

Talking to Your Child About Sex and Sexuality

For many parents, talking to their child about physical changes and sexuality can be challenging and sometimes uncomfortable. There are several reasons why parents may feel this way. Some parents aren't confident in their knowledge of puberty and sexual health, some are unsure about what topics are appropriate to discuss with their child, and some simply don't know how to start the conversation.

Alberta Health Services understands these challenges and has created the website teachingsexualhealth.ca to help you find the information you need to keep the conversation going with your child. The Parent portal of the website offers the following:

- Tips on how to discuss puberty, sexuality and sexual health with your child.
- Explanations on why and how to talk to your child about topics like sexual development and bullying.
- Outlines of the sexual health curriculum from grade 4 to grade 12.
- Webisodes (videos) that give examples of how to answer your child's questions about puberty and sexual health.
- Links to reliable resources and community agencies in your area of Alberta.



In school, your child will learn about a wide range of topics; from the basic parts of the human reproductive system, to the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty, and much more. Sexual health is an important part of a person's health and wellbeing and influences a person throughout their life.

Bring the conversation of puberty and sexual health into your home for the benefit of your child's health and development. We encourage you to check out what teachingsexualhealth.ca has to offer!

Unstructured Free Play and Safety for School Aged Children

Unstructured free play is the time children spend being physically active on their own terms without guidance from adults, coaches or rules. It's kicking a ball with a couple of friends in the field, playing a game of hopscotch on the sidewalk, having a game of grounders at a local playground or skating with friends at the arena. Research tells us that unstructured play is very important for the normal development of physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills in school aged children. Simply put, kids need to learn naturally through play. Unfortunately, the amount of time children are spending in this type of activity is declining. Concern about safety is commonly described as a reason for not allowing free play. Parents may feel less control when their kids are outside playing, believing that organized sports and activities are safest.

How much supervision does your child require when playing outside your home? While babies and very young children are safest with an adult at arm's reach, you can allow your child more freedom as they get older. From kindergarten to grade 4, children playing outside should have an adult or responsible older child available and watching, but not hovering over them. For example, in a park, give your child boundaries and then position yourself where you can see them and they can see you. From grade 5 on, most children are ready to play outside with less adult supervision. Your child should demonstrate that they can safely cross a road on their own before you start to allow more independence. Start slowly by giving them boundaries close to your home (such as green space away from a busy road or a fenced in pavement area) and check on them at regular intervals. Gradually widen the boundary as both of you become more comfortable. Playing with a friend or group is safest. Always know where your child is, who they are with, and what time they are expected home.