

# LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

A GUIDE FOR  
PARENTS  
on children's  
sexual development  
at elementary school age



Bundesinstitut für  
Öffentliche Gesundheit

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT TO EXPECT

**If you occasionally ask yourself whether, when and how you should talk to your child about sexuality, how you can address openly and well the topics of physicality, experimentation and boundaries and how you can support your child in the development of their sexuality from an early age – then this brochure may be helpful for you. It describes the physical and emotional changes and the challenges associated with the onset of sexual maturity and the path to it. But also the possible uncertainties, questions and arguments that can arise in the family.**

It addresses children's experiences of love, tenderness and relationships and describes how parents and caregivers can educate children about topics such as sex, fertility, contraception and much more.

The brochure is intended to help you support your child in their development to allow them to lead a self-determined life later in terms of their sexuality and relationships. Holistic sex education helps children to feel comfortable and safe in their bodies. At the same time, it helps to prevent sexualized violence. Children who know about their bodies and sexuality are also more likely to be protected against sexual assault, as they can communicate better and name situations more clearly.

### SEXUALITY IS PART OF OUR LIVES

Sexuality develops over the course of a lifetime. It is important to know that the sexual development of children and their experiences are fundamentally different from adult sexuality and must be distinguished from it. A child's interaction with their body and their needs is playful, spontaneous, curious and not oriented towards specific goals. The essential foundations of gender identity, body perception and the ability to bond and relate are laid in childhood. These are all important building blocks for later sexuality and relationships.

### A PERSON'S DEVELOPMENT IS INDIVIDUAL

In the individual development of your child, the physical changes are just as important as the emotional ones. Children's preoccupation with their own bodies and physical closeness to other people play a particularly important role from an early age.

One thing is certain: Every child develops at their own pace from birth and has their own unique characteristics.





# “CAN WE TALK?”

## SERENITY AND CALM

**No matter how old your child is, you have probably already noticed that if you are calm and relaxed, in many cases this will also be reflected in your child’s behavior. It’s easier to talk to each other in a relaxed atmosphere. This is similar when dealing with the topic of sexuality in education. Be aware that, from the very moment of birth, your child reacts to your behavior. You are a role model for your child in every respect and they will look to you for guidance.**

*"Children only discover their bodies little by little. It's not about sex as we adults see it, it's just about discovering and exploring new things."*

### PARENT QUOTE

#### Address issues early on

It makes sense to start explaining things about the body and its functions at an early age, at the latest when you realize that your child is interested in it. Children develop an uninhibited curiosity about their bodies at an early age and this continues beyond elementary school. During this time, they often want to know what sexual organs are, whether there are different ones and what they are for. You can support your child by helping them find the answers. It is important to speak in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate and in a language that the child can understand, without giving long lectures. Sometimes children just want a brief answer to a question so that they can get back to their games.

#### Do not pretend

Explain what your child would like to know in the simplest possible terms. You will quickly notice if it becomes difficult for your child to understand something. Perhaps you don't know the answer yourself or find it difficult to talk about it. That's perfectly fine and normal. Don't be afraid to show when you are unsure or when you need to laugh and be open about your feelings. This often helps to loosen up "awkward" situations and to have a trusting conversation. You can look up the things you don't know together and find out.

At every stage of your child's development, honesty is the best policy.



### CHILDREN WANT TO DISCOVER THEIR BODIES

Sexuality in children is not the same as adult sexuality. In contrast to adult sexuality, children do not live out their sexuality intentionally and purposefully. For them, experiencing and discovering the body is linked to the feelings they have about it. Children want to know: What is normal? What is okay? Am I okay?

#### Every development has its own pace

Sexual development does not follow a plan that is the same for everyone. Just as the first teeth come in at different speeds as part of physical development, the mental and emotional development of each child is also different. Everything takes time. Allow your child to go at their own pace.

Remain sensitive and attentive to moments when your child needs you. If you are unsure whether your child has a question or would like to know something, ask them. This also supports the relationship between you two. Use normal everyday situations such as having a meal together, playing together or a weekend outing to address topics that may be very important.

If there is an open, trusting atmosphere at home in which you signal that sexuality can also be a topic, your child will feel confident to ask questions.

#### What do you want to teach them?

When your child was younger, you were the caregiver "in charge" of tenderness. Now you have more tasks ahead of you. Now you can also be a contact person and role model in dealing with the topic of sexuality. Make a conscious decision about what you want your child to learn from you in terms of sex education. These topics are also discussed in class and among peers, for example in the playground. Accept that the opinions of friends are becoming more important for your child. At the same time, you need to be there for your child to help them understand what they have heard or seen. In addition, your child is now gaining important relationship experience in their circle of friends. You can also support them with dealing with these experiences as a point of contact.

