TALKING ABOUT BODIES, BOUNDARIES, AND SAFETY

This 5-Point Plan can help you respond to questions children may have about sexuality. It can help you find the words that feel right to you. There may be more than one way to answer a child's question depending on their age, their development as well as your own knowledge, comfort, and family values.

Whether it is with your own child, another child in your family, or a child that you care for in a childcare setting, the following 5-Point Plan can help guide your responses to questions that may come up.

POINT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
1. Respect and promote **self-esteem**.	**Be encouraging**. Help them feel good about their questions, their changing bodies, emotions, etc. Positive reinforcement encourages the child to ask you other questions in the future.	"Wow! That's a great question." "Thanks for asking me." "Sounds like you're curious!" "I'm so glad you asked me."
2. **Ask questions** to clarify.	**Ask questions.** Provides you with insight on the child's current knowledge and clarifies their question.	"What have you heard about this already?" "What do you think?" "Tell me what you know."
3. Acknowledge **the facts.**	**Answer honestly.** Provide accurate information and clarify any misconceptions in an age-appropriate way.	*Example 1 (safety/consent)* "Sexual activity is something that two adults can do together if they both want to. It's not something children do." *Example 2 (family diversity)* "Not all families are the same. Some have a mom and dad, others have two moms or two dads. Some have one parent, or another adult takes care of them." *Example 3 (reproduction)* "In order to make a baby, you need a uterus, sperm and an egg." *Example 4 (gender diversity)* "Not all boys choose to wear pants, some like wearing skirts. Children can wear all kinds of clothing including different cultural clothing, skirts, pants, dresses, etc."

4. **Communicate values.**	**Explain the values of your family.**	*Example 1 (safety/consent)* "When you're an adult, you can decide when and if you are sexual with someone." *Example 2 (family diversity)* "Families are made up in many different ways and we respect and accept all families." *Example 3 (reproduction)* "Being a parent/caregiver can be a lot of work so it's important to know that you can care for a baby." "People can become parents in different ways. Your parents are the ones who raise you and love you." *Example 4 (gender diversity)* "In our family/ in our childcare centre, we can wear whatever we feel most comfortable in."
5. **Emphasize responsibilities.**	**Help them understand their role, responsibilities and what is expected of them.**	*Example 1 (safety/consent)* "If an adult wanted to touch or kiss you or have you touch them, you would need to tell me right away." *Example 2 (family diversity)* "It's important to be accepting of all types of families." *Example 3 (reproduction)* "When you are older, you may choose if you want to become a parent." *Example 4 (gender diversity)* "It's important not to make fun of someone for what they wear."

Notes:

More supports & resources are available on our website