

How to Talk to Your Young Person About Sex

A values-based, practical guide for Muslim parents and carers

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Key message: Sex education is not shameful — it is, like sex itself, sacred within the right context.

“If you feel uncomfortable, you are not alone. Many parents were never taught how to have these conversations. Your discomfort is temporary; your child's need for guidance is ongoing.”

“HOW DO I START?”

Start Early, Build Gradually: The idea is not one “big talk” — it is a series of small, age-appropriate conversations.

Age Stage	Key Focus Areas & Core Topics
Under 5–7	- Body as Amanah (use correct names, teach awrah) - Privacy and boundaries - Safe vs unsafe touch
8–12	- Puberty (physical and emotional changes) - Exposure to media (internet safety, pornography) - Masturbation
13+	- Relationships (attraction and interaction with opposite gender) - Consent - Online risks - LGBQ+

Keep it simple. Answer the question they ask — no more, no less.

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK: HOW TO TALK

- Be age-appropriate but use proper anatomic names.**
- Give information in small, manageable steps.**
- Use faith-based language** — connect conversations to respect for the body (**Amanah**) and accountability to Allah (**Taqwa**).
- Stay calm. Don't shame or panic.**
- Create emotional safety. Keep the door open.**

Your reaction determines whether they come back to you.

PRACTICAL PHRASES YOU CAN USE

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN	<i>“Allah made your body special, and some parts are private.”</i>
FOR PRE-TEENS	<i>“Your body is changing because you're growing — it's normal and nothing to be ashamed of.”</i>
FOR TEENS	<i>“You may feel attracted to people — that's human. What matters is how we manage those feelings.”</i>
DIFFICULT QUESTIONS	<i>“I'm really glad you asked me.” / “Let's talk about that in a way that helps you understand properly.”</i> It is okay to say: <i>“That's an important question — let me think about how to explain it properly.”</i>

WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE DIGITAL WORLD AND PORNOGRAPHY

Instead of only saying “this is haram,” explain:

- It can distort reality
- It can affect mental health and relationships
- It does not reflect real intimacy or Islamic values

APPROACHES TO AVOID

- ✗ **Shame** (“Good girls/boys don't...”)
- ✗ **Fear** (“You'll be punished...”)
- ✗ **Silence or avoidance**
- ✗ **Overreacting to questions**

These create distance, not protection.

A FINAL REFLECTION

Ask yourself: “If my child is confused about sex, relationships, or their body — who do I want them to turn to?”

Your goal is not perfection. Your goal is to be approachable, trustworthy, and present.

CLOSING DU'A

“O Allah, guide our children, protect their hearts and bodies, and help us to fulfil our responsibility towards them with wisdom, mercy, and sincerity.”