

YEARS
P-6

Let's talk 5 tips for answering tricky questions

1. Try not to over-answer

There's one basic rule to try and stick to: don't over-answer, just address their question. Nervousness can make us run our mouths, but try and stick to the topic if you can. That being said, if you do over-answer – don't worry. Kids generally only take in what they're ready for and filter out the rest.

2. Use clear and simple language

Try to be clear and honest, and use simple language. Don't switch to a formal tone of voice -keep things casual. Aim for a neutral way of speaking (so not shaming, but not necessarily "ray! Periods!" either. You'll have your own style). We don't want to create embarrassment around these topics, but we also don't want to make them seem bigger than they are.

3. You don't have to be perfect

It's okay to feel awkward or stumble over an answer, just so long as you're trying. You can tell them you're feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable. They'll appreciate you trying anyway. By showing that you care enough to respond, they'll feel cared for and taken seriously. And keep their confidence; you don't want them seeing you laughing about their questions later.

4. Take them seriously

Sometimes your child might ask something that seems really 'out there'. First, ask them why they're asking about it (be curious, not interrogating). Then give your answer, depending on how much you think they should know, and what you feel is appropriate. It's important that they're reassured and have the opportunity for a trusted adult (you) to explain to them what is and isn't safe, healthy and respectful.

5. It's okay to take time

If you can answer their question at the time, go for it. It's okay too if you don't know how to answer right away. But don't use it as an excuse to avoid answering the question entirely. Do some research, ask someone else and open up the chat again with your child. If they're not getting the information from you, it's likely they'll go instead to not-so-reliable sources. If you show your child that you're approachable and up for talking, you'll build their confidence in you as a person they can rely on later.