

YOUR CONVERSATION GUIDE: 6-8 YEAR-OLDS

It can be hard to imagine, but kids start to talk to each other about sex sometime between the ages of six and eight. Maybe they've seen something on TV or overheard conversations on the school bus, but the fact is, they're curious!

The good news by talking to them first, you can control the conversation. This allows you to become their "go-to person" who is able to answer all their questions - whether or not you're ready for those questions!

Focus on talking early and often. It might seem intimidating, but you don't have to fit everything into one conversation. Ease in and let your child lead the way.

Here are a few ideas for talking with your grade-schooler:

- ❑ Tell them they can tell you anything & you will believe them. Creating this kind of bond now can pay off in the future when the topics turn toward things like bullying & underage drinking.
- ❑ Talk about secrets vs. surprises. Say something like: "Surprises make people happy. Secrets can make people upset or unhappy. If anyone asks you to keep a secret, you should tell me."
- ❑ Make boundaries clear. For example: "Your whole body is a private part whenever you want it to be. You get to decide who touches you."
- ❑ By the age of eight, start to talk to your kids about sex. "It takes an egg & sperm to form a human. It's incredible." Follow-up by talking to them about how male & female body parts each play a role in the process.
- ❑ Ask them which adults they trust the most. Are they family? Teachers? A coach?
- ❑ Demonstrate comfortable touching behaviors. Make it into a silly game where you side-hug, high-five, fist bump, etc.
- ❑ Speak & listen calmly. It's important that your kids feel safe & loved during all of these discussions, even if you feel uneasy.
- ❑ Review safety & touching boundaries anytime your child is in a new situation.
- ❑ Check-in regularly to see what's going on with your kid & their friends at school. Encourage them to share with you what they're hearing at school & be ready to clarify any misinformation.

