

Family Norms Exercise

The following questions can be used to start discussions in parent education groups, or be given to couples to discuss. The goal is to encourage people to articulate the norms they wish to set for their family. Encourage families to pick a date for an annual family and sexuality values talk – maybe start a new Valentine’s Day tradition! Detail on these and related topics can be found in *The Sex-Wise Parent*, (Skyhorse, 2012) Chapter 6.

What terms will you use to teach your kids about all of their (and your) body parts? How and when will you use them?

Discussion point: Children need words for genitalia easily understood by others.

Will you have a dress code?

Discussion point: Privacy, modesty, self-respect

When will you let your child bathe by himself?

Discussion points: Privacy, modesty, safety.

What rules do you want about having kids in your bed?

Discussion points: Privacy, autonomic arousal.

Will you give your kids a choice about hugging and kissing relatives?

Discussion points: Control over their own body, choice, respect.

What will you do when your child’s curiosity leads him to touch your body?

Discussion points: Privacy, role-modeling setting boundaries gently but firmly.

Will your physical signs of affection with your children change over time? How? Why?

Discussion points: Autonomic arousal, puberty, ensuring children feel loved.

How will you react when you see our child touching his or her genitalia?

Discussion points: Autonomic arousal, avoid associating sexual pleasure with fear/guilt/shame.

How can you support your child’s enjoyment of all her senses: the taste of food, the smell of a beloved person, the feel of fabric, the warmth of human touch?

Discussion points: Healthy sexuality is positive, wonderful and life affirming; too many parents only discuss the dangers and kids deserve a balanced perspective.