



For more information, visit www.IndianaRESPECT.com or call 1-800-433-0746

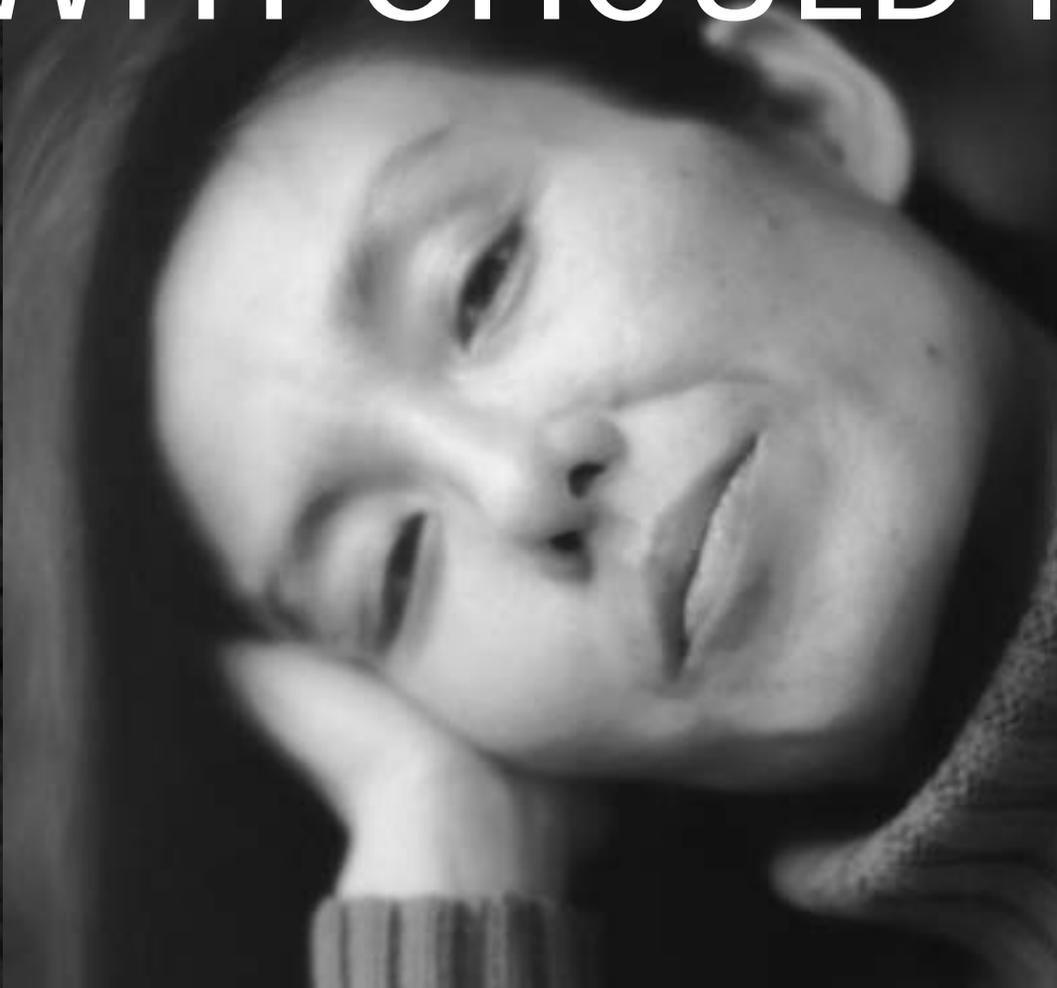
N E E D
H E L P
T A L K
I N G ?

Thoughts, tips & suggestions to help you talk to your kids about sex.

WHY SHOULD I TALK
WHEN SHOULD I
HOW SHOULD I START
TO TALK TO
WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO MY KIDS
HOW DO I TALK TO MY
ABOUT SEX?
WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT
MY TEEN ASK
WANT TO KNOW ABOUT

WHY SHOULD I

TALK TO MY KID



As a parent, you are the most important influence in your child's life, especially when it comes to important issues like sex. Believe it or not, our kids want us to talk with them about sex, but they also want us, as parents, to bring up the subject. Studies show talking openly with your child about sex and family values reduces their risk of premature sexual activity and teen pregnancy.

