

## **Conversation Starters for Parents to Talk with Youth about Sex and Sexuality**

Many parents wait for their kids to ask questions instead of bringing up topics of sex and sexuality with them. The reality is that many children aged 10–14 will not ask their parents questions about sexual topics, and many parents may avoid the conversations because they are uncomfortable with the subject. Often, open-ended questions can be used to start conversations. They can help a parent open discussions about sexuality with a child in a comfortable way.

### **For kids who don't bring up the subject, you can ask ...**

"I can't believe how tall you've grown already. Have you noticed other changes in your body? What do you like — or what don't you like — about the changes you're going through?"

"When do you think a person is ready to be a parent?"

### **To answer tough questions you don't feel ready for, you can say ...**

"That's a really good question. It's normal to be curious about that. I'd really like to talk about it with you, but I need some time to think about it first."

"I think we can look it up together. Let's Google it."

"What have you already heard or learned about that? Where did you learn it?"

### **Be factual — and clear up slang — when answering questions. Here are examples:**

Q. Some girls at school were talking about jilling off, what's that?

A. Jilling off, or masturbation, is when a girl or woman stimulates her clitoris or vagina for sexual pleasure. Touching yourself can't hurt you. Many girls and women and boys and men masturbate. A lot of people masturbate throughout their lives. Some people choose not to masturbate at all.

Q. Where do girls pee from?

A. Girls and women urinate through the urethra, a tube that is connected to the bladder. The opening to the urethra in girls and women is above the opening to the vagina. Boys and men also urinate through the urethra. The opening to the urethra in boys and men is at the tip of the penis.

Q. What's a blow job?

A. Blow job is another term for oral sex on a man — when the mouth or tongue is used to stimulate the penis. Touching the vulva with the mouth is also called oral sex. Some sexually transmitted infections, especially herpes and hepatitis, can be passed from one person to another during oral sex.

**Questions parents or adolescents ask that open the door to discuss values:**

- When is it okay for teens to have sex?
- What do you think about how the couple on your favorite television show deal with each other when they get angry?
- How do you know when you like a person enough to have sex?

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