



Have questions?

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Stop It Now!<sup>®</sup> prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.

### **Sexuality Concepts for Children (Ages 4 – 8)**

It's wonderful that you're looking to learn more about how to talk to the kids you care for about their bodies. This is such an important part of abuse prevention! Just as you teach children that a nose is a nose, they need to know what to call their genitals and understand what they do. This knowledge gives children the correct language for understanding and asking questions about their bodies. Clear communication is an important protective factor to keep kids safe from sexual harm.

These descriptions have been developed for children ages 4-8. For more resources on age-appropriate sexual behaviors, family safety planning, and warning signs, visit [stopitnow.org/prevention](http://stopitnow.org/prevention).

#### Genitals

- These are what we call “private parts,” which include the anus, penis, and vagina. These are parts outside the body that are sexual or reproductive (help make babies).
- Your genitals are private, which means that no one should touch them or see them but you, unless you need help in the bathroom or during a medical exam.

**Engagement tip for caregivers:** The next time you are giving your child a bath, do a “geography lesson” and help them find their private parts. Ask them to point to the parts as you name them. You could also use a picture from a book to have this conversation.

#### Anus

- The anus is the hole in your butt, where solid waste (poop) leaves the body.

#### Vulva

- The vulva is the outer portion of sexual organs that some people have between their legs.
- The vulva describes the whole area, and it is made up of a few parts: the entrance to the vagina, the clitoris, the labia (the inner and outer lips), the urethral opening (where pee comes out), and the mons pubis (the fleshy area above the outer labia).

#### Vagina

- The vagina is a part of the vulva. It is an opening between a person's legs, and it is also a tube leading from the uterus to the outside of the body.
- Vaginas regularly clean themselves and may release different types of fluids.



- A grown up with a vagina might use their vagina during sex. (See the “Having Sex” section below”.)
- Babies can come out of a pregnant person’s vagina. The vagina can stretch to fit the baby through it.

### Clitoris

- The clitoris is a sensitive body part that people with vulvas typically have.
- The head of the clitoris sticks out at the top of the labia. Most of the clitoris is inside the body that you can’t see.
- The function of the clitoris is to provide pleasure. Many people with vulvas enjoy touching their clitoris because it can feel good, but this should be done in private.

### Uterus

- Many people with a vulva also have a uterus.
- The uterus is an organ inside a person’s body. It’s just below their belly button.
- Many uteruses have ovaries, which are where eggs are stored. Grown-ups who have ovaries can use them to make a baby.
- If a person is pregnant, the uterus is where their baby grows.

### Penis

- The penis is a sexual organ that some people have between their legs.
- The penis can get bigger if you rub it. That’s called an erection.
- Rubbing a penis may feel good, but it’s something done in private.
- There’s a hole at the end of the penis called a urethral opening where pee comes out. When a person gets older, something called semen comes out of that hole.
- A grown-up with a penis may use their penis during sex. (See the “Having Sex” section below”.)

### Scrotum

- The scrotum is the little sac below the penis where testicles are kept.
- Grown-ups who have testicles can use them to make a baby. The testicles are where sperm is made, and sperm helps make a baby.

### Nipples

- If you look down at your chest, you may see two small bumps that are a different color than the rest of your chest. These are called your nipples.
- Nipples can sometimes be sensitive. They might feel good to touch.
- When some kids go through puberty, the area around their nipples starts to grow - these are called breasts.
- If an adult with breasts becomes pregnant, they may be able to produce milk to feed their baby.



### Intersex Body Parts

- Sometimes people are born with sexual organs that are not exactly like a penis or vulva, or may be a combination of both. Even though most people have either a penis or a vulva, there are many kinds of genitals. That is normal, too.

### Having Sex

- Sex is something grown-ups do together. Adults have sex for a lot of different reasons, such as wanting to feel close to someone, sharing good feelings, or making a baby.
- Sex is most often people touching each other's sexual organs. That usually means a person puts their sexual organs on or inside another person's sexual organs. For example, someone may put their penis in another person's vagina. This is called sexual intercourse.
- Having sex is a big decision, and it's important that grown-ups who decide to have sex with each other talk about it. That makes sure they agree about what they want.

### Gender

- Some kids like to be called boys, some like to be called girls, and some don't like either. What is most important is asking them what they like to be called. It's a sign of respect.

### Consent

- Consent means giving permission for what you want to happen to your body.
- Children can say yes or no to any touches. That includes a hug, a pat on the back or holding hands.
- Both adults and children should ask for consent when it comes to touch. Listen to the answer and follow their directions.

### Relationships

- Relationships are how people connect to each other. There are different kinds of relationships. Some people have a best friend. A friendship is a type of relationship. Children and their siblings and parents are a family, and those are types of relationships.
- Romantic relationships happen between grown-ups. People in this kind of relationship may want to hug, kiss, and have sex. Sex is one way grown-ups show they like each other.

Conversations like these aren't one-time things. Here are a few resources we recommend:

- Tip Sheet: Talking With Children and Teens (<https://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/talking-to-children-and-teens>)
- Sex Positive Families' Resource Filter (<https://sexpositivefamilies.com/resources/results/?bycat=&byage=preschool-elementary&bytype=+and>) which helps caregivers locate age-appropriate explanations and information on healthy sexuality and development.
- Amaze's Age Guide (<https://amaze.org/age-guide/>) shares videos with caregivers and children by age on topics geared to their development and understanding.