

A Valuable Letter: An easy way to talk with your kids about sex

Talking about sex with children is not just about the act of sex. Young people say they want their parents to tell them more about their *sexuality* than about sex. They want to know what their parents think is important in life, love and relationships.

Parents are the primary sexuality educators for their children. Sexuality education is a lifelong process of learning and forming attitudes and values about:

- Personal identity
- Body image
- Gender roles
- Relationships
- Intimacy
- Affection

Kids also want their parents to help them deal with their stress and confusion about sex and sexuality (along with negative peer pressure, bullying, sports, and school).

Parents are key to helping children develop a positive view of their sexuality. Here is an easy, non-threatening way for parents to start talking to their children, at any age, about sexuality. It offers parents an opportunity to reflect on their values and ideas about love and relationships. Even if expecting a child, a parent can write this letter as a way to look at relationships and plan for the future.

If you are working on your writing skills, you could dictate your letter to someone who could write it out for you - an excellent opportunity to practice and see your own words in writing!



“A Valuable Letter”

Write a letter to your children about what you value or think is important for you and for them.

Tell them what you think about love and what you would like for them when it comes to relationships. You may want to use words and language they can understand, depending on their ages.

In your letter, talk a little about the stress they may be dealing with. The stress may be about sexuality. It could also be about peer pressure, sports, school work, friends, or siblings. You are letting your children know that you understand that growing up isn't easy. Let them know some ways to cope with their stressors, such as talking to you or other supportive adults.

Here's a simple checklist for what the letter might include:

- ✓ What do you **value** (what people, ideas, beliefs)?
- ✓ What do you think about **love**—what does it look or feel like, how do you show love?
- ✓ What do you think about **relationships**— how should people treat each other?
- ✓ Acknowledge your child's **stress** and give encouragement and ideas to cope with stress

Send or give your child the letter. “A Valuable Letter” makes a great bedtime story for young children who are learning to read - even for babies!

