

A PARENT AND CARERS
INTRODUCTION TO
**ASKING THE
AWKWARD**



Young people want their parents and carers to have everyday conversations with them about relationships. This includes being aware of the positive opportunities technology provides for their social and romantic lives.

Talking regularly with your child about relationships and sex can help develop shared understanding, trust and support between you.

Talk little. Talk often. Ask The Awkward.

PREPARE YOURSELF

Do a little homework.

Our help sheets give key talking points and knowledge to help you to feel confident and keep conversations flowing.

Pick your moments.

Watch the Ask The Awkward films together to give you a good starting point for talking. Pick a time that suits both you and your child, when neither of you have commitments or somewhere else to be. Ask them when a good time would be to watch an episode together.

Avoid 'the big talk'.

A 'little and often' approach is more effective and tells your child that you are there to talk about any topic, any time.



KEEP CONVERSATIONS POSITIVE

Ask open questions.

Most of the questions you ask should be open ended. For example “tell me about...” or “what do you think about...”

For closed questions or where your child has answered “yes”, “no” or “I don’t know”, ask clarifying questions to encourage continued talk. For example “why do you think that?” or “what do you think [a friend, family member] would say to that question?”

Ask, wait, listen.

If you and your child don’t usually talk about these topics, it may take some time for them to think of their answers or feel open talking. Give them some time to think and respond. Listen to what they have to say, be prepared to learn from them and take the time to understand their points of view.

Make positive choices together.

Supporting your child to be safer online shouldn’t be about threats and punishments. Discussion should be focused on safer and positive online use and not solely on what they can’t do. For example, rather than listing the sites your child cannot use, you could look at agreeing a list of sites they can. Helping your child make these decisions for themselves means they are more likely to do what you’ve agreed. Be prepared to revisit your agreements for new sites and apps, and as your child gets older.

Talk to connect, not to investigate.

Remember the purpose of these conversations is to build trust, share and learn together. Be careful not to overload your child with lots of questions or dig for information. Your child is more likely to tell you if something is wrong or worrying them online if you have regular conversations.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD TELLS YOU SOMETHING THAT WORRIES YOU

Most of the time conversations with your child will be positive. However, if your child ever tells you something has happened online which causes you or them concern, it is important to know where you can get support:

Online sexual abuse or grooming. You can report your concerns directly to [CEOP](#).

Bullying. Childline are available to talk to online, on the phone, any time. Your child can call 0800 1111 or [visit their website](#).

Nude image sharing. If your child is worried a sexual image or video of them may have been shared online, they can report to Childline and IWF’s [Report Remove tool](#). This helps children and young people report an image or video shared online, to see if it is possible to get it removed.

