

Talking with young people about pornography

PARENTS'
GUIDE



What do you need to know?

Our kids live in a digital world. It's no surprise that many of them see pornography.

It's normal for young people to be curious about sex and while younger children might see porn for the first time by accident, teens are more likely to be seeking it out. The best way to support them is to have open, honest conversations about what they might see and how it's different from real sex and relationships.

It won't be a one-off conversation but hopefully this guide provides a way to get started.

Our research shows that young people turn to porn for sex ed. They see stuff that's unrealistic and problematic, so it's good if parents and whānau can talk to them about it, but how?

Let's start talking

Have you talked to your child about sex? In order to start this conversation you need to have had the sex talk first. For support with this visit www.familyplanning.org.nz

Once you've done that here are some tips on how to get started...



CHOOSE THE RIGHT MOMENT

A private, quiet time to talk, like a car ride or during an activity together.



BE OPEN AND HONEST

Acknowledge that this conversation may be awkward.



SHOW RESPECT

Respect their opinions and boundaries; don't embarrass them by making jokes.



ACTIVELY LISTEN

Try to let your own ideas take a back seat and really listen.



LEARN FROM THEM

Get them to teach you what they know about things like consent.



BE PATIENT

Don't give up, try and try again.

What to talk about:

REAL SEX IS

- real people
- intimate; kissing, hugging, caring
- about pleasure
- positive communication and interaction

PORN IS

- performed by actors
- fantasy – not how real people interact/treat each other
- often lacking in consent
- unrealistic expectations of sex and relationships

AGGRESSION

- It's common to have seen violence and aggression in pornography.
- This most frequently shows men controlling or dominating another person, often women.
- Talk to your young person about the importance of an equal balance of power in all intimate relationships and that violence is never okay.

CONSENT

- Consent is essential when it comes to sex, and needs to be clear. Porn doesn't often show this.
- If you are unsure whether someone is consenting you must stop and check in.

Starting the conversation with your teen

ASK what they think is important in a healthy relationship. It's a great way to discuss fantasy vs reality in pornography.

ASK whether how people look and act in pornography reflects what they see in the real world; at school, home and in the community.

ASK what they think the impacts of watching porn are. Try to respect their points of view, even if you disagree with them.

ASK what they think the impacts of viewing pornography might be for a younger brother or sister or family friend. This helps them to share without it being about them.

ASK how pornography makes them feel. It's important to really listen to what they say.



USE TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Talk about news stories, ads and shows with messaging that could reflect stereotypes that exist in pornography.

If you are worried about your child's relationship with pornography you can visit our website for support, information and resources to suit different age groups. You can also call or text 1737 anytime, for free, to talk to a trained counsellor.

TE MANA WHAKAATU
**Classification
Office**

ABOUT US

The Classification Office is an independent Crown entity which classifies films and other content and has a key role providing information about classification work. It conducts research and produces evidence-based resources to promote media literacy and enable New Zealanders to make informed choices about content they consume.

Social media @NZOFLC

For practical advice and videos visit: www.classificationoffice.govt.nz