



PORN TALK GUIDE

Today's "birds and bees" sex talk requires so much more from parents than it used too. With online pornography available to your child from a variety of devices, sites, apps and games, imbedded into everyday platforms, one in 4 kids have been exposed to porn by the time they are 12 years old these days.

Our children are part of the first generation to grow up with internet access, and this is a whole new challenge for parents as well as kids. Whilst you might have seen porn in magazines or via video tapes when you were growing up, the video streaming of high-speed internet porn today is much worse for children because it reduces their ability to think through decisions before they make them, by changing the structure of their developing brains and reducing their self-control, which is more important than how 'smart' they may be.

If we want to help them navigate the teens years successfully, we HAVE to understand the potential impacts of online porn on our kids, get past the awkwardness and have the healthy conversations we need to have with them. There is an enormous difference between adult and youth porn use. The way our kids are getting their ideas about sex have changed, and we need to pay attention to what those ideas are. Sex is being normalised for them as aggressive, abusive, non-consensual, often targeted at woman, who generally respond with a submissive, pleasurable response.

To get ahead of the game, start chatting to your kids about porn around 10 years, or even earlier if you find that your child has already been exposed. It's hard, we know, we've had to do it!

If you are undecided about the need for and seriousness of the task ahead, first watch this short clip by sex therapist, [Jo Robinson](#), where she debunks some of the common responses that seek to normalise the use of porn. Her plea to parents is: "You MUST talk to the teens in your life about porn. This is non-negotiable."

Chatting to your kids about porn

Understanding how much info your child can take in before they shut down due to discomfort and embarrassment! Aim for short but regular chats of no more than a few minutes.

Try to choose times when other siblings who don't need to hear it are away, and your child is in a fairly chilled mood.

Incorporate books that you can read together, to make it easy and more normal.

If digging into the science behind what makes pornography addictive is too much for right now, simply explain to your child that because human beings are always looking for new experiences, and we have a natural drive to connect with potential sexual partners, porn offers a hyper-stimulating, low-risk vehicle to feed our natural desire for connection. But it has untold negative effects and creates a false understanding of how partners are attracted and what intimacy is really like. Because it gives the brain dopamine hits, it also becomes addictive. Fast.





Sex in movies, and porn more specifically, is pretend stuff, and not what sex is, or should be like, in real life. Online porn is mostly unhealthy, unethical, abusive, non-consensual, and in some cases illegal.

Leave the conversation open and on-going, with the opportunity for questions from your child. This conversation needs to be brought up constantly as your child develops into an adolescent and then a young adult. It is a great opportunity to develop the strength of your relationship with them, so that they will always come to you first when they need support.

Remind them that you are always available if they need support.

What to do when your kid has watched porn

It might feel like a bad nightmare to discover that your child has viewed online pornography, whether accidentally or intentionally as let's face it, it is all XXX-rated out there.

So go ahead, clutch your heart, hyper-ventilate. And then breathe and get down to it. You need to chat calmly to your kid.

Respond to their heart, by asking how they felt when they saw it? How did it make them feel? Were they shocked, scared, worried? Be a soft pillow not a concrete slab, as Jo says.

Unpack the problematic messages they may have taken in around hurting, consent, degradation, control, violence.

Take a hold of their hands and their devices. Talk to them about managing their settings, controls and filters. And put those parental controls in place if you haven't done so yet. Parental controls are vital in our fight against the ever-pervasive creep of porn. There is no other way to say this – just block it! Don't let initial exposure turn into a compulsion and an addiction with life-long consequences.

Keep checking in. Let them know you are a safe person to talk to. Let them know you want only the best for them for their future relationships, and that they need the opportunity to develop their preferences and feelings in a healthy way that porn cannot provide.

Stay strong and be consistent

If you're still not sure about the need to have these conversations with your kids, check out *Fight The New Drug*, a global NPO, raising awareness about the real and wide-ranging impacts of pornography on relationships and how it drives the human trafficking industry. They have created a captivating documentary [Brain Heart World](#).

Know that by keeping this conversation alive in your family, you will quite possibly be changing the course of your kids' lives for the better.