### PARENT QUOTE

*"It helped me a lot to simply put myself in my child's shoes. I suddenly understood more."*



# USE YOUR OWN WORDS

## TALKING ABOUT SEX

### WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU?

**Start with yourself. Perhaps with questions like these: What were my childhood experiences of sexuality like? How did my parents approach the subject? And: What would I have liked and what would have helped me? This can be a way to get a feel for the situation your child is in. Try to think: What is important to me? What do I want to teach my child? What would I like to give them? Which parent is the right person to talk to or is it both? Stay open to your child's feelings and thoughts and see what might help them.**

"Humor can help. Sometimes a joke breaks the ice, but it mustn't be too embarrassing either."

### PARENT QUOTE



### THE TALK – MORE THAN JUST TALKING

There is no such thing as THE one TALK and THE right time. Sex education is an ongoing process. There is always a need to talk about something, as your child's current interests and questions change. It is a good idea to have these conversations in the moment when questions arise.

When your child asks you questions, it is a great sign of trust, and a bravely asked question deserves an honest answer. It can be helpful to ask yourself a few questions: What would I have wished for back then? What would have helped me back then?

It's ok to be unsure. If your child is curious about topics relating to sexuality, this is a great opportunity to start a conversation on the subject.

If questions arise, you should respond to them as openly as possible. You can also talk about things that are important to you. Feel free to take the step yourself and approach your child with something you want to talk about. Try to be honest and authentic, and if your child doesn't want to talk about it at that moment, you should respect this.

If your child surprises you with a question that you may not know the answer to yourself, you can show that you don't know. After all, this is an intimate and sensitive area of life. It's not so easy to talk about it, and certainly not with every person. It's normal to falter at first, even as an adult – it's okay to be unsure yourself!

Your child may tend to avoid talking about sexuality. Talking about it can be embarrassing for your child. This is also normal. If your child knows that they can talk to you about it and if you signal to them that sexuality can be a topic of conversation, they may come to you of their own accord in another situation.



### TALKING NEEDS RULES

Create an atmosphere together with your child in which everyone feels comfortable. This, of course, includes things like:

- # Listening to each other and showing an interest.
- # Taking what the other person says seriously.
- # Practicing telling each other when something nice, funny or sad has happened.
- # Trying to understand how the other person feels.
- # Showing respect for each other's boundaries.
- # Laughing together can be very liberating.

### ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO SPEAK UP ABOUT THINGS

Help your child to learn how to express themselves so that they are able to find words for the situation they are experiencing. Expressing needs, voicing uncertainties, being able to formulate questions and wishes clearly – these are all important things that will help your child now and later. And it's good to know that you can always try again. The important thing is that you always offer your child support and that you respond to your child's changing needs. By asking questions, your child determines the topics and the depth of the conversation. Depending on the stage of development, reality of their living situation or even mental capabilities, for example in the case of a disability, these can be very different. You can also use illustrations from books or the internet to explain things clearly.

Think carefully about which words you would like to use when talking to your child. Your child will often send you signals, like looking at you questioningly or take an interest in the condom machine in the public toilet, for example. This is a good opportunity that you can seize.

### PARENT QUOTE

"My experience is that I simply have to get down to business. I mustn't sound like a biology book or pander to the language of young people."



# WELL, I'M NOT SURE HOW TO ANSWER THAT

WHAT CHILDREN WANT  
TO KNOW ABOUT  
PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

**You will probably find yourself in this situation at some point: Out of nowhere, your child asks a question that baffles you. "What does 'fuck' mean?" Are you now perplexed, confused or shocked? How does your child know this word? And how can you respond to this?**

**YOUR CHILD SETS THE PACE**

This example illustrates quite well the fact that sex education doesn't start when you're ready. And it doesn't start with "Right, kiddo, it's time to have the TALK." Between the ages of 6 and 10 – and sometimes even earlier – girls and boys often start such conversations with their parents all by themselves. At this stage, they usually tell us exactly what is on their mind. And this will probably include questions about sex – depending on what they have heard in the schoolyard, on the way to school or during sports.

**HOW TO REACT APPROPRIATELY**

You have little influence over what your child picks up. But you can help your child to put things into context. It's also nice when your child comes to you with such questions. This shows courage and that they have a lot of trust in you, so keep calm and relax. Do not react to a question that does not seem appropriate for their age by getting upset or angry. It's better to answer the question in a way that your child understands and ask why this question is on your child's mind. Show genuine interest. This also sends a clear signal for the ever-nearing phase of puberty: "You can talk to me. You don't have to be ashamed of asking questions."

**WHAT IS A CHILD-FRIENDLY ANSWER?**

To find such an answer, you must always bear in mind that girls' and boys' understanding is constantly expanding. For example, young children are usually not very familiar with gender differences. For them, things like hairstyles or clothing are still the most important distinguishing features. Only later do they understand that the sexes are also distinguished by the sexual organs. So always bear your child's stage of development in mind when you ask yourself how much detail you should go into when answering questions.