We know talking with your child about sex is never easy. But teens, and even pre-teens, are curious about sex. If you don't take the time to talk to your child about sex, they'll go somewhere else for information - information which may be false and misleading.

ABOUT SEX

WHEN SHOULD I START TALKING TO MY

There is no right age to start having conversations about sex with your child. To your dismay, it's probably younger than you would like to think. As parents, we need to talk to our children about sexual activity early and often. They need to know the facts about sex and its consequences, and they need to get that information from someone they trust. Remember that no parent needs to be an expert on sexuality to have a meaningful conversation with their child. So, initiate the conversation with your child because it is far better to start a little early than to wait until it's too late.

ABOUT SEX?





HOW SHOULD I START

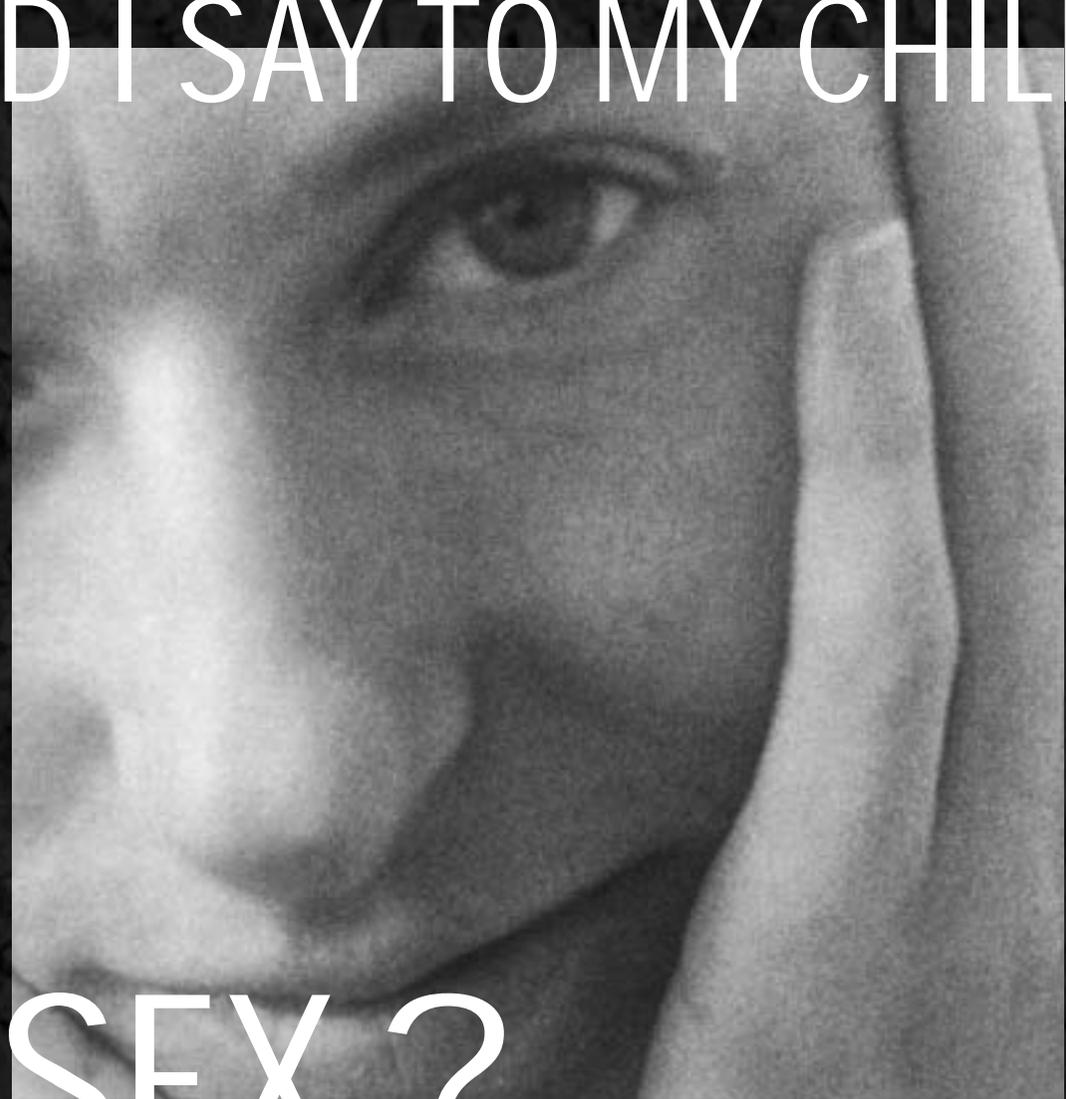
Before speaking with your child about sex, think about your own values. What do you believe? How do you feel about sex and relationships, especially among teens? Think about things you cherish in relationships. How does sex play into those values? Knowing these things for yourself will help you to express your feelings and expectations about relationships and sex with your child. Tell them the truth about how you feel. If you believe a person should wait to have sex until marriage, say so, but be sure to explain why. Share your own experiences, even if you have made sexual choices you wish you hadn't. By sharing, you may help them learn from your mistakes.

