



THE BIRDS AND THE BEES' TIPS FOR FAMILIES SERIES

Developmental Stages

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT WHEN



EARLY CHILDHOOD (0-3) A TIME OF EXPLORING

One of the first things young children do is start exploring their bodies. This makes it a great time to start teaching them the anatomical names for their body parts. They are also exploring their own independence which makes it a great time to promote bodily autonomy. Once they can indicate "no" start asking before touching.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (4-12) A TIME FOR UNDERSTANDING

During this age, children begin to understand topics like gender identity, reproduction, and privacy. To answer these questions, use clear explanations in plain language. Start to explain how their bodies will change as they grow older. Give clear guidance about privacy. This is a good time to introduce basic safety skills like assertiveness.



ADOLESCENCE (12-19) A TIME OF CHANGING

During this time, families help youth cope with their new thoughts, feelings, and bodies. This is when most youth start having their first erotic feelings. They need to know that this will happen and how to cope. Erotic interest usually occurs well before any sexual behavior. Finally, this is an important time for sharing what your family values.

ADULTHOOD (20+) A TIME OF RESPONSIBILITY

In order to be safe in the community, adults are expected to know the laws around consent, sexual harassment, and pornography. These conversations should start in adolescence so people can be independent with the skills in adulthood. Also, family rules and provider policies need to respect that people on the spectrum are sexual beings.



GENERAL GUIDELINES CALM, CLEAR, FACTUAL

Families are often afraid to provide information about sexuality because they are afraid they will say the wrong thing or that talking about sexuality encourages sexual behavior, but when you approach sexual topics calmly, clearly, and factually, you create a foundation for being your loved one's #1 resource.