**"BUT THEY'LL LEARN ABOUT IT AT SCHOOL"**

Yes and no. Learning takes place with and without words. Even if you show your child through your behavior and perhaps also through words that you do not want to make sexuality a topic, this is a message regarding sexuality, namely: that it is better not to talk about it or that it is perhaps an embarrassing topic for which there are no words that may be spoken at home. What's more, you are responsible for educating and explaining things to your child. You are responsible for raising your child and their education and you know them best. At the same time, institutions such as kindergartens and schools also have the duty to educate. This also includes sex education. Both you and the institutions convey values and norms on this topic and pass them on to your child.

In kindergarten, the children learn to talk about topics such as feelings like jealousy, or friendships. This is also an important part of education. Later at school, it's more about imparting knowledge, for example about biology or different ways of life. The school takes into account the social, societal and emotional aspects of sex education. The curriculum includes sexual organs, pregnancy and birth. Topics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, setting and respecting boundaries, sexually transmitted infections and protection against them as well as different contraceptive methods are also discussed according to the developmental stage of the students.

Students are taught about sex in schools. All students should be informed about this subject and be able to find further information or counseling services if needed or if they are interested. The aim of sex education, both in classes and other forms, is to enable children to live their sexuality responsibly as teenagers, young adults and adults. The foundations for this are laid early on, as is the case everywhere in education. Although all federal states have included sex education in their curricula and thus established it as mandatory for all pupils, the focus varies from state to state.

In conversations with you, your child will also ask the odd knowledge question, but mostly it will be about topics such as feelings, friendships or insecurities with regard to physical changes. Closeness and trust between you and your child play a major role. An institution like school cannot necessarily achieve this. Perhaps because of their training, teachers often find it easier to teach children about sexuality in a factual way. And sometimes the children are more comfortable talking about it with other people. But you as parents have an important role and, above all, other ways of reaching your child. You can respond individually, situationally and emotionally to your child and their questions and needs.

Even if your child's school does provide sex education, parents still have the necessary task of educating their children and supporting them in their development, including sexual development. You can give your child the information if and when they need it. They can also ask you questions that they would be rather uncomfortable asking in front of the class. Sometimes it is also easier to open up in a safe space. Your child also has a different emotional relationship with you. This can also make it easier for them to turn to you for help with emotional issues. For example, if they wonder what it feels like to be in love, are lovesick, or have questions about friendships and relationships, perhaps also if they are unsure what a good or a bad friend is.

Last but not least: If there is a relationship of trust at home, your child will trust you and that is a good basis for talking about such personal and touching topics.

Education also takes place in everyday life and not necessarily just at the kitchen table or in the classroom. Your child may have questions and ask them out of the blue in any everyday situation – for example, if you see a pregnant woman on a family walk and your child wants to know more.

### **YOU ARE A FATHER OR MOTHER AND NOT A PERFECT TEACHING PROFESSIONAL**

Take your responsibility to explain things to your child. But don't force anything. They don't need to know everything about sex. Nobody expects you to give a textbook lecture on biological processes. Simply let your child know that you are always there, take all questions seriously and support them in their search for answers. This helps them to become more self-confident, develop a positive body image and learn to build trusting relationships with other people. In this way, you can give your child the opportunity to gain experience and develop in an age-appropriate way. You can be a valuable companion for your child, especially because of your life experience. Your child will see you as a role model and will try to imitate you in many ways and will be guided by what is important to you.



### **QUESTIONS AND UNCERTAINTIES**

Take the opportunity your child offers by being so open and directly coming to you. This will subside during puberty. Now you are the first point of contact for questions or uncertainties. You have the opportunity to shape the relationship between you and your child in a positive way at an early stage, also in matters of sexuality and with regard to puberty.



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# PUBERTY IS ON THE HORIZON

## CHILDREN'S SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE

**One thing is certain: Puberty doesn't happen overnight. Quite the opposite: The physical requirements for sexual development during puberty are created long before this. The child's body produces hormones that influence the growth of primary and secondary sexual characteristics several years before the onset of sexual maturity. This also has a direct impact on children's sexual perception and behavior. This raises questions for many parents. "Why is my child behaving like this? Is this normal? Is that appropriate for their age? What should I do?" It is quite normal for children to change their behavior and for parents to have questions and doubts.**



## TOPICS AND VALUES

Find the topics and values that you want to talk about with your child and feel free to offer to talk. Perhaps it will help if you think back to your childhood and the first time you fell in love in elementary school. How did you feel? Did you have any questions? Would you have liked to talk about it? Who supported you in this regard, what was helpful for you and what was difficult for you? Now you have the opportunity to support your child as they go through these perhaps turbulent times.