TALKING TO MY CHILD ABOUT SEX

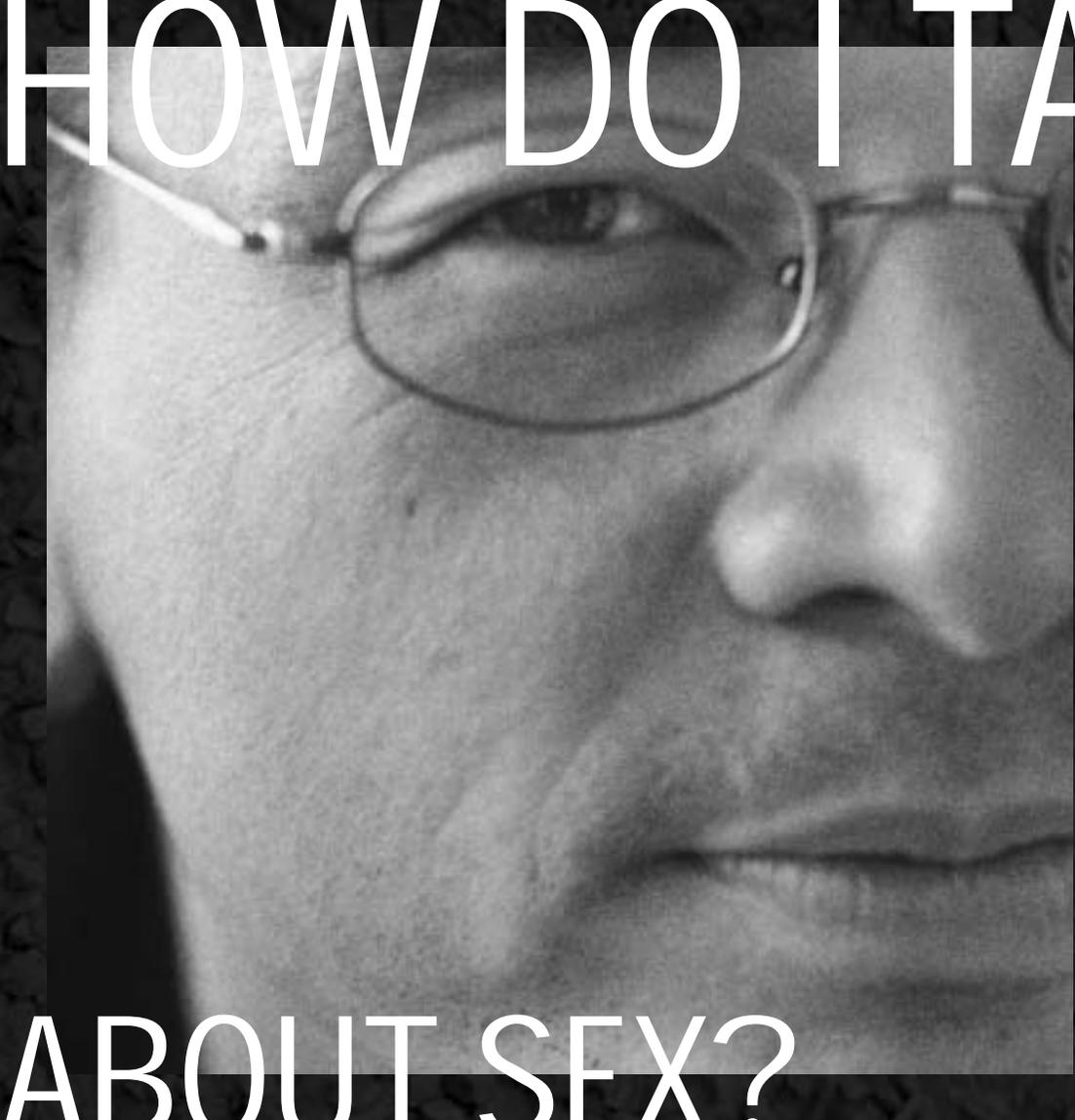
WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO MY CHILD

