

- **How To React to Unwanted Sexual Touching and Sexual Harassment** Remind them their body is their own and no one has a right to touch or say anything about their private parts. They have the right to say “no”. Teach them how to say ‘no’ confidently.
- **Internet Safety**—talk about sexual predators, how easy it is for people to portray themselves as somebody different online, the dangers of chat rooms. Warn them not to meet someone from the internet in person, unless you are going with them.
- **Sexual Responsibility**—They need to know that sex can transmit diseases, how to reduce the risk (safer sex) and that they are responsible for their own sexual health.
- **Values and Beliefs**—discuss your personal beliefs about sex, sexuality, marriage, etc. Be prepared for them to agree or disagree and maybe have their own values & beliefs.
- **Use age-appropriate materials**— Enhance your discussions with books, films, or pamphlets, and look at them together.



Where to get Help

- **Sexual Health Centres**
- **Public Health offices**
- **Bookshops**
- **Libraries**
- **Family, Parent, or Women’s Resource/Support Centres**

Why Talk about Sexual Issues With Your Child?

- **Children who have a clear understanding of sexual issues are more likely to behave responsibly with sex when they are older.**
- **Children who are confident and know about their sexual rights are less likely to become involved in an abusive relationship.**
- **If you are unapproachable about sex, your child will turn to other sources, like friends, and may get incorrect and unhealthy information.**

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SEX
EDUCATION
AND YOUR
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL
LEVEL CHILD



SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE
Lunenburg County

Promoting Sexual Health Throughout the Lifespan

Ideally, talking to your child about sex and sexuality is an ongoing process that begins when they are very young. Don't think of sex education as "the talk" when a child reaches puberty. By the age of four, most children are curious about certain sexual issues and they need clear, honest and brief answers.

Telling a child about sex will NOT make them sexually precocious. **Research indicates that children who have a clear understanding of sexual issues are more likely to behave responsibly.** (e.g. waiting until they are older before having sex; choosing contraception; using condoms) If you talk to your child about sexuality, it paves the way for open communication about sexual issues as they get older.



What they should already know:

- Proper names of body parts
- What "private" vs "public" means and that there are private parts of your body (usually the parts that are covered by a bathing suit)

If your child does not know this, make sure they know the basics before continuing.

Normal Sexual Development:

Don't be alarmed if your elementary school level child takes an interest in sexual issues - it is perfectly normal. Typical behaviours can include:

- **Playing house (family and marriage role playing)**
- **They may start to become uninterested in children of the opposite sex and may even complain about them being nearby.**
- **Becoming modest about being naked in front of parents.**

- **Curiosity about sexual intercourse, babies, and gender differences and may discuss it amongst themselves.**
- **'Sex' play (such as 'playing doctor'/undressing) may still occur at this age, as they are still curious about the opposite sex.**

Preparing yourself

You may feel embarrassed, uncomfortable or hesitant when talking to your child about sex:

- **Find Information, Help and Support.** If you can't think of what to say, or are unsure about what to tell your child, read up on the topic. You could refer to age-appropriate sex education materials such as books, movies, websites or pamphlets to help you.
- **Be involved.** Don't assume that the school is solely responsible for your child's sex education. Teachers teach the facts. Talk to children about your family's religious or personal beliefs and values.
- **Be relaxed.** Have fun. Laugh. Don't make it a sombre lecture.
- **Be Clear.** Don't use 'euphemisms' or slang. If you are talking about 'using protection' explain what that means.
- **Work with their "tude".** Older children may think they know it all and don't want to talk. Try to ask them questions to find out how much they know, and just fill in the gaps in their knowledge. Let them know that you are always there if they have a question.
- **Know your child and avoid comparing them to others.** Children mature at very different rates. They can be physically mature but not mature emotionally or socially. Use your judgement and their signs for deciding how much to tell them.

Puberty

Puberty can start as early as age 8 and continue until around age 16—18. Children need to be prepared in advance for all the changes about to come and what to expect in order to not feel scared, and in order to know they are normal.



- **Menstruation**—Tell girls about periods, and show them pads and tampons.
- **Erections**—Tell boys about spontaneous erections and wet dreams, and how to hide an unwanted erection when it happens in public.
- **Cancer Screening**—Girls should be told about breast and vulvar self exams and boys need to know about testicular self exams.
- **Other Pubertal Changes**—Tell boys and girls about all the changes that can occur in both genders, so they know what is happening with the opposite sex as well.
- **Respect**—Teach children to respect each other and not to tease other kids who are going through puberty.
- **Hormones**—They need to know about the hormones and the physical and emotional changes and ups and downs that come with that.

Sex Education (more appropriate for Grades 5 and 6 and beyond)

- **More details**—they will need to know more details about sexual intercourse, conception, and basic concepts of things like STIs, contraception, and healthy relationships.
- **Use "Teachable Moments"** Sometimes things come up in conversation or on TV or music videos. Discuss these topics and how realistic they are. Discuss gender roles—are they appropriate and realistic?