### WITH CURIOSITY AND FUN

You may not always understand your child's behavior at this age or it may seem awkward to you. For example, many children visibly enjoy throwing around sexual terms that they have picked up somewhere, often without knowing exactly what they mean. From a parent's point of view, this can seem quite provocative or even odd. That is quite normal. This is because children try out very different ways of expressing tenderness, their likes or dislikes etc. to others during this phase. And that includes language. Sometimes it helps to explain exactly what certain words, including swear words, mean. You can also "google" them together. You will find amazing things and reveal the meanings of the words at the same time.

### FALLING IN LOVE

By elementary school, many children already know what it feels like to be in love. They know the feeling of butterflies in their stomachs and suddenly feel particularly attracted to others their age. These first attempts at love and relationships are very delicate. All people and, of course, all children are very sensitive and vulnerable in this matter. Perhaps you can support your child in these attempts. Sometimes it is also a game for the children and they choose who they "fall in love" with. Yet they often don't really know what being in love actually means. They are attempting to approach the subject and try it out. You can also talk to your child about this. You can tell them what being in love and friendship mean to you, and listen if your child has questions, or perhaps if they just want to tell you something.

For children, falling in love is often a serious matter. Many are insecure and get upset when their feelings are made public or ridiculed – by classmates, for example. Try to respect your child's behavior by showing understanding for feelings of infatuation or compassion for your child's feelings of disappointment, no matter when the inevitable happens.

### WHO AM I? FINDING YOURSELF

The leap from kindergarten to school is an exciting time for children. Not only do they have to learn to concentrate – they are now also developing an idea of how they want to be. Suddenly, girls prefer to play with other girls and boys prefer contact with other boys. A rift seems to open up between the sexes. You might even hear: "Boys are just stupid and girls are bitchy!"

It is difficult for parents to understand why some elementary school children emphasize being a boy or a girl so much.

But now it is important for some children to emphasize differences between the sexes. This can be seen, for example, when the behavior of male or female role models is imitated. This often takes place in a very clear, sometimes exaggerated form. For your child, differentiating themselves from another gender means affirming their own gender and is therefore a form of self-discovery, for example to learn to understand themselves better as a girl or a boy. As parents, it is important for you to know that self-discovery in relation to one's own gender is a normal developmental step. This behavior often mellows out over time and children discover that they also have other sides to them. And this is exactly where you can support your child. For example, you can collect and question different ideas about gender roles in a talk with them. What are "typical girls" and "typical boys" supposed to be? Does it really have to be this way? And what role do knowledge, skills, preferences and talents play?

While the discourse about gender diversity is extremely important, it is at the same time important for many children to identify with a particular gender. Many people think: "It's simple with gender: We are born with a certain gender, which means either a girl or a boy." But it's not always that simple: Some children cannot be clearly assigned to a gender at birth. And although some are clearly assigned as a girl or boy, they experience early on that they do not feel they belong to the gender assigned to them at birth. For all children, this phase is about developing their own gender identity. Please also read the chapter on "The gender identity."

### THE INFLUENCE OF ADULTS

Mothers and fathers, teachers and other adults exert influence – often unconsciously – on children becoming "proper" girls or "proper" boys.

#### WHAT ROLE MODEL DO I HAVE?

It is often the case that girls are still encouraged to nurture their relationships or care for others. On the other hand, if they are loud and rebellious, they may attract negative attention. Boys are usually shown more understanding if they make noise and are demanding.

Depending on their upbringing, girls may find it more difficult than boys to keep their own needs in mind and to clearly defend themselves if something happens against their will. The way boys are brought up may make them believe that they are invulnerable and that they always have to deal with problems on their own.



### DEVELOPMENT IS INDIVIDUAL

Children develop differently. But there is no such thing as the "typical girl" and the "typical boy." Support your child's development, for example, by offering different experiences and encouraging them to try out different things, whether it's playing a sport, playing an instrument, cooking or making something themselves. Places to try out and get involved can be a sports club, a vacation camp or school clubs. Children can also experience and try out new things together with you or others. All these offers that you present to your child will support their individual development and strengthen their personality.

### CHILDREN FIND THEIR WAY

Do your child a favor and don't try to force them into a certain role. Give your child the freedom they need and allow them to explore their own developmental horizons and decide which sports, hobbies or interests they want to pursue. This will allow them to learn different skills and discover a wide range of potential. These experiences and opportunities strengthen identity and promote development. This allows your child to develop without pressure.

However, freedom also means that you do not consciously try to raise your child against typical expectations. If your daughter prefers to play with dolls rather than cars, that's perfectly okay. If your son doesn't want to dance and would rather play soccer, that's perfectly fine too.

### HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THEM

Encourage your child if they prefer hobbies and leisure activities that are not "typical" for their gender. If friends and relatives make unkind remarks about this, support and encourage your child to find and follow their own path. It is important that your child be free to choose their interests and receives your support in doing so.

## THE GENDER IDENTITY



**Girl or boy? Many take this as a given; it's obvious, you can see it. But for some people it's not so clear-cut.**

### INTERSEX PEOPLE

There are people whose physical sexual characteristics cannot be clearly assigned as female or male. For example, they are born with a penis and a vagina or a vagina and testicles. These people are called intersex, or simply inter.

