

Tips for talking to teenagers

Parents, tips for talking to older teenagers about relationships and sexual education

Use opportunities such as events on television or celebrity pregnancies to open up a discussion.

Do things together like going for a walk or a drive, where you can talk privately without being interrupted or overheard.

Encourage your child to think about their own values. This helps them to develop their own limits and boundaries

Don't assume they know it all and start early – ideally with pre-teenage children.

Try to find out what they know and what they want to know. Ask them about what they are learning in school or if their friends have girlfriends or boyfriends.

Talk to them about what they want to do in their lives. Ambitious plans and ideas for the future about education or work can deter young people from engaging in risky behaviour.

But my teenager won't talk to me. How do I even begin?

Doing things together can be a great way to connect with your teenager. It doesn't have to be anything fancy. Walking together or driving somewhere can be a good opportunity to talk. You are alone and won't be interrupted. TV shows and celebrity news can be a great starting point. Teenagers may feel more comfortable talking in a general way about relationships at first. You could start by asking them general questions about their

Parents' Questions Answered

Is it common for teenagers to look at pornography on the internet?

In an Irish survey of 863 children aged between 9 and 16 years, about 33% of children reported visiting pornographic websites accidentally and 20% have visited these websites on purpose. Of those children who saw a pornographic website, 33% ignored it, 45% told their friends about it and less than one in ten told their mother or father about it. If you are concerned about your child looking at pornographic material, you can install a net nanny, ensure the computer is in a family room and supervise them while they are on the internet. It is really important to talk to them about the risks, so if they do come across inappropriate content they know they can tell you and talk to you.

Can other people look at my child's social networking site?

Although teenagers can choose to have a private setting on their page, this does not mean that it is private in any real sense of the word. It might be useful for you to sit down with them and put their name in to a search engine to see if their page comes up. They might be surprised that it is so easy for people to find their page. Ask them to think about other members of the family, neighbours or teachers reading their page. Anyone who knows their name can see photographs and find out information that they might prefer to keep private.



Parentline offers support, guidance and information on all aspects of being a parent. Visit www.parentline.ie or call 1890 927 927.

Test Yourself Quiz

Free DVDs, booklets, advice @ training for parents

1. What is the age of consent for sexual intercourse?

- a. 16
- b. 19
- c. 17
- d. 18

2. The majority of young people have sex for the first time:

- a. In their mid-twenties
- b. Around 17, 18, 19 years
- c. At 15 or 16 years
- d. When they get married

3. 90% of 18–24 year olds use contraception consistently. True or False?

- a. False
- b. True

4. If a young person has sex before 17 they are:

- a. More likely to use contraception
- b. Less likely to use contraception

5. If a young person has sex before 17 they are:

- a. More likely to have a crisis pregnancy
- b. More likely to get an STI
- c. Less likely to use contraception
- d. All of the above

6. A woman can become pregnant during her period if:

- a. She has a short menstrual cycle
- b. Has irregular periods
- c. Has been stressed, ill or has travelled
- d. All of the above

7. You can get pregnant or get a sexually transmitted infection the first time you have sex. True or False?

- a. False
- b. True

8. You can get a sexually transmitted infection from oral sex or anal sex. True or False?

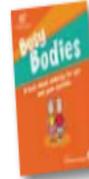
- a. True
- b. False

9. How long after having sexual intercourse is the Emergency Contraception (morning after pill) effective?

- a. 48 hours
- b. 72 hours
- c. 5 days
- d. It is only effective the morning after sex.



www.b4udecide.ie has been developed for older teenagers, their parents, teachers and youth workers to assist in educating young people about relationships and sexuality. A resource pack is also available to teachers and youth workers from the Crisis Pregnancy Agency 01 814 6292.



Busybodies – for parents of 10-14 year olds. Used in 5th, 6th class in school or in 1st year. Contains basic information on puberty and human reproduction. Freetext BUSY followed by your name and address to 50444 to get a free copy.



You Can Talk To Me – DVD and booklet – contains tips and advice for parents on talking to their children about relationships and sexual health. To order a copy freetext PARENT, followed by your name and address to 50444.



The Facts DVD – for parents, teachers and youth workers. It contains information on fertility, contraception, a condom demonstration, STIs and crisis pregnancy. Freetext FACTS, followed by your name and address to 50444 for a free copy.



National Parents Council – Primary

The National Parents Council runs workshops for parents on talking to your child about relationships and sex. Call 01 887 4475 or 01 887 4481 for more information.



To order a free pack containing all of the resources above or to bulk order any resource, call the Crisis Pregnancy Agency 01 814 6292

Remember:

Just because your child has not mentioned a girlfriend or boyfriend, does not mean that they have not engaged in, or considered engaging in, some level of sexual contact.

Answers

Q1. C The age of consent is 17. This means that it is against the law for anyone under 17 to have sex.

Q2. B The majority of young people have sex at 17, 18, 19 years of age. Only a minority of young people have sex under the age of 17.

Q3. B The vast majority of young people are very responsible and use contraception every time they have sex.

Q4. B If a young person has sex before age 17, they are less likely to use contraception.

Q5. D People who have sex at a young age are more likely to have a crisis pregnancy or an STI. They are less likely to use contraception than people who had first sex at an older age.

Q6. D A women can become pregnant during their period, if she has a short cycle, irregular periods, or if she has been ill, stressed or has travelled long distances. Having sex during a period is not safer sex.

Q7. B You can get pregnant the first time you have sex.

Q8. A You can get an STI from oral or anal sex, as well as vaginal sex.

Q9. B Emergency contraception can be effective up to 72 hours after unprotected sex, but it is most effective if it is taken within the first 24 hours.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We will be delivering the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme to your son/daughter over the next few weeks. I enclose an overview of what is covered at Junior and Senior Cycle. The RSE Policy is available on the school website if you wish to see it. RSE is a required part of the curriculum and the way it is taught in this school is informed by our ethos and Mission statement.

We are very aware of your role as the child's first educator. We would appreciate your support by talking to your son/daughter about the RSE programme and helping them with any concerns they may have.

Should you have any queries or concerns please contact the school and we will support you in any way possible.

Please find enclosed some details on the content we will be delivering and some additional information that you may find useful.