

Conversation Starters and Scenarios for Parents

Sexual Behavior: Choices and Risks

Ages 12-14

You know you should be talking with your child about sensitive subjects like sexuality, but you don't know where to begin. The experts at the Robert Crown Center for Health Education are here to help by sharing a few conversation starters, or phrases, to introduce the topic. The scenarios are situations that you and your child can read together to help frame a meaningful discussion. Remember to decide ahead of time what points you want to cover and what you want your child to take away from the conversation. The primary message should be that they can always come to you with questions and concerns about these topics. Be prepared to listen and learn from your child as well.

Conversation Starters

- “Do you ever wonder if one of your friends might make a risky choice with a boyfriend/girlfriend some day?”
- “Kids sure grow up fast these days. What kinds of things could get in the way of being a ‘normal teenager’?”
- “Is it ever hard to trust your own judgment when someone is trying to convince you to do something you're not sure about?”
- “The stakes are high when it comes to sex. Where do you go to get your questions answered about really personal topics?”

Scenarios

- Your child tells you his/her friend thinks he/she has an STI. How do you handle this situation? What are important points that you want to bring up with your child about this issue...medical, social, personal responsibility? What are the short and long term effects of different STIs? How do you address your own family's values? What if it is your child that has the STI? How does that change the conversation?
- You see a text from your child to his/her “crush” insinuating he/she is interested in taking the relationship to a more intimate level. How do you feel about this? How do you discuss this with your child? Is this the right time to discuss teen pregnancy, STIs, respecting ourselves and others? What if your child decides to get intimate and then changes his/her mind...how can they safely say no?
- Your daughter has been dating her boyfriend for about 6 months. She tells you she is thinking of having sex with him because she is afraid he will break up with her if she doesn't. She knows a girl who this happened to and doesn't want to be embarrassed/sad like her friend was a few months ago. What do you tell her? What values about respect, responsibility, respectful communication, and safety do you bring up?
- Your son is at a party where there has been underage drinking. He has been talking to a girl that he has a crush on but knows she has been drinking. She seems to be really interested.
 - a. How do you, as a parent, feel about underage drinking at this party?
 - b. Should he get physical with her in this situation? Why/why not? How does the fact that she has been drinking alcohol influence this situation?
 - c. How well does your son know this girl? What kind of relationship would he like to have moving forward with her? Is being physical right away a good idea?