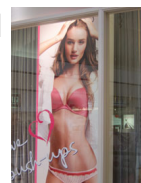


When our children are small we, understandably, keep disturbing topics from them. We protect them as much as we can. Many families, either intentionally or unintentionally, extend this way of communicating to all matters around sex and sexuality. They don't talk about it. At all. Then, when the children get to the age of puberty, these families have a well established pattern of NOT talking. It's always hard to break a pattern. It can be even more difficult to break open the silence parents have created around sexuality and sex. But there are some simple things you can do to ease in and open up the subject.

- First, get over the idea that you need to shelter your kids from the subject of sex and



sexuality. Open your eyes and your ears. Your kids are learning about sex and sexuality constantly. Look around at the shopping mall. Notice the posters in the windows at Victoria's Secret. There's a message. Look at the way the mannequins are dressed. There's a message. Kids notice. And kids learn, fast.

- Use those every-day occasions to comment (teach) your kids about bodies and provocative clothing. Comment on the mall posters and mannequins, "That outfit would be nice if it covered her more."

- Keep talking. Comment on how other kids are dressing. Talk about dating and tell your kids that dating is overrated (it is, especially for pre-teens and teens). Tell your daughter that the physical contact that accompanies sexual expression is powerful – and that because of that, it's best saved for a committed relationship (And this is when you transmit your specific values. You can be very direct. ), and that the TV shows and teen magazines (many of them) get it wrong. The truth is – kids really do want to hear this stuff from their parents.

And, of course, these comments are just the tip of the iceberg. But you have to get started so get started!

- Repeat. Once is not enough. Yes, your kids will roll their eyes at you. Big deal, you'll get over it.

If you're still not convinced, read this Time Magazine article that just came out, [Parents'squo; Sex Talk With Kids: Too Little, Too Late.](#)