



TALK TODAY, SAFER TOMORROW!

10 Easy Conversation Starters

The Safeguard Alliance, a project of The National Center on Sexual Exploitation



THE SAFEGUARD ALLIANCE

Talking to kids about the dangers of pornography is important – and can seem really stressful! But once you get started, the hardest part is behind you. Adapt these ideas and keep talking as your children grow and experience new things. You can do it! Every time you talk your children are safer.

1. Teach children what pornography is in age-appropriate ways.

Definitions give power. From the simplest explanation to a full definition for older children, giving children the words to describe what they have seen opens the door for them coming to you in the future.

Younger Kids

- “You know we have fun together sharing our favorite family pictures. But you should know that sometimes people share inappropriate pictures, videos, or cartoons that show people without any clothes on. Have you ever seen anything like that?”

Older kids (after you have talked about sex)

- “Pornography shows or describes nudity or sexuality and is intended to create sexual feelings. It can be online, or in games, movies, music, ads, and books. Sometimes people share nudes on their phones. These are false and harmful ways to experience sexuality, so it’s a good idea for us to plan together how to avoid it.”

2. Start with what they already know

You have already been talking about family values, their bodies, and personal safety issues. Build on that to help them be aware of the dangers of pornography in age-appropriate ways. Create a safe environment for kids to ask and answer questions.

Younger Kids

- “In our home we know to wear our clothes around other people. We only take them off in private or when we need help from someone like mom, dad, or a doctor. Sometimes you might see pictures of people who are not fully dressed or not wearing any clothes at all. When that happens we look away, and tell mom or dad right away. We can help you know what to do and how to feel better.”

Older kids (after you have talked about sex)

- “We’ve talked about the amazing changes your body goes through as you grow, and how wonderful sex is at the right time with someone you love. It’s sad, but sometimes people forget how special this is and they show these things that should be private out in public. It’s called pornography. When you see anything like that, let us know and we can talk about it.”

3. Practice with your family what to do if they see pornography

Just like a fire drill, your children need to have a plan so they can react quickly when they encounter pornography.

Younger Kids

- “Let’s make a deal with each other, OK? If you see anything like pornography, your job is to protect your heart and mind. Turn away from it as fast as you can and tell me right away!”

Older kids

- “What could you say to a friend who wanted to show you pornography? Do you have some ideas? Maybe you could turn away and say: I don’t want to see that! That’s not ok – you shouldn’t be showing that!”

4. Be upfront about your concerns.

If you are worried about talking about pornography, tell your kids! Being honest about your feelings can go a long way to opening up a conversation.

- “It may be awkward to talk about this but it’s better than not talking at all, isn’t it!”
- “You know I’m not an expert on this subject, but we can learn together. Maybe you can teach me what it is like for kids today!”
- “I wish I had done a better job of talking to you about this in the past, but you can help me get started now.”
- “I worry that if you hear about pornography, you might want to see what we are talking about. It is natural for kids to be curious and want to learn more about things, but the reason I am talking to you is because pornography is very harmful, and I want you to be prepared to avoid it anytime, anywhere.”

5. Take opportunities to praise kids for good decisions.

Children gain self-control and personal power when they learn to see themselves as good decision makers. Water what you want to grow!

- “I noticed that you changed the channel when that inappropriate ad came on. I’m really impressed that you made that good choice and acted so quickly. I bet you feel pretty good when you take control of what you watch. That will keep you safe from things like pornography.”

6. Build on their desire to be trusted and grown-up

Children look forward to growing up and want to be respected and trusted with important things. Give them credit for how difficult it is to grow up in this time.

Younger Kids

- “You are growing up so fast and I think you are ready to talk about a really important thing. I know I can trust you to make good decisions when you understand how important it is to stay away from pornography.”

Older kids

- “You are such a wonderful kid, and this is a challenging world we’re living in. I know you’re trying to keep away from bad stuff online. I trust you, but I don’t trust people who want to get your attention with pornography. Are there some rules we could set together that would help keep you safe?”

7. Use examples in the media and news

Our environment is littered with sexualized ads, apps, games, music, and social media - and the news is filled with stories of sexual misconduct. So use them as natural conversation-starters! Take advantage of these learning opportunities and ask your kids what they think. Give them lots of space to talk, even if it means being silent for a few uncomfortable moments. You’ll be surprised at how much they open up.

- “There’s another ad showing a woman who is barely dressed. Why do you think advertisers use scantily-dressed women in their ads? What kind of a reaction are they trying to get from you?”
- “This morning I read a news story that reported finding that hundreds of students at a school were sharing nudes with other kids. Have you heard of anything like that at your school? What do you think about it?”

8. Share a personal experience.

Sharing your experiences with your kids can be life-changing for them. Have you seen images that you wish you hadn’t? How did you react? Did you wish that you had been prepared to know what to do? What have you learned to do better now? It will help them to feel safe to share their own experiences and feelings without shame and judgment when they understand that you have experienced some of the same struggles.

- “When I was about your age, a friend showed me pictures of naked women in a magazine. I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t tell anyone because I was so afraid I’d get in trouble, but I was upset and curious at the same time. Now I realize that I was just a kid and I didn’t do anything wrong. Sometimes we see things that are a little shocking. Has anything like that ever happened to you? I hope you know you can always tell me. You won’t be in trouble at all!”

9. Read current blogs on this issue.

Spend some time getting educated to help your children. The

time you spend preventing problems now can save years of tears later. You can use these topics as conversation starters with your family. We have a list of good resources below.

- “I read something really surprising today. I learned that most parents think they have talked to their children about being safe online more often than their children say they have. I bet that’s true! What do you think?”
- “Today I read that viewing pornography can become an addiction, similar to how people become addicted to drugs. Have you ever heard that?”

10. Follow up on these conversations and check in regularly.

Once you have done the hard work of starting, keep it going! It will get easier over time, and your kids will become more comfortable coming to you to share their experiences.

- “Is there anything like pornography stuck in your mind from a long time ago? Do you want to tell me about it so you can let it go and forget it?”
- “Sometimes kids see pornography accidentally online, or their friends show them things. Have you seen anything like pornography since the last time we talked? What did you do? What could you do if that happens again?”
- “I’d love to hear about your favorite things to do online and anything that has happened that you are wondering about!”

Let’s raise the first generation to be prepared to reject pornography!

The Safeguard Alliance is a project of The National Center on Sexual Exploitation.

These organizations collaborated to share this message.

[National Center on Sexual Exploitation](#)

[Protect Young Minds](#)

[Educate Empower Kids](#)

[Reach 10](#)

[White Ribbon Week](#)

[Fight the New Drug](#)

[Covenant Eyes](#)

[Love People Not Pixels](#)

[Strength to Fight](#)

[NextTalk](#)

[We Stand Guard](#)

[Parents Aware](#)

[Campaign for a Porn-free Childhood](#)

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