

Discussion Starters: Questions about Sexuality

Go ahead, take a chance. Ask your child some or all of the following questions, and see where the discussions lead. You may be surprised.

Okay, before you start asking, you may first want to consider how you'll respond. Honestly ask yourself if you want your older child to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. Do you want them to get married? Do you want them to have children? These are tough questions, and the answers may not be that simple. Think carefully about how you'll respond to your child – you definitely want them to hear your values and beliefs, but you definitely need to listen to theirs too.

Here are the questions:

- When you get older, do you want to have a boyfriend or girlfriend?
- When you get older, do you want to hold hands with a boyfriend or girlfriend?
- When you get older, do you want to kiss a boyfriend or girlfriend?
- When you get older, do you want to get married?
- When you get older, do you want to have children?
- Is it okay to touch your private parts in public? Why not?
- Is it okay to touch your private parts when you're alone at home in your own bedroom?
- Last question: Is it embarrassing to talk about these things?

By the way, if you want your older child to have a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or partner, you can help by creating opportunities for them to meet potential romantic partners. Consider the following:

- Cook a dinner or sponsor an activity (bowling, miniature golf, etc.) for your child and their friends, classmates, or workmates.
- Throw holiday parties, birthday parties, or parties to celebrate accomplishments.
- Ask a community organization – one that works with people with developmental disabilities – to sponsor social events (for example, a dance or karaoke evening).
- Suggest potential dates.

Note: If marriage, a long-term relationship, or having children sound like distinct possibilities for your older child, then you might want to read “Marriage and Having Children.”