



Back-to-School: A Caregiver's Guide to Sex Ed

At the Alabama Campaign, we believe parents and caregivers are the starting players in conversations about relationships and sexuality. But so often we hear that they don't know what to say or where to begin. Here are some tips and possible conversation starters about key topics.

Tips to Keep Conversation Comfortable:

- Ask questions and encourage open discussion. Make sure you listen to your children, allowing them time to speak. Avoid analyzing, interrupting, lecturing, or accusing.
- Keep it low-key. Don't push it if your children aren't ready to talk. Try again another time.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it. This builds trust.
- Share your values and express what you want for your child in their relationships. It's also important that you ask them to express what they want from their relationships.

Healthy Relationships

- "What do you think a healthy relationship looks like?"
- "Do you feel like your friends have healthy relationships?"
- "What do you think an unhealthy relationship looks like?"
- "In a healthy relationship, you should never feel pressured, unsafe or harmed in any way."
- "Are there any couples you really admire in our family, among your friends, or in our community? Or even couples you admire on television shows you watch?"

Consent

- "What does consent mean to you?"
- "What are situations where you'd ask someone for their consent?"
- "What do you think enthusiastic consent means? What does it look like in your friendships/family relationships/romantic relationships?"
- "How would you react if someone sets a boundary or says no?"
- "If someone agrees to do something after we've asked multiple times, did we obtain their enthusiastic consent?"

Medically Accurate Information

- “It seems like you are beginning/have begun puberty. This is a period of rapid growth and development, and it may be challenging. I'm always here if you have questions.”
- “Do you have questions about what you're feeling/hearing/seeing/reading?”
- “I know a lot is changing for you in your sexual development, and that's totally normal. Would you feel comfortable communicating with your doctor if anything seems off about your sexual or reproductive parts?”
- “Do you know how to identify sexual abuse? You can always talk to me if something is happening to you.”
- “I know this seems silly, but do you know the medically accurate language for your private parts? I want you to be able to confidently identify them so you can talk to your doctor if you have any questions.”

Gender & Sexual Orientation

- "Gender identity is how we feel about being a boy/girl/man/woman or even somewhere outside those genders."
- "Our sexual orientation is who we're attracted to. For example..."
- "Both gender identity and sexual orientation can be fluid, meaning how we define ourselves today doesn't have to be permanent."
- “How you identify and whether you choose to share that with others is a choice that runs only on your own timeline. I hope you know this is a safe space.”

STI & Pregnancy Prevention

- "It's important to stay safe and healthy if you're sexually active. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy can be prevented with the correct use of condoms."
- "There are several types of birth control. Your doctor can help you choose what works best for you. Let's make an appointment"
- "Do you know where to access birth control and condoms? Do you know how to use them?"
- "I think we should talk to your doctor about the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination. It prevents several types of cancer."

The Alabama Campaign is here to help with additional information and resources. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at [@AlabamaCampaign](#), or visit our resource page for additional parent/caregiver resources at www.alabamacampaign.org.