Intersexuality occurs in all cultures and ethnicities and has always existed.

In most cases, doctors determine at birth that the genitals cannot be clearly assigned to the male or female sex.

In the past, these children were nevertheless assigned a gender, i.e. male or female. This assigned gender was then entered accordingly on the birth certificate. With the consent of the parents, measures were then often taken very early on to adapt the bodies of intersex babies to the medical concepts of male and female. However, these treatments often have serious, lifelong consequences for the body and psyche of inter people. It is also not yet possible to predict at birth in which direction the child will develop. For this reason, since 2021, treatments aimed solely at conforming the body to the male or female norm have been prohibited for children who cannot give their consent.

For some people, however, it can also be the case that their gender appears unambiguous at birth, but their intersexuality only becomes apparent in the course of their lives. This occurs, for example, when a person is born with female genitalia but has a male chromosome set.

A basic distinction is made between primary, secondary and tertiary sexual characteristics. The primary ones include the sexual organs, the development of which is determined by the sex chromosomes and hormonal influences. It is estimated that one in 2000 children in Germany is born with an "ambiguous" sex. It is important to know that most intersex children are healthy and do not require medical or even surgical interventions. Some intersex people identify and feel as women, some as men. And some feel they are both, some feel they don't belong to either gender.

Since November 2013, parents no longer have to decide whether to have “boy” or “girl” entered on the birth certificate when a child with indeterminate sex characteristics is born. You can choose not to specify the gender at all. Since 2018, it has also been possible to register your sex as “divers” (German term for “non-binary”). All together, there are four different entries possible for sex: male, female, non-binary and not specified. This means that intersex people can also be better catered for than before.

Children whose physical sex characteristics cannot be clearly categorized as female or male develop just as individually as other children of the same age. They also imitate gestures and behavior, try things out and develop their own gender identity. They usually do this according to which gender they feel they belong to. But it’s not that easy for everyone. If you are the parent of an intersex child, it is important that you support your child through this process and let them know that you are there to listen to and support them.

### **TRANS\***

Some people realize at some point that they do not or only partially feel that they belong to the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans\* is a collective term for a wide variety of self-definitions and identities.

Many trans\* people want to live in their perceived and not in their assigned gender. This can also become clear in children. For example, an elementary school child can already clearly feel this: “The gender doesn’t suit me. I identify as a girl and want to be accepted as such.”

Over time, it may become apparent that this is not just a phase.

If your child does not feel comfortable in their assigned gender, it is important that you as parents and caregivers support them with love and care in their individual development. Let your child know that they can always turn to you.

In the notes we have compiled further information and contact details for advice centers.

### **CHANGE OF GENDER ENTRY AND FIRST NAMES**

With the entry into force of the Act on Self-Determination (German abbreviation: SBGG) on November 1, 2024, it is now possible for trans, inter and non-binary persons to have their gender entry and first names changed in the civil register by making a declaration to the registry office.

For minors up to the age of 14, the legal guardians can submit the declaration of change to the registry office in the presence of the minor. The declaration requires the consent of the child if they have reached the age of five.

Minors aged 14 and over can submit the declaration of change themselves. However, to be legally valid, the declaration requires the consent of the legal guardians.

It is often very difficult for trans children when their bodies develop “incorrectly” during puberty, i.e. not according to their wishes. It is possible to block physical development by taking hormones. However, these treatments are controversial and require close psychological and medical counseling and support.

There is also the option of gender reassignment surgery with psychological and medical support. Such gender reassignment measures are only possible from adolescence and should be carefully considered. It often makes sense to wait until adulthood. However, some trans people have only partial or no surgical and/or medical procedures carried out. Here, too, it is important to remember: Every person is different and unique.



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# THINGS ARE CHANGING

## DEVELOPMENT IN FULL SWING

**Everyone needs areas that belong only to them, i.e. inner and outer retreats. These places may hold thoughts and experiences here that do not want to be shared with others. The older children get, the more important it is that we give them their privacy.**

**RESPECT YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY**

Your child is entitled to time alone. Children often want a place where they can be undisturbed and simply be themselves. Accept this need of your child. It is good and important to be able to be alone and left to your own devices. It is certain that your child just wants to have their peace and quiet from time to time.

It is helpful if you agree with your child how you will let each other know when your child or you would like to be alone: for example, by letting the other know in advance, locking the room or putting up a corresponding door sign. As parents, make it a habit to knock before entering the child's room. This is a simple way of showing your child that you respect their privacy. This will also teach your child to develop respect for the privacy of others.

**TINGLES AND TICKLES**

For some children, the time between childhood and puberty is also a time when they explore their own bodies. That doesn't have to be the case, but it can be.

