

Sexual Integrity



Your kid is growing fast and learning new information every day. They have questions about things you’ve forgotten—like fractions. They have questions about things you don’t remember ever knowing—like state capitols. But the hardest questions they may ask may be questions about the thing that put them on this planet to begin with. Don’t panic. The conversations will get more complicated as they get older, but for now it’s basic (even if it does feel awkward at times).

Your role during this phase is to...

Inform them how things work, so they will understand biology and understand how and why God made us.

This guide is designed to help you meet your elementary kid where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of sex. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal

in mind: Sexual integrity means guarding my potential for intimacy through appropriate boundaries and mutual respect.

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Tips to Help Elementary Schoolers Understand Sexual Integrity

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future.

To elementary-age kids (K-3)...

SAY THINGS LIKE

"Can we talk more about this another time?"
(Always finish the conversation with room to pick it back up again later.)

"It's always okay to tell someone 'NO' if you don't want them to touch you."

"I'm so glad you asked me."

"God made your body, and we want to take good care of it."

"God made sex and designed it to be a good gift for a husband and wife."

"Sex is private, it's not something we watch or look at."

"When a girl starts to become a woman, she will . . ."

"When a boy starts to become a man, he will . . ."

To elementary-age kids (4-6)...

SAY THINGS LIKE

"Can we talk about this more another time?"

"Pornography is dangerous because it often becomes an addiction that can limit your ability to enjoy real sex later."
(Talk about why pornography can be harmful.)

"Sex can be dangerous outside of marriage."
(Caution sexual activity.)

"I'm so glad you asked me."

"I don't like to hear someone say that word because..."
(Refine the words they use for bodies, sex, and people.)

"What kinds of things have you heard about sex?"

"Where did you hear about...?"

"What do you think that means?"

"You are beautiful/handsome just the way you are."

Remember

The elementary years are the years to honor their questions with appropriately forthright answers. Remember, you capture their heart when you help them learn with concrete examples, so be simple and direct. Encourage the conversation, but don't force it. You want to keep this conversation going!

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Enhance the Conversation

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Dads, set up regular “dates” with your daughters, and moms, set up regular “dates” with your sons. (If you're a one-parent household, seek out an extended family member or trusted friend of the appropriate gender and invite them to participate whenever possible.) These outings can be as infrequent as once a month and as informal as a quick fast food run. While you're together, model respect and etiquette for your child, and insist they do the same. Talk about acceptable and unacceptable treatment of the opposite sex while you build a healthy one-on-one rapport with your kid. (If you don't have someone of the opposite gender you feel comfortable with to do this, you can always take them out and have a discussion about how they should be treated on a date and in a relationship.)

Role-play with your child. For younger elementary, you can use stuffed animals or dolls to represent the characters. Choose from the scenarios below or come up with some of your own. Ask your kid what the characters should do. Talk through their reasoning and affirm appropriate responses.

- A friend of the same gender asks to see your private parts or show you theirs.
- A friend of a different gender asks to see your private parts or show you theirs.

- An adult you don't know tells you they need your help—all you have to do is go somewhere with them.
- An adult you do know wants to touch or see a part of your body covered by a bathing suit.
- Someone asks you to keep a secret from Mom or Dad.

Leverage existing resources to begin a conversation about sex and body image with your elementary schooler. Study your child to know which approach to take—whether you should read the resource together or let them read it alone and follow up with them after. The goal is to establish trust and transparency as you begin the journey of healthy conversations about sex and dating throughout the remaining phases with your child.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application.

To discover more ways to understand this phase, check out the Parenting Your... book series at parentcuestore.org.

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