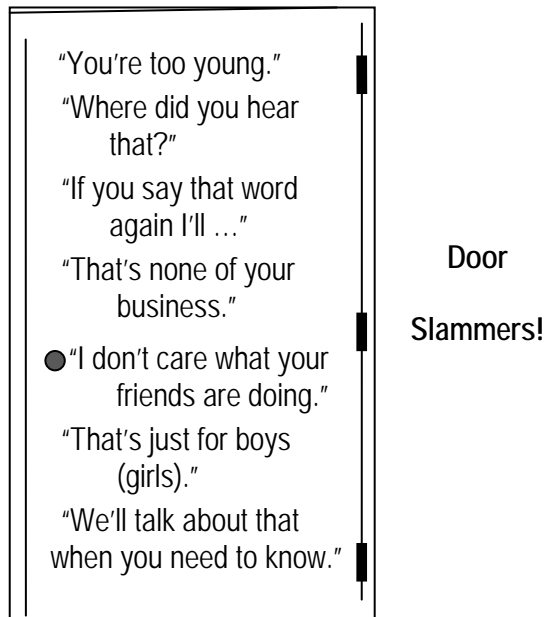
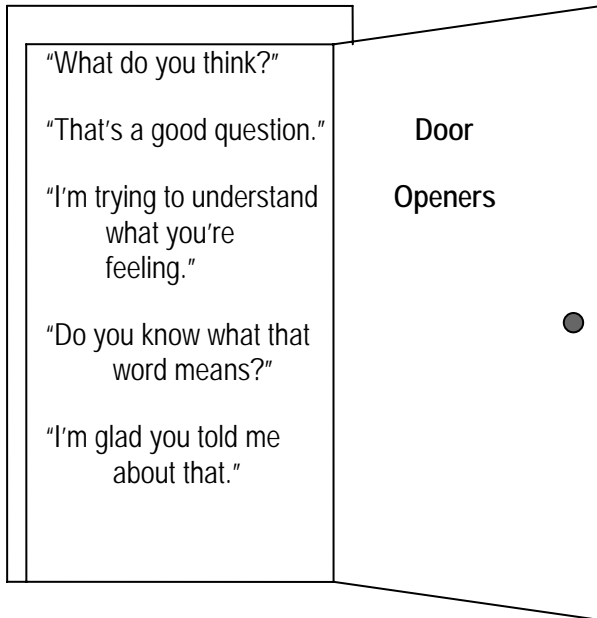


COMMUNICATION TIPS for PARENTS



BE HONEST when talking about conception or birth.

TALK ABOUT HUMANS. Talking only about animals is confusing when your child wants to know about people.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD. When your child approaches you with a question or concern, stop and listen. Hold your own immediate reaction (shock, advice, solutions) while you explore what she/he is trying to say.

GIVE CLEAR EXPLANATIONS. Use correct names for parts of the body and body functions. Children need a language to use when talking about their feelings, ideas and concerns.

SHOW YOUR INTEREST. Stop what you are doing, move toward your child, and move to his/her level.

BE PATIENT. Expect the same questions and concerns to come up. Children have difficulty grasping some information. They often need repeated reassurance about the changes they are going through.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD’S ENVIRONMENT. Current jokes, the programs they’re watching, their music – these will provide opportunities to discuss sexuality issues.

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC. Bringing up issues from time to time will give the message that you are interested in discussing sexuality. Your child may put you off (“Oh Dad” or “Yuck!”), but that doesn’t necessarily mean s/he knows it all or doesn’t want to talk.

KEEP THE DOOR OPEN. Let your child know that you are available for other conversations or questions on this topic.

MESSAGES WORTH REPEATING:

All of us are growing and changing throughout our lives.
Everyone develops in his/her own way.
Your way is unique and special and valid.
Everyone’s body is private and deserves respect.
Sexuality is a beautiful gift—something to be handled wisely.

Adapted from *Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Advocates for Youth.*

Prepared by Planned Parenthood Manitoba 1980; revised Sexuality Education Resource Centre 2003; reviewed 2008.