A gentle caress, a pleasant shiver when they touch a certain part of their body: Some children discover early on where it is nice to caress themselves. Experiencing this is a completely normal part of children's sexual development. Children know where the body tingles most when it is stroked. When children stroke and pleasure themselves, it is an intense experience for them. It is part of your child's normal development to find out for themselves what is pleasurable and what is not. And there will be phases in which they are more or less prone to masturbation.

Talking about masturbation is not easy. The very idea of children making themselves feel good in this way can be difficult and weird for parents. Some then forbid it, simply because they can't deal with it themselves.

Some parents ask themselves: Can masturbation be a topic we talk about? Should it be a topic of discussion? And if so, how?

When children are smaller, they may slide around dreamily on a cushion or play with their penis. They do this simply because they realize that it calms them down or makes them feel good. If you notice them doing something like this, there is no need to say anything to them. You don't have to forbid it and you don't have to look over the children's shoulders. On the contrary: Let your child have these experiences. Exploring their body and discovering what makes them feel good is part of a child's development and is completely normal. But it is important to teach your child that they should not do this in public, for example in the swimming pool, but that it is a very private, personal thing that people do for themselves when they are alone.

How you as parents react to children exploring their bodies and making themselves feel good depends on how you yourself feel about it and what ideas you have grown up with. You can ask yourself: How do I stand to the issue of masturbation? What messages was I given in the past? What was helpful and what was not? You may have been told that masturbation is not allowed, that it is not something you can talk about or that it is viewed negatively.

Today it's good to know that masturbation is also about getting to know your own body. This allows the youngster to experience what they like and what feels good in a protected environment.

You can do a lot to help your child develop a positive awareness of their own body. Experiencing things themselves without their parents controlling everything or being present everywhere is a completely normal need for children. Masturbation is also something completely normal, and the natural discovery of one's own body paves the way for a responsible and conscious approach to sexuality later on. Criticism or inappropriate jokes at the child's expense would only embarrass them. If parents notice that their child is exploring their body, they should refrain from making any remarks on the matter.

*"I remember my own childhood: At some point, I wanted to lock the bathroom door while showering."*

### PARENT QUOTE

You might never explicitly talk to your child about it. But you can signal through your attitude and behavior that this is a private matter that everyone can shape for themselves. For example, by not making any allusions to or innuendos about it, or by knocking when your child is alone in the bathroom or in their room. Children do not have to talk to their parents about masturbation and their own experiences with it. That's just their private life!

You can also show your open attitude as a parent by respectfully holding back or making general comments on the subject, such as that it is completely normal and a nice way to get to know your own body.



### BETWEEN FREEDOM AND SHAME

Accept your child's shame and give them the freedom to be how they feel.

Do not demand exaggerated shame behavior from your child.

### SHAME DEVELOPS NATURALLY

It is a natural part of a child's development that they begin to look at themselves and their actions through the eyes of other people. Around the time they are starting school, many children still like to be naked at home, others do not. While it used to be fun to run around the garden stark naked, even when strangers were present, children now no longer want to do this. They no longer want to be seen undressed or only in their underpants. Although there is no breast protrusion yet, it is no longer enough for girls to just wear swimming trunks when they go swimming.

This conscious self-awareness is an important step towards growing up. This developmental step also contributes to learning and internalizing shame. Shame helps a person to assess certain areas of daily life appropriately and to choose for themselves to whom and in what situation they want to show themselves naked and to whom and when not.

The older children get, the more shame they develop. At elementary school age, children distinguish between their private environment and the public sphere. They acquire cultural knowledge and social norms and thus learn which behavior is appropriate or inappropriate and where.

It is interesting to know that shame is universal. In all cultures around the world, people know shame. Shame also means protection. We don't want to show ourselves naked to just anyone, and that's a good thing. All over the world, shame can be recognized by the same behaviors: People break eye contact, lower their gaze, blush, hold their hands in front of their face or turn away. Researchers have found clear signs of shame in people as young as two years old. All children around the age of six show shame.

**SHAME DURING PUBERTY**

In the phase of puberty, which can start at different ages, children prefer to hide their genital area also from their family. The era of locked bathroom doors is beginning.

**HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?**

As your child moves into puberty, it can help to think about a few things regarding living together in a household with others:

- # How did you deal with nudity at home?
- # Did you have a lockable room?
- # Where could you go to be undisturbed back then?
- # Who was allowed to lock the bathroom, when and for how long?
- # What would you like to do with your own child today that differs from how your parents treated you?

Children experience not only their own nudity, but also the nudity of others as shameful. Many things that have to do with the developing body and personal hygiene are suddenly “totally embarrassing.” Girls and boys usually only find a more relaxed approach to their own nudity after puberty.