It is important to be honest with your child; they need accurate information and decision-making skills to resist being pressured to have sex, which can lead to unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases. Abstinence is the most effective form of contraception. In fact, it's the only sure form of contraception. Choosing to abstain from sex keeps your child safe from unplanned pregnancies and helps them avoid sexually transmitted infections. Talk with your child about reasons to wait to have sex. Reassure them that not everyone is having sex and that it is okay to be a virgin. The decision to become sexually active is too important to be based on what other people think or do.

ABOUT SEX?



HOW DO I TALK TO MY CH



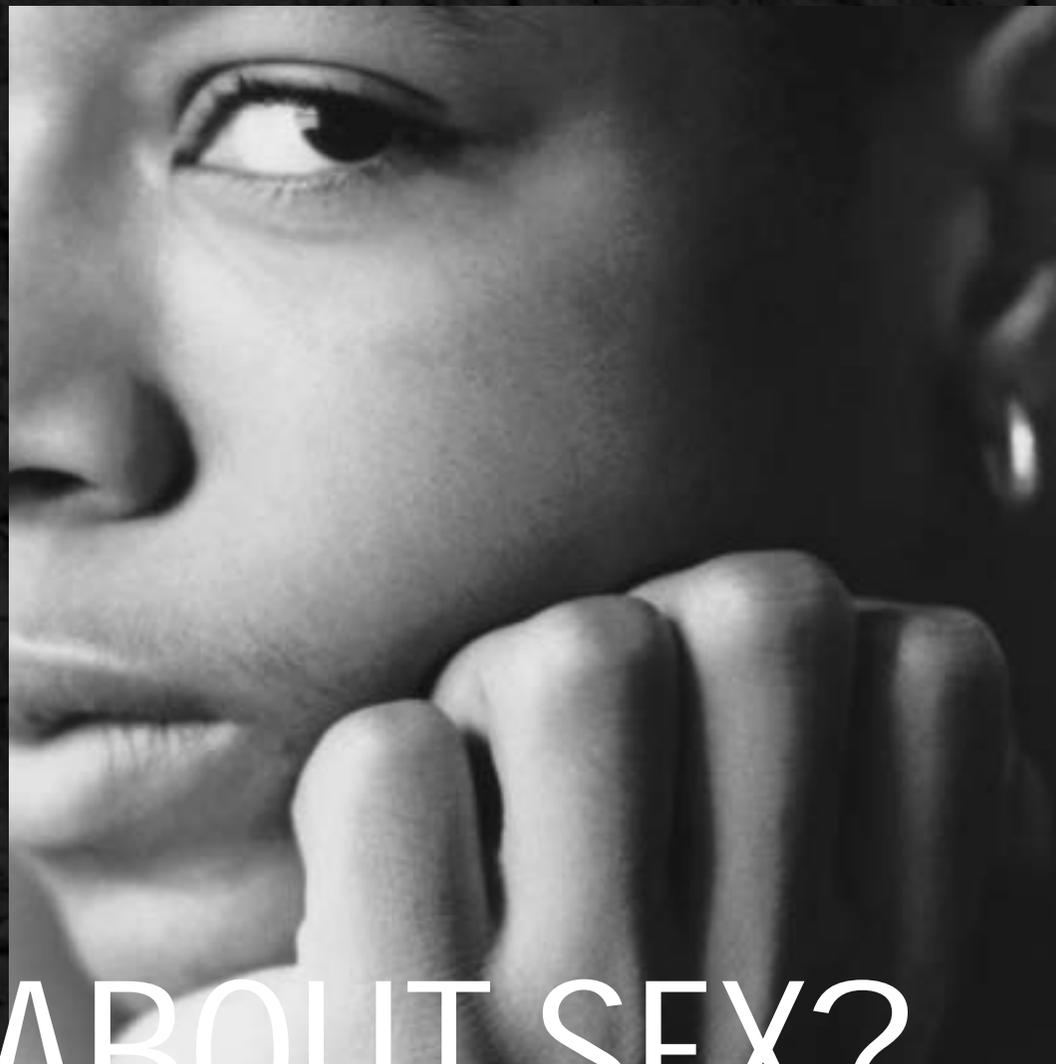
Have a conversation with your child -- don't talk at them. Let them know you are interested in what they think and feel about any topic, whether it is sexuality, school, religion, the future, whatever. They have a right to an opinion. Make sure you hear it and respect it, even if you don't agree. Not only will this strengthen your relationship, but it will also help them gain confidence in developing and defending their own set of values. Talk with your child about the values regarding sexuality and relationships that most people support including equality, honesty, responsibility, and respect for differences. Being an example of these values for your child to see will reinforce them in your child's mind.

