

Talking to your child isn't always easy!

How easy is it for you to talk to your child about the following subjects?

SUBJECT	VERY DIFFICULT					VERY EASY
First love	1	2	3	4	5	
Importance of being physically active	1	2	3	4	5	
Contraception and pregnancy	1	2	3	4	5	
Sexual orientation	1	2	3	4	5	
First sexual encounter	1	2	3	4	5	
Puberty	1	2	3	4	5	
Fast food and diet	1	2	3	4	5	
Sexual pleasure and masturbation	1	2	3	4	5	
Alcohol consumption	1	2	3	4	5	
Effects of drugs	1	2	3	4	5	
Sexually transmitted infections (STI) and condom use	1	2	3	4	5	

Comfort talking about a topic will vary from person to person. For parents, some subjects are more difficult and embarrassing to talk about with their children. When faced with difficult situations, ask yourself:

- What makes these subjects embarrassing?
- What do you fear about your child's reaction?

- What are the messages you want to give your child about these subjects?
- Will talking about your own experiences with your child help you start a discussion?

Ideally, you should talk about these things before kids have their first experiences.

SOME USEFUL TIPS

- Is your child uncomfortable talking to you about sex? You can say: *"A lot of people find it embarrassing to talk about sex. If you're uncomfortable, I understand. It makes me feel a bit awkward too, but I think it's important to talk about it. What can we do to feel more comfortable?"*
- If you try to talk about something, but your child doesn't want to, don't get discouraged! He'll think about what you said. It's important that teens know you're ready to talk.
- Although sex is a serious topic, humour can ease any tension.
- Talk about sex in the same way as any other topic: something that is part of life and that concerns everyone.
- Start the discussion by asking what your child already knows. This will let you adapt to their reality.
- You can also refer to their friends. It may be easier to talk to kids by not talking about them directly and using situations that may have happened to a friend.
- Difficulty talking about a subject shouldn't prevent you from bringing it up. To ease your discomfort, tell your child how you feel.
- If some subjects are simply too uncomfortable for you both, make sure that another adult is available to give information or you can suggest other sources (books, websites).