

AGES 11  
TO 16+

"Can I get Instagram now?"  
"Why are you always asking questions?"  
"How do I say no to them?"

Be discreet and respect your child's privacy. [Micro-talks](#) are a better approach than a sit-down for The Talk. If your child thinks they know it all,

## THE FACTS

The current average age for starting puberty in the UK is 11 for girls; the earliest sign is often the development of breast buds. Around two years after this, girls usually have their first period. For boys, the average age is 12, and the earliest sign is often an enlarging of the testicles. Puberty can take up to four years.

Young people prefer a 'sex positive' approach to sex education which focuses on 'life skills' rather than risks and abstinence, according to the BMJ, but report that this is lacking in their sex education.

Children want parents to get involved, and our job doesn't end with delivering the facts around sex and sexual health. 70% of young adults report wishing they had received more information from their parents about some emotional aspect of a romantic relationship, according to the 2017 Harvard report The Talk

## TALKING TO CHILDREN AGED 11 TO 16

### Top tips

1

**Ask your children for information** regarding a sex-ed topic. For example: "I don't understand why some kids still get bullied for being gay. Does that happen at your school too?" Remember, their school sex education may well have been better than your own! Even if you already have a good idea of the answer, **asking your children questions implies respect for their knowledge and judgement**

2

**Never guess the answer to a question:** inform yourself. Go off and do some research or talk to someone else about how to approach it, and then revisit. It's OK if you aren't an expert. **Admit it if you aren't sure how to discuss a topic** or find it challenging to talk because communicating frankly about these topics wasn't something you experienced while growing up

3

As a way into conversations about difficult topics, **ask them what their friends say.**

Discuss their friends' opinions and challenges about things like porn or sexting, and follow up by asking what their advice would be. Talking about others' experiences gives them the chance to talk about their feelings indirectly, and practice handling difficult situations in a safe way

4

**Be mindful of respecting your children's privacy.** They may not want to talk with you about their thoughts and experiences all the time. If children are shy or embarrassed at the moment, tell them it is OK to talk about it another time. At least by continuing to bring up topics over time, you are laying the groundwork for future communication, and letting them know that you are there to support them if they need advice

## Top phrases

"Help me make up my mind on this..."

"I think you're mature enough to talk about this now"

"Your reaction shows me you know something about this already"

"Is there more to it than that?"

## MORE HELP WITH AGES 11 to 16+

### 1. Parent Toolkit | SEX ED RESCUE

Sex Ed Rescue's Parent Toolkit is a treasure trove of links and articles. We like the 'Values' worksheet, 'Teachable Moments' and 'Sex Education Barriers Checklist' [Go to Sex Ed Rescue >](#)

### 2. 'The Talk' report | HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Insights from Harvard reserachers about how we can have meaningful and constructive conversations to promote healthy relationships and prevent misogyny. [Go to the Harvard report >](#)

### 3. Online magazine | FUMBLE

There's more where this came from:  
Visit [OutspokenEducation.com](http://OutspokenEducation.com)

Great for older teens. Fumble aims to plug the hefty gap left by inadequate relationships and sex education, giving young people amazing, relevant social content to read, view and share

[Go to Fumble >](#)

#### 4. Website | SCARLETEEN

No wonder this excellent resource for teens and emerging adults bills itself as "Sex ed for the real world". Approachable & inclusive, it's full of support and advice. Lots to empathise with - and of interest for adults to delve into too...

[Go to Scarleteen >](#)