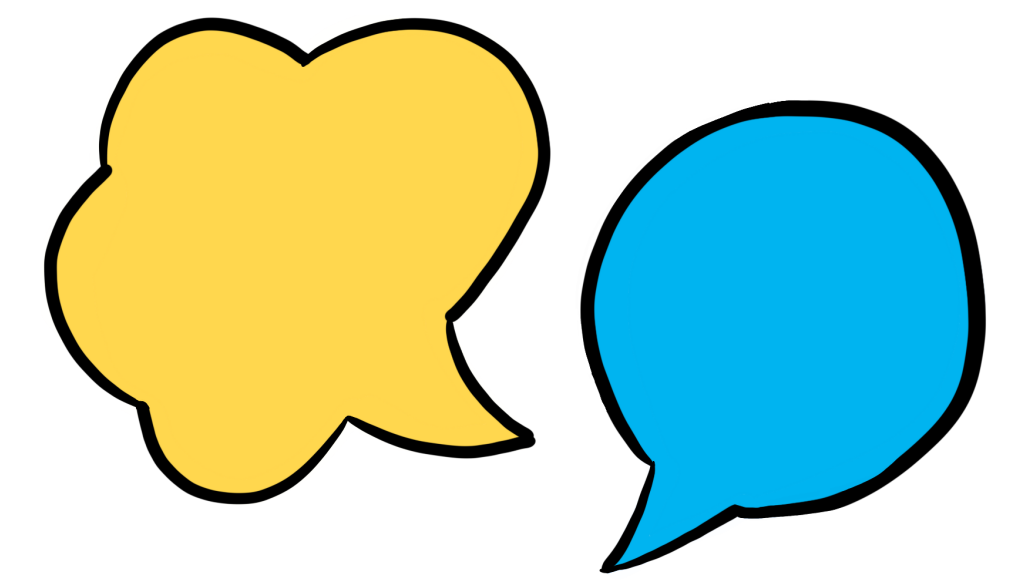


quick tips

on talking with kids about body science



SMART THINGS TO SAY

with Saleema Noon
Sexual Health Educators

- *You can't tell a child too much.*
Everything that's not interesting or relevant to them will go in one ear and out the other.
- *Use scientific names for body parts.*
Kids who have this vocabulary are less targeted for abuse.
- *Step away from painful two-hour long conversations.* Even a two-minute conversation is valuable because it normalizes the topic and send the message to your kids that you want to talk about it.
- *Utilize learning tools.* Books, apps and educational websites are fun and engaging, and they say everything for you!
- *Communicate sooner than later.* Tell your kids a bit more than you think you need to, a bit sooner than you think you need to.
- *Repeat.* Be prepared to review and repeat. Over and over again.
- *Give information before they ask.*
Some kids will never ask questions about their bodies, but still need to be educated and protected.
- *Use your right to say 'I don't know'.*
If you can't think of an answer right away when your child asks you a question, explain that you need some time to think about how best to answer and revisit later (i.e. at bedtime, after dinner, when your guests leave, etc.).
- *Take advantage of teachable moments.*
Bring up topics when they come up naturally while watching Netflix, listening to the radio in the car or scrolling through Facebook.
- *Appreciate the questions.* No matter how shocking or embarrassing your child's questions are, don't freak out. Be proud that they are curious about sexual health, and remember that questions mean your kids trust you as a reliable source of information. Nice work!
- *Practice, practice, practice!* If you can rehearse a few key words or phrases, answering kids' questions on the spot will be much easier.
- *Have fun with it.* Enjoy the hilarious use of words and misunderstandings. Laugh. And don't take yourself too seriously!