

# Sexual Health Week

## 11 – 17 September 2017



### Talking with your children about subjects related to porn

For [Sexual Health Week](#) this year, we're talking about porn. We carried out a survey of more than 2,000 parents\* to find out how they feel about discussing subjects related to porn with their children.

#### Why is it important?

- Pornography is one of the top five factors that parents said they believed could have an **impact on their children's views of sex and relationships as they grow up**. The other four were TV, films, social media and their children's friends.
- More parents think that their children are likely to **see porn by accident** (69%) than deliberately (50%).

#### Who should do it and when?

- Almost three quarters of parents (72%) believe that **both parents and schools** should be talking to young people about subjects related to pornography, such as body image, self-esteem, consent and communication.
- 81% of parents believe it's a good idea to start talking to young people about subjects related to pornography – in a way that's suitable for their age – **before they're 16 years old**. Over half (54%) of parents think it's a good idea to start talking about these subjects when young people are **13 years old or younger**.

#### What do parents think they should be talking about?

- **87%** of parents have either already discussed **body image or self-esteem related to pornography** with their child, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.
- **88%** of parents have either already discussed with their child **how pornography doesn't often show the safest ways of having sex in order to avoid getting a sexually transmitted infection or getting pregnant**, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.
- **75%** of parents have either already discussed **whether their child is happy with the role pornography plays in their life**, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.
- **88%** of parents have either already discussed with their child **the importance of communication in sex, and how pornography doesn't often show this very well**, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.
- **90%** of parents have either already discussed with their child **the importance of consent in sex, and how pornography doesn't often show this very well**, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.

- **88%** of parents have either already discussed with their child **the difference between the sex that's shown in a lot of pornography, and sex in real life**, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.
- **89%** of parents have either already discussed with their child **what they can do if they see pornography that upsets them, or someone tries to pressure them into watching it**, or believe that it should be discussed at the appropriate age.

## Do parents who want to talk about it feel able to?

Of parents who told us that they believe it's a **good idea** to start talking to young people about subjects related to pornography (in a way that's suitable for their age) **before they're 13 years old**, and have a child who's older than that, aged between 13 and 18:

- **53%** hadn't discussed **body image or self-esteem** related to pornography with their child
- **54%** hadn't discussed with their child how pornography doesn't often show the **safest ways of having sex** in order to avoid getting a sexually transmitted infection or getting pregnant
- **68%** hadn't discussed whether their child is happy with **the role pornography plays in their life**
- **55%** hadn't discussed the importance of **communication** in sex, and how pornography doesn't often show this very well
- **47%** hadn't discussed the importance of **consent** in sex, and how pornography doesn't often show this very well
- **52%** hadn't discussed the **difference** between the sex that's shown in a lot of pornography, and sex in real life
- **50%** hadn't discussed with their child what they can do if they see pornography that upsets them, or someone tries to **pressure them into watching it**.

Some reasons parents gave for not having discussed subjects related to porn with their children included finding it **awkward or embarrassing** (16%), feeling they **didn't know enough** about the issue (9%), **not being sure what to say** (17%), and not wanting to **embarrass their child** (19%).

## Notes

\*Survey of 2,004 parents in the UK. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Atomik Research. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11 August and 14 August 2017. The survey was carried out online. The survey was representative of all UK parents of children aged between 4 and 18.

If you are a journalist and would like a further breakdown of the survey results, please email [press@fpa.org.uk](mailto:press@fpa.org.uk).