



Parents Make the Connection

#12



What's the biggest deterrent to your teen engaging in early sexual activity?



You. Research shows that *parents* are the #1 influence on teens' decisions about sex.

Parenting IS Prevention

Close family relationships help prevent risk behaviors, like drug use or violence. Which protective factors does your family offer?

- Family shares responsibilities, including chores and decision making.
- Family members are nurturing and support each other.
- Parenting is consistent.
- Parents set clear expectations and limits regarding alcohol and other drug use.
- Family copes with stress in a positive way.
- Parents encourage supportive relationships with caring adults beyond the family.
- Education is valued, encouraged, and supported.

Missoula Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting, and Prevention Services (MAPPPS)

MISSOULA FORUM FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

www.MissoulaForum.org



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Tips for Talking About the Facts of Life

Talking with your children about love, intimacy and sex is an important part of parenting. Communicating about tough issues can help them make the right decisions. It can help them avoid feeling pressured to do things they are not ready for or are uncomfortable with.

Before talking with your children about sex, here are a few questions to ask yourself:

When you were a child:

- Did a parent ever talk to you about sex?
- Did you ever tell your parents about the sexual behavior of a friend or peer?
- Did your family ever discuss pregnancy or sexually-transmitted diseases?
- Did your parents ever discuss sexual orientation?
- Did a parent ever talk to you about inappropriate touch?

- Explore your feelings about sex so that you will be more comfortable talking with your kids about it.
- Start talking with your child about sex at an early age.
- Take advantage of teachable moments. A friend's pregnancy, a news article, or a TV show can help start a conversation.
- Communicate your values and concerns about sex. Your adolescent really does care what you think, especially about what is right and wrong, or safe and dangerous.
- Sometimes your teen may feel more comfortable talking with someone else. Together, think of other adults you both trust with whom they can talk.
- Listen more than you talk. If you want your children to talk with you about things that are important, get into the habit of listening without passing judgment on what they say, not just about sex, but about everything.

Let your teen know you're interested, open, available and honest, and chances are, when you least expect it, you'll find yourself talking about the things that really matter.



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