**AND IF YOU ARE “CAUGHT” HAVING SEX...**

When living with children, it may happen that your child will “catch” you during sexual intercourse. This is a situation to which children react with a mixture of curiosity and uncertainty: Why are they moaning so strangely? What kind of strange movements are they making? If you notice that your child is becoming aware of your sexuality, talk to them about it calmly. Tell them that it is normal if the child finds it very strange and that you are sorry that they have seen/heard this. Because sex is a matter for adults, children don’t want to and shouldn’t find out about it. But if it does happen, you can help your child to understand what they saw/heard. Tell them that adults enjoy sex and sexual intercourse if they want it and their partner does too. Once they have been informed, they will be able to name what they have seen, but will need your help to process the situation emotionally. Under no circumstances, however, should you set out to get “caught.” Sexual advances, explicit sexual touching or sexual intercourse only belong in the intimate sphere of a couple.

**LEARNING PERSONAL HYGIENE**

**At elementary school age, intimate hygiene should be a matter of course for children and should be done by them independently. While you may have previously made sure that intimate areas of the body were washed regularly, your child can now develop a feeling for daily personal hygiene themselves.**

You will probably now be less and less involved in your child’s bathroom activities. Therefore, late childhood offers the last opportunity to influence attitudes towards personal hygiene in the intimate area. It’s not so much about washing off dirt or fighting body odor.

The genitals are very sensitive parts of the body that should only be cleaned very carefully. If you share the bathroom with your children, they will look very closely at how you wash and treat your body.

Your behavior serves as a role model. Demonstrate that your body is valuable to you and that you like to treat it with care and keep it clean. And this also includes the vulva, penis and bottom. It is helpful to talk about this with the children and explain hygiene. Even if this is not always possible: It’s easier and less shameful for boys if they can learn it from their father, and for girls if they can learn it from their mother.

**FOR BOYS**

Carefully pull back the foreskin and wash the glans, penis, testicles and anus. Warm water is sufficient for this.

Your son may find that the foreskin cannot be pulled over the glans at all or only partially. This may be because the glans and foreskin are still stuck together, the opening of the foreskin is too narrow or the attachment band on the underside (frenulum) is too short. In this case, you should consult a specialist in pediatrics and adolescent medicine in order to obtain a reliable diagnosis and, if necessary, initiate treatment.

**FOR GIRLS**

Girls' intimate hygiene involves gently spreading the vulva lips (labia) and washing there and around the anus with warm water.

The inside of the vagina is protected from harmful influences such as germs and bacteria by its own vaginal flora and must not be washed out. Girls should be cautious about the intensity of their intimate hygiene, as too much washing can destroy the natural flora of the vagina, allowing bacteria to spread and lead to an unpleasant smelling discharge.

Girls should be careful when wiping in the toilet: To prevent bacteria from the intestinal tract from entering the vagina, it is important to only wipe from front to back.

**DISABILITIES AND PUBERTY**

In principle, children with a disability experience their own development and changes in the same way as their peers. In certain areas, however, these changes can also cause more difficulties for children with disabilities, especially if the children have cognitive disabilities. In this case there may be a big difference between the level of development and the mental age. It can be more difficult to cope with and process the physical changes, and this can cause anxiety and insecurity. In order to alleviate these fears, it is important that parents of children with cognitive disabilities explain the changes to them. You can explain to them that these changes are normal and that if they are worried, you can talk about it together. Children compare themselves to each other. This makes children with disabilities aware that they are different – or that they can't do everything. This process can be accompanied by sadness and anger. Children can find it difficult to find words for these feelings. With your support, your child can learn to deal with these feelings and communicate them.

For all children, the question or desire to be “normal” plays a major role throughout the entire development process. Parents and caregivers should respond to these questions and wishes honestly, openly and trustingly.

**SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH EDUCATION**

The more informed children are and the better their ability to talk about sexuality, the more likely they are to be able to develop their sexuality within the scope of their possibilities. This will also help them to live and experience their sexuality responsibly in adolescence and adulthood. The knowledge and skills they acquire through sex education also help to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Sex education also helps to combat sexualized violence. Children who are well-informed and can talk about sexuality are more likely to turn to trusted persons if they have experienced difficult situations. Children and young people with a disability are more frequently affected by sexualized violence than their peers without a disability. This is because perpetrators consider children and young people with a disability to be easier to manipulate and often see them as easier victims for assaults. This makes it all the more important to inform them at an early age.



# WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?

## SEX AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**Social media such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Facebook have changed the way we communicate and consume information. Be it in the family, at school or during leisure activities. A large part of communication takes place via social media, and many children and young people also look for role models here.**

**The influence of social media has also changed the presentation of sexual topics and content.**

Children of elementary school age are in a phase in which they are discovering social media alongside media such as television and the internet. You will not be able to prevent your child from coming into contact with all kinds of images and information about sexuality. But you can prepare them for this. It is therefore important that you help your child learn to use media. In this way, you can help them develop media literacy. And that means not only being good with the technology, but also being able to realistically assess, categorize and evaluate presentations and content.

