



Conception, pregnancy and birth

Ages 6-7

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD GOING THROUGH?

At this age, children are interested and curious and sometimes ask questions about conception, pregnancy and birth.

Through these questions, children are trying to figure out:

- Where they came from.
- How they came into the world.
- What happened while they were in their mommy's stomach.

No matter what their family situation (e.g., adoption, separation, single-parent, extended, gay parents), children need to:

- Feel that they were wanted.
- Know that they were all conceived in the same way: from a tiny egg from a woman and a small sperm from a man.
- Know that they were all carried in their mother's stomach.

Things kids may be wondering

- Where do babies come from?
- How are babies made?
- What does "making love" mean?
- How does mommy's egg meet daddy's sperm?
- How does the baby get in and out of mommy's stomach?
- Why do Thomas and Juliette have two mommies?
- Why does Alice have two daddies?

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT?

Answer their questions

It's important to answer your child's questions about conception, pregnancy and birth by using the correct terms.

Ensure that you clearly understand what your child wants to know:

- What do you think?
- What do you know about this topic?
- What have you heard?

Then give simple and short answers.



Below are a few ways to help you find the right words. They will help you to give children information gradually depending on what they want to know and their level of understanding.

Conception

- To make a baby, you need a man and a woman.
- Babies are conceived during sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.
- Sexual intercourse (or making love) is when two adults love each other and care about each other. They want to get close and hug each other with every part of their bodies.
- To make a baby, the man's penis needs to put sperm in the woman's vagina.
- The sperm from the man will then try to find the egg in the woman.
- When a sperm meets the egg in the woman's stomach, this is when a baby is conceived.



Pregnancy

- The egg and sperm that come together move to a special place in the woman's body called the uterus.
- They stay there to grow and eventually become a baby.
- The baby will grow for 9 months in the mother's uterus. It is kept warm there and is fed by the umbilical cord.

Birth

- After spending 9 months in its mother's stomach, the baby is ready to come out. The muscles of the uterus push the baby towards the vagina, which stretches to allow it to come out.
- Sometimes the baby is unable to come out through the mother's vagina. A doctor then needs to make an incision (a cut) in the mother's stomach to get the baby out. This type of surgery is called a caesarean.

Tips

If children still haven't asked you questions about this topic yet: **Start** the discussion by asking if they know where they came from and how they were conceived. You can also bring up the subject when you see a pregnant woman or a pet that is expecting a litter.

Talk about memorable things about your pregnancy and their birth (anecdotes and changes in your life). Look at photos from your pregnancy and when they were babies.

Make them aware that each family is different. Some children have a mother and a father, some have two mothers, others have two fathers, and some only have one parent. The important thing is to be surrounded by people who take care of each other.

WHAT CAN HELP YOU?

Book for parents

SAINT-PIERRE, Frédérique, and Marie-France VIAU. *My Child's Sexuality: Questions and Answers for Parents*, Éditions du CHU Sainte-Justine, 2009.

Books for children

ROBERT, Jocelyne. *L'histoire merveilleuse de la naissance*, Les Éditions de l'Homme, 1990.

ROBERT, Jocelyne. *Ma sexualité de 6 à 9 ans*, Les Éditions de l'Homme, 2004.

Do you need a professional resource?

Call Info-Santé at 811 or the parent help line at 1-800-361-5085.

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