

OFTEN PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS KNOW WHAT THEY WANT TO TALK ABOUT, BUT THEY CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO BRING IT UP AND ACTUALLY START THE CONVERSATION. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR HOW TO "JUMP IN"!

USE "TEACHABLE MOMENTS"

We have all been in the car with our children rocking out to the latest "jam" when you suddenly hear words or lyrics that refer to something sexual, or that might be even offensive.

"I know you love this song but I have to comment on these lyrics because I feel they represent something I am against..." OR

"Hey, did he just say 'XXX?' I'm curious if you know what that means."



Another approach is to begin by reminding your child of some event, movie or television show that touches on the topic or issue you want to discuss.



"Sara, remember that show we saw on TV where that girl was wondering why it seemed like she was growing more slowly than all of her friends? I've been thinking about that and I'd like to talk with you about it."

ASK FOR AN OPINION OR ADVICE

"I have a friend who's upset because she heard her daughter saying that she wanted to hang out with an older boy. She asked me for advice and I wanted to find out what you think I should tell her."

TAKE A DIRECT APPROACH

"Miguel, there is something I want to talk with you about that has been on my mind a lot these days. Is this a good time?"

If your child says that it's not a good time, respect their boundaries, and ask for another time that would be better.

IT'S OK TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT MAY FEEL AWKWARD AT FIRST

"I know this may be uncomfortable to talk to me about this subject, but I love you and it's important to me that you have information to make good decisions for yourself."

KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

Provide books and websites that you have previewed for them. Some kids may not want to talk with you or may even refuse to talk after you try to initiate a conversation. Try leaving out books that you think are informative and age-appropriate, and make sure to initiate conversation from time to time for clarification.

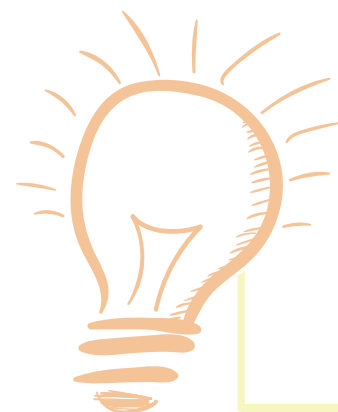
TRY A "REDO"

It's ok to revisit a conversation if you feel like you want to add more information or change what you offered at first.

"You know Jane, I was thinking about our conversation last night and I'd like to change what I said about..."

HAVE FUN!!

It's ok to laugh and be silly around these topics, as long as your child doesn't feel that you are making fun of them or their choices.



ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Once your child begins to feel safe discussing these topics with you, all sorts of topics might come up that can (and will!) challenge you. This tool is a guide for responding to these questions. Of course, every relationship is different, requiring flexibility and creativity in the moment. Let the fun begin!

Think of **BACHE** when responding to difficult questions:

BREATHE • AFFIRM • CLARIFY • HEAR • EXPLAIN AND EMPOWER

B Take a **deep Breath**, and do what you need to do to **Be present** so you can listen fully and answer or react calmly and thoughtfully.

A **Affirm** your child for asking the question, and remind your child of your unconditional love and support. Then take a moment (or more!) to think if you need it.

"That's a really good question."

"Hmmm... that's an interesting question. Let me think about that for a second."

"Huh- you know, I'm not really sure how to answer that question, but I'm glad you asked! I need to (talk to someone else, do some research) and get back to you. Can I tell you tomorrow?"

"I'm so glad you asked me that question. You know I will always love you no matter what, even if you tell me something you think I might not want to hear."

C **Clarify.** Try to discern what your child already knows and believes about the topic and to identify the motivation behind the question. Ask questions to understand what type of answer your child is looking for.



"So what do you think the answer is?"

"What do you know about (this topic) already?"

"What do you think (the person being referred to) should do? Why?"

"I'm just wondering what brought up this question for you?"

Then **pause** for at least 10 seconds before opening your mouth, even if it feels like forever!

H **Hear** what your child is saying. **Listen** fully before responding. You will learn a lot about your child's knowledge level and beliefs if you can let them speak first!

E **Explain** the facts, dispel myths or misinformation and answer the question. **Elaborate** and teach your values. If relevant, describe a range of beliefs, and state your own if you think it will help. You may want to ask what your child thinks first before stating your belief.

Encourage and **Empower** your child to come up with his or her own answers/resources.

"Do you want me to show you some websites/books that might be helpful for you about this topic?"

"Who else can we ask about this topic? Where else can you go to get information?"

"What have you already thought about for dealing with this situation?"

For more information on how to talk with your children about sex,
and for recommended books and websites to share with them,
check out our "Resources For Parents" at

www.bacheinfo.org



PUTTING NEW TOOLS IN ACTION

*List one or two questions that you dread being asked or that you are not sure how to answer.
Then go through them with your partner and take notes for each step as you formulate your answer.*

1.

2.

BREATHE

AFFIRM

CLARIFY

HEAR (how might your child respond?)

EXPLAIN/EMPOWER

ACTION STEPS

★ *What do you want your child to know about gender, puberty, sexuality, and healthy relationships?* ★

★ *List three take home messages or ideas that you want to remember from this workshop:* ★

★ *What are the topics you would like to talk about with your child in the next month?* ★

★ *What questions or concerns do you have for the school/teachers/principal? How and when will you follow up?* ★