ABOUT SEX?

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I TALK TO

Your first talk with your child about sex should not be your last! Start the conversations early, and continue to have them. Parents sometimes wait until they collect enough information and energy to have “THE TALK”. There shouldn’t be one “talk”, but a series of talks. There is no doubt your child will have new questions, concerns, and thoughts as he or she progresses through adolescence. Make it clear to your child that you are always willing to have an open, honest talk about sexuality. Talk about sex with your child whenever questions come up for them, or when a teachable moment arises. Use situations from TV shows, movies, news articles, and your child’s life as an opportunity to talk about sex.

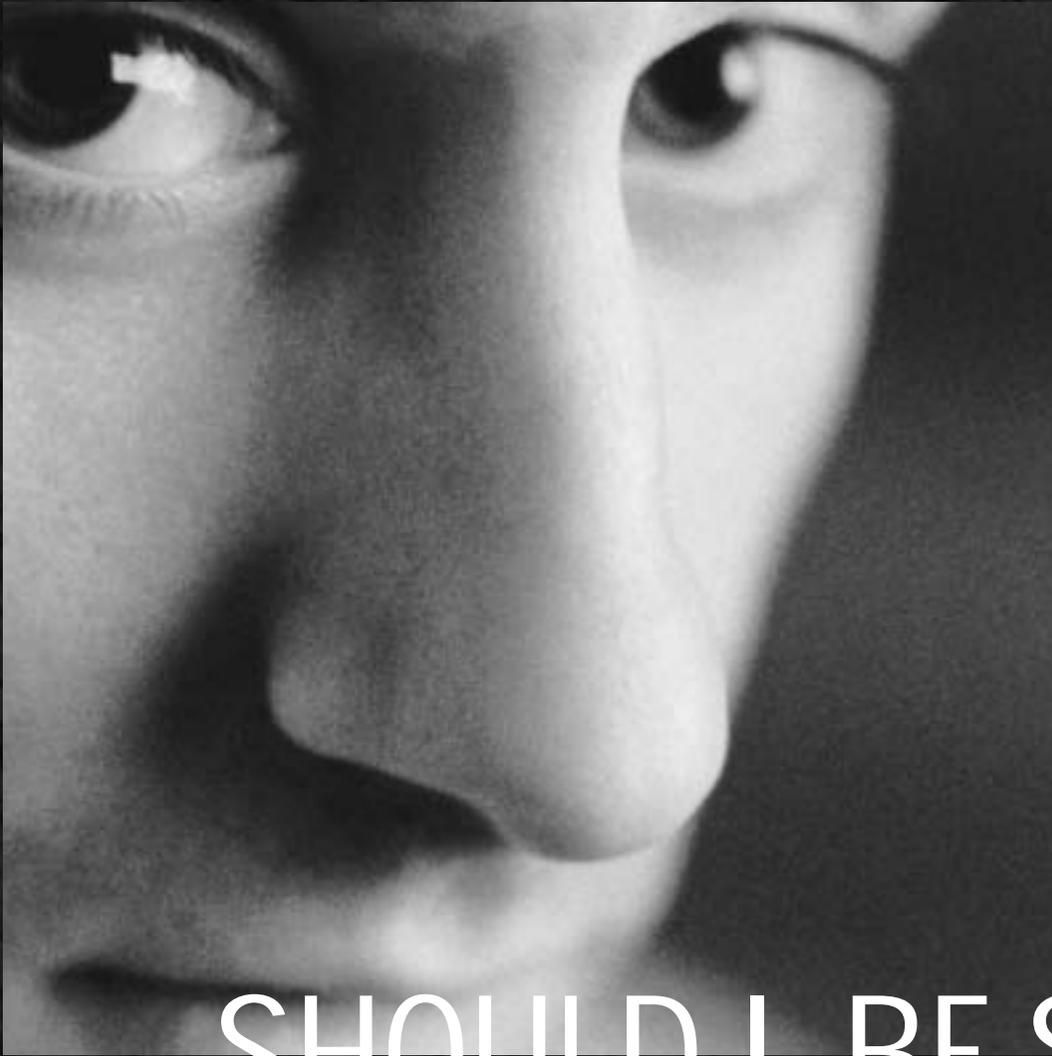
MY CHILD ABOUT SEX?



