

Keep talking.

- Find out what your child is learning in school so that you can continue the discussion at home.
- Make sure your child knows about the changes of puberty before they happen.
- Reassure your child that everyone develops at their own pace.
- Keep answering your child's questions.
- If your child stops asking questions, let him/her know you are always ready to talk anyway.
- Talk to other parents.

Need more help?

If you have a partner, discuss with him or her how you want to talk about sex with your child. Practise answering questions with your partner or with a friend. Remember, the way you answer is as important as the words you use.

Get more information.

- Call the Toronto Health Connection for workshops and pamphlets at 416-338-7600.
- Ask your child's school to arrange a parent information night.
- Call the Parent Helpline at 1-800-603-9100.

Here are some good books for pre-teens:

Asking about Sex and Growing-Up: A Question and Answer Book for Boys and Girls. *Joanna Cole.* Morrow Junior Books, 1988. Typical questions children ask with clear simple answers.

Changes in You and Me: A Book about Puberty Mostly for Boys.

Changes in You and Me: A Book about Puberty Mostly for Girls. *Paulette Bourgeois and Kim Martyn.* Key Porter Books, 2004. A book about puberty that 'tells it all' candidly and with humour.

It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health. *Robie Harris.* Candlewick Press, 1994. Candid drawings and great information on puberty and sex for the preteen.

It's so Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies and Families. *Robie Harris.* Candlewick Press, 2004. Lots of great information for the slightly younger child.

Let's Talk about S-E-X: A Read Together book for Kids 9-12 and Their Parents. *Sam Gitchel and Lorri Foster.* 2005. Planned Parenthood. Includes a Parent's Guide.

This pamphlet is dedicated to parents—the most important sex educators of their children.

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 **TORONTO** Public Health

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Your child is definitely getting a sex education!



*...from friends
...from the media
...from society
for parents of children age 8-13.*

What's wrong with that?

Well, sometimes it's

- confusing
- the wrong information
- harmful

The pre-teen years can be very confusing. Your child may have many questions:

- Why do you get hair?
- Do periods hurt?
- What's an STI (sexually transmitted infection)?
- Is it normal for a girl to have a crush on another girl?



You can help your pre-teen.

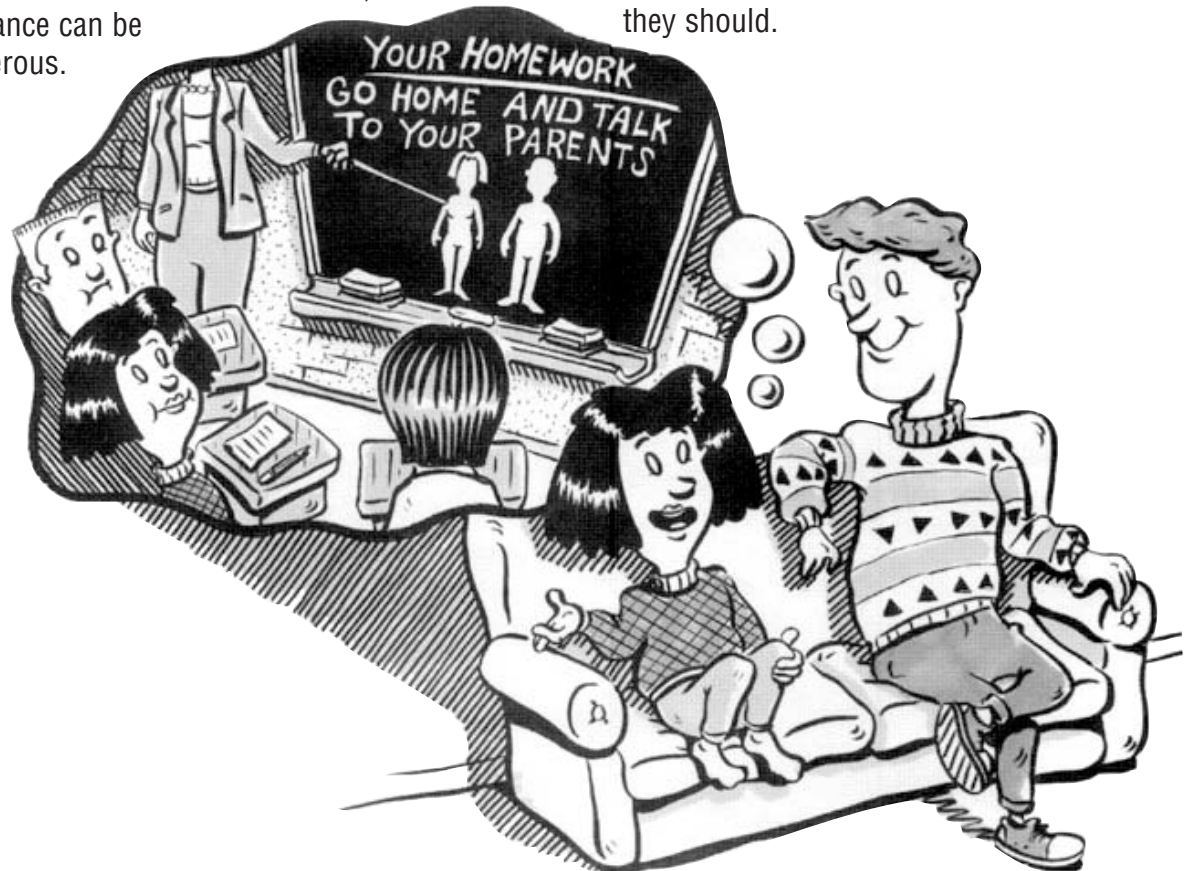
How? By talking together a lot.

You have a very important role to play. Help your child sort out what they hear from friends and what they hear at school. Your child wants and needs your guidance.

Maybe you haven't talked much yet with your child about sex, but it's never too late to start. Today, more than ever, parents and children need to talk together.

This is not always easy.

Some parents think that if you talk about sex, children will do it. Not true! In fact, ignorance can be dangerous.



When parents and children talk and listen to each other:

- kids aren't as scared about puberty
- they learn about the risks of early sexual intercourse
- they learn how to make healthy choices

It is also important to talk about how you feel. This is as important as teaching the facts. Children need to hear their parents' values, too.

Values: Saying 'don't have sex' doesn't always work. Teenagers don't ask their parents if they can have sex, but your children may choose to wait to have sex if they know your reasons why they should.