

# BDN BANGOR DAILY NEWS

## It's always the right time to talk to your kids about sex

by **Bangor Metro**  
January 31, 2021



### Read local!

All BDN readers enjoy 5 free articles.

Subscribe

FOR UNLIMITED ACCESS

Get Maine news direct to your inbox

[SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)



It's always the right time to talk with your kids about sex. Ideally, that's not a one-and-done conversation but an ongoing talk. Credit: Stock photo / Pexels

*By Stephanie Bouchard*

For many people, Valentine's Day conjures up thoughts of love, romance and intimacy. But sex education? Not so much. However, the holiday is one of those golden opportunities parents should seize to talk to their kids about sex and matters relating to sex.

Gulp. Most parents don't relish the idea, so we asked a couple of local sex educators — Sandra Caron, Ph.D., a family relations and human sexuality professor at the University of Maine in Orono, and Vicki Preston, one of the coordinators for Maine Family Planning's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Education Program – to share a few tips.

---

## Forget a one-and-done 'The Talk'

Ideally, talking to your kids about sex is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing conversation that starts when they are young (toddler-age



### Read local!

All BDN readers enjoy 5 free articles.

Subscribe

FOR UNLIMITED ACCESS

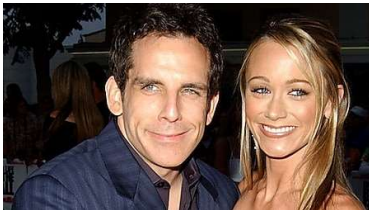
Get Maine news direct to your inbox

[SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)



Instead, be matter of fact and keep it simple. You can say, for instance, something along the lines of “there’s a special part of the mother called the uterus and when the baby’s ready to come out, it’s going to come out an opening called the vagina.” That’s all there is to it, Caron said.

For pre-teens and teens, be on the look-out for opportunities — Valentine’s Day, or a song lyric you hear on the radio, or a scene you see on TV or in a movie — to start a conversation.



SPONSORED CONTENT

## **Ben Stiller's Wife Is Now 205lbs And Looks Insane** ↗

By [WoahWorld](#)

### **Watch your tone**

Talking about sex may be uncomfortable for you, but you can learn to make it less so, Caron said. “Parents need to realize you can’t avoid this,” she said. “Your kids aren’t going to not learn about this. You make [a] decision: Do I want to be part of this or not? Do I want to send a message that I’m not someone they can turn to?” Monitor what you say and how you say it and your reactions to sex- or body-related issues.

### **Show them you are approachable**

You want to establish yourself as a go-to resource for your kids, Preston said. If you’re not sure what to say, there are numerous books and online resources available. Maine Family Planning has a handout called “The



#### **Read local!**

All BDN readers enjoy 5 free articles.

Subscribe

FOR UNLIMITED ACCESS

Get Maine news direct to your inbox

[SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)



Another great activity for families to do, Preston said, is to have a bowl on the dining table into which all members of the family can put questions or topics on a slip of paper. Each time the family sits down to eat, someone pulls a slip out and the family talks about what's on the paper.

Formats like these also take the pressure off parents to “know everything,” Preston said. Instead, parents can honestly say “I don't know” and then, with their children, set out to get answers, which is a terrific way to teach young people how to find trustworthy information about sex and sexual health — especially on the internet.

### **Use anatomically correct words**

“Don't fear the words,” Preston said. When you teach your kids to name their body parts, be as matter of fact about naming the penis and vagina as you are about naming the nose and ears. You'll help to avoid issues around body shaming, and you'll be arming your kids for life to talk about their bodies not only with intimate partners, but with health providers, too.

*This first appeared in the January/February issue of Bangor Metro magazine, available on newsstands throughout much of Maine. Bangor Metro is also available by subscription.*

© 2021 Bangor Publishing Company.

Proudly powered by Newspaper by Automattic



### **Read local!**

All BDN readers enjoy 5 free articles.

Subscribe

FOR UNLIMITED ACCESS

Get Maine news direct to your inbox

[SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