WHAT TOPICS

- What are our family values?
- Where do lasting friendships come from?
- Do you have to have sex to keep a boyfriend/girlfriend interested in you?
- What should you do if your date threatens you?
- Does having sex make for lasting dating relationships?
- Your date spends a lot of money on you. Do you “owe” them something in return?
- Should one person make all the decisions for the couple?
- How does sex impact a relationship?
- Is everyone really doing it?
- What’s the best way to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy?
- What are some consequences of sex? For teens?

SHOULD I BE SURE TO COVER?

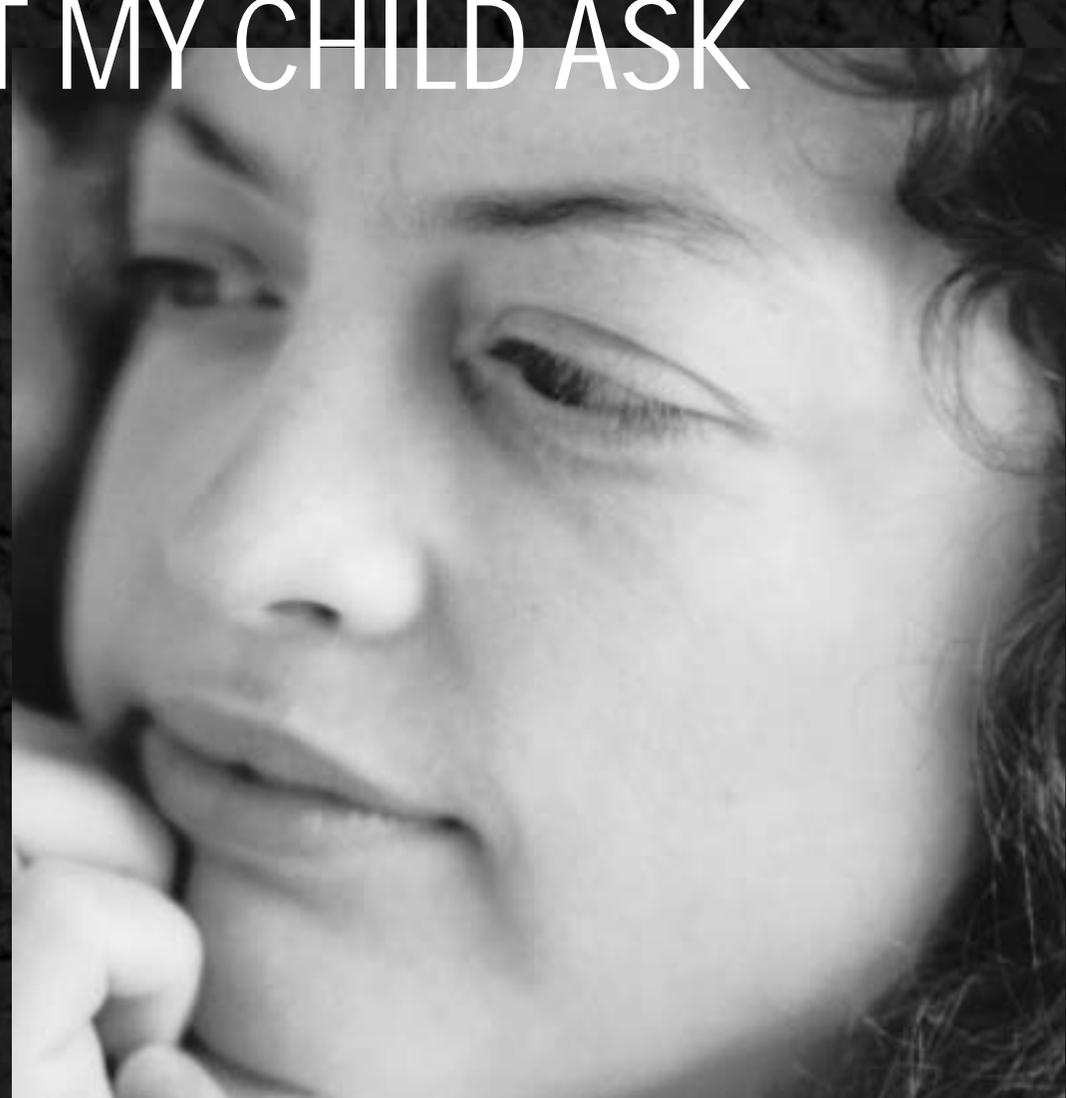


WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT MY CHILD ASK

- How do I know if I am in love?
- How do I resist pressure from my boyfriend/girlfriend to have sex?
- How do I tell him/her that I don't want to have sex without losing him/her or hurting his/her feelings?
- Will having sex strengthen our friendship?
- Should I wait until I'm out of high school before I have sex? Until I'm married?
- Will having sex make me popular?
- Can you get pregnant the first time?
- How do you get a sexually transmitted disease?

Keep in mind that just because your child asks questions about sex, he or she is not necessarily thinking about having sex.

ABOUT SEX?



WAYS TO SHOW YOU CARE



There are many ways that your child can show someone they care for them without engaging in sexual activity. Below are just a few alternatives to having sex. Be sure to share these ideas with your child and encourage them to make a list of their own.

- Choose a special, favorite song
- Give each other pet names
- Do things for each other without being asked
- Make a list of things you like about each other
- Share private jokes
- Make each other gifts
- Cook each other's favorite food
- Hold hands
- Share dreams with each other

WITHOUT HAVING SEX

THE BOTTOM LINE

Talking to your children about sex is one of the most important duties a parent has. Through open, honest communication you can prepare your child to make smart, informed decisions about sex and relationships. But remember, you don't have to do it alone. You have many resources that can help you, from friends and family members to school counselors, doctors and congregational leaders. All you have to do is ask. Information is also available by calling 1-800-433-0746. Remember to keep talking and keep listening.

This booklet is provided to you by Indiana RESPECT (Indiana Reduces Early Sex and Pregnancy by Educating Children and Teens), Indiana's adolescent pregnancy prevention initiative. Indiana RESPECT uses federal Abstinence Education Grant Program funds and state Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention funds to encourage sexual abstinence and delaying pregnancy and parenting during the teen years. For more information regarding Indiana RESPECT's community grant program, statewide media campaign, and how you can be a part of the solution, visit www.IndianaRESPECT.com. Some information found in this booklet is provided by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and is used by permission (pamf.org/teen).