



**Our children are bombarded with information about relationships and sex through the media, often providing misinformation and reinforcing negative stereotypes.**

As parents it is our responsibility to give our children the facts about sex and relationships. We know that the earlier we talk to our children about these things the more we can help them make better choices and reduce the chance of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

In BANES we have a relatively low teenage pregnancy rate, however, over half of these still end in abortion. Chlamydia infection also affects 1 in 12 young people (15-24 years old).

Talking about sex and relationships doesn't encourage children to have sex earlier but it will give young people the confidence to delay their first sexual experience and practice safer sex when they are ready to do so, which ultimately helps them to avoid unwanted pregnancies, abortion and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

We know starting these conversations can be hard, especially when our own sex education might have been poor or non-existent. This leaflet is designed to give you some tips to help you start these vital conversations with your child. Further information regarding sexually transmitted infections and young person friendly services can be found at:

[www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk](http://www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk)

## Top tips

### 1) Earlier the better

The sooner you start the easier it will be, so it's a great idea to start to talk to your child before they start to learn conflicting information from other people. Even with older children they will appreciate the talk. You can even use TV story lines or your own experiences to start the conversation.

### 2) Honesty is the best policy

With children learning what they know about sex and relationships through their mates and the media (including pornography) there is so much misinformation learnt. Try to answer questions honestly and if you don't know the answer say so but find out!

### 3) Conversations start with you making the first step

By making sex and relationship conversations a part of everyday life it will help put both your child and yourself at ease. Use family situations such as a pregnancy, marriage and divorce as opportunities to discuss sex and relationships, ask for their views as well as giving your own.

### 4) Parents are important role models

Children learn their ideas about men, women and relationships from their parents. It is a good idea to teach girls and boys about what happens to each others bodies so boys should understand about periods and girls should understand the body changes that happen to boys (such as wet dreams). It is also important that we talk about sexuality so they grow up aware of these issues and are positive about diversity.



### 5) Touchy-feely

It's really good to talk about emotions and feelings associated with sex and relationships rather than cold medical facts about the body – your children need to know about the difference between good and bad relationships, appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviours and the importance of respect and love in making decisions about sex and relationships.

### 6) Listen

You will boost your child's confidence if you always listen to them, this will also help boost their self-esteem. It's always a great idea to find out what your child knows about the subject they are asking about to get a better understanding of what they know or think they know.

### 7) It's good to talk!

Keep talking openly and honestly about growing up, relationships and sex as your children develop. It can often take a while for some of the information you give to make sense so you may need to cover a subject several times for it to really sink in. And the more open and honest you are with younger children, the more likely they are to approach you with problems and questions when they are older.

### 8) Don't assume

When it comes to sexuality there are no set rules. There is so much pressure and prejudice around sexuality that young people often feel they cannot be honest with those closest to them. Talk to your children in a non-judgemental way and be supportive of any decisions your child may make.



### 9) Don't leave it for the teacher!

We can understand why it's easy to expect schools to provide all sex education but parents also have an important role in ensuring that young people get all the help and advice needed to live fulfilled, healthy lives, enjoying relationships and of course sex!

Your child's school may invite you to discuss your child's proposed sex education and we strongly recommended that you attend this. If the school doesn't offer this, then make sure you speak to them so that you can understand your role in your child's education and prepare yourself for questions your child might have.

### 10) We cannot all be experts

There are websites available to give you further information and support, many are listed in this leaflet. A good place to start for further information is:

[www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk](http://www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk)



SEXUAL HEALTH ADVICE FOR EVERYONE



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#### Websites for further information on sexual health and relationships:

##### [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

Questions and answers about sexual health issues

##### [www.playingsafely.co.uk](http://www.playingsafely.co.uk)

Information about stis (including HIV), contraception and emergency contraception

##### [www.mariestopes.org.uk](http://www.mariestopes.org.uk)

Expert and supportive advice on abortions and sexual health services

##### [www.teenagehealthfreak.org](http://www.teenagehealthfreak.org)

Medical questions can be asked and answered by e-mail

##### [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

Information about HIV/AIDS and sexual health

##### [www.checkitout.me.uk](http://www.checkitout.me.uk)

Information about chlamydia and free, confidential tests for under 25s

##### [www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk)

Supporting Parents of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Daughters & Sons



SEXUAL HEALTH ADVICE FOR EVERYONE

Visit the website for more information and advice. The main site hold lots of information regarding young persons' services and further information regarding sexually transmitted infections and prevention of pregnancy.

[www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk](http://www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk)

## Talking with your child about relationships and sex



**Q: Where would you prefer your child to get information about relationships & sex?**

- Internet
- Their Mates
- TV / Mags
- You

Your child would like it to be you. So start the conversation today, before someone else does.

For help and advice visit:

[www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk](http://www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk)



SEXUAL HEALTH ADVICE FOR EVERYONE



Bath & North East Somerset Council