid the conversation but you don't have to be afraid to talk to your kids about anything! They want to know what you think. So here are some three simple ways to talk to your kids about their bodies.

First, don't use euphemisms. When we don't use the proper terms for genitals we send the message that this is a topic that is off limits and shouldn't be discussed. The last thing we want is to communicate to kids that there are topics that they just cannot come to us about. Use the proper name for all body parts and make it a normal practice in your family. When body parts are all treated the same, we don't accidentally communicate shame, fear and misinformation.

Also, there is a safety in being able to name all of their body parts with clarity and confidence. If they need help or if something has happened, the last thing we want is for that assistance to be delayed because another adult or caregiver didn't understand what your child was attempting to communicate. Clarity is safety.

Second, ask questions. One of the best ways to communicate that you care for and value anyone is to understand their world. When your kids are younger, they are curious and ask question after question. Taking the time to thoughtfully answer their questions and then ask them questions in return, helps them learn, make sense of the world around them and lays the groundwork for you to have conversations that grow in meaning and importance as they get older.

As your kids transition into preteens and teens, they will not ask as many questions and it will be up to you to start conversations. You know your kids best so you know when they are most receptive to your curiosity and questions. Do your best to ask neutral questions by avoiding questions that start with "why." Questions that start with, "why" often make people feel as though they have to defend themselves or a choice they made.

Share your why. At each stage of development, we can communicate why a rule or a boundary is important. For example, explaining why you don't hit your sister, instead of just telling the child not to hit. Explaining why is just as important as the rule or boundary and it communicates the values you wish to impart to them. Teaching kids values allows them to build a template or roadmap for life that allows them to interpret rules and situations that you will not always be there to guide them through.

The ultimate goal of each parent is to prepare their kid for the world, giving them a roadmap to begin life with is invaluable.

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