Children's reactions to the portrayal of sexuality in the media can be very different. Younger children usually find it "icky" when there is kissing on television, whereas older elementary school children, especially boys, are already very interested in erotic content: They watch clips on YouTube, receive and send ambiguously suggestive pictures and photos via messenger services. They are curious and some boast about their detailed knowledge at school.

#### **WHAT DOES THIS DO TO MY CHILD?**

Because children can be confronted with eroticism and sexuality in the media at any time, many parents rightly ask themselves: How does this affect my child? This can be very different: Unlike adults, children can sometimes simply "not get" images and messages with sexual innuendo, while others react in a disturbed manner. Younger elementary school children in particular do not yet understand the majority of sexual innuendos in films, but notice above all that the depiction has something to do with sex.



#### **SAFETY ONLINE**

You can find a good overview of all social media and their use specifically for children on the website of the EU's Safe Online Initiative:  
[www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de)

#### **SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN THE WORLD OF MEDIA**

Here, too, the exchange between parents and children is important first and foremost. Show an interest in what your child is doing. Discuss how, for example, representations in the media affect you and your child.

In order for children to learn how to competently navigate the variety of media, it makes sense to closely monitor their media consumption. Watch selected clips or TV programs together with your child and talk about what you have seen. Surf the internet together. In this way, you show your child that you are interested in how they use media and what information and impressions they gather there. Social media is also used to make contacts and reach out to people. Children have to learn to classify contact from another person, deal with it and react appropriately. They should also learn to recognize potential risks and get support. Let your child know that they can come to you at any time if they are unsure about being contacted by someone and how to react to this contact.

## CLEAR RULES ARE IMPORTANT

- # Agree on fixed rules for television, internet and smartphones. How long are they allowed to watch? What exactly can you watch?
- # Pay attention to the age rating of movies – this also applies to video games. If in doubt, make your own judgment as to whether the film or video game is appropriate for your child's level of development.
- # In the beginning, supervise your child's smartphone and internet use and inform them about the potential dangers of pornography sites, paid services or the handling of confidential data.
- # Also be aware of your child's media consumption with friends. Clarify with the parents concerned what rules apply in their households and have the courage to express concerns or set your own boundaries if necessary.
- # Of course, you should secure erotic films or similar media for your own use so that your child cannot access them. You also have the possibility of setting up technical measures:
  - # Set up safe surfing systems
  - # Install parental control programs – you can find information at [www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de) or [www.juuuport.de](http://www.juuuport.de)
  - # Use search engines for children
  - # Activate the "SafeSearch filter"

### THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TRUST

Even if you take all these tips to heart, you cannot prevent your child from coming into contact with images or videos/films that can make them feel very insecure or frightened. That's why the most important thing here, as in other areas of life, is that the child can trust you. They must trust that you will not scold them if you discover that they have been watching porn or chatting with strangers. They must trust that you will then react calmly and be on their side, that you will talk to them calmly. Only then can and will your child come to you if they have questions about pictures or films, are unsettled or find situations depicted in pictures or films or even chats with strangers odd.



### THE SMARTPHONE AND THE APPS

Talk to your child regularly about how they use their smartphone. You can discuss apps together and try out offers suitable for children. It can also be helpful to introduce a regular schedule to discuss this, for example every three months.



# OBSERVING AND LISTENING TO BE ABLE TO HELP

SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

*"Of course I'm afraid that something like that will happen to my child and they won't tell me anything. That's why I always try to talk openly about everything and respond sensitively to what my child says."*

### PARENT QUOTE

**Sex education is important so that your child learns to name all the parts of the body and understand sexuality as a natural part of life. Sex education makes an important contribution to the prevention of sexualized violence. The child learns to set their own boundaries and that these must also be respected by other people, just as they must respect the boundaries of others. Children are allowed to say no and others have to accept that. Sex education is also important to enable your child to talk with more knowledge about sexual abuse and sexualized violence, so that they can say what frightens them, what they have observed or what has happened to them if they have experienced such a difficult situation. Children who are well informed about these topics find it easier to confide in caregivers.**

Sexualized violence does not always have to be associated with the physical use of violence, but also includes children being forced or coerced to do something through direct and subliminal humiliation, threats or other means of pressure.

### THE PERPETRATORS VIOLATE BOUNDARIES

Sexualized violence takes many forms. For example, it can take the form of sexually connoted insults, unwanted (secret) touching in intimate areas, hurtful remarks and looks or even forced sexual acts. Sexualized acts of violence massively violate a person's personal boundaries. Regardless of whether they were deliberate or not. It also counts as sexualized violence when children are asked to touch adults (or adolescents) intimately, are made to watch a porn film or someone pleasuring themselves. Particularly serious forms are oral, vaginal or anal rape or their attempt.

### OBTAINING TRUST

Sexual child abuse, i.e. sexual acts carried out on children, is usually not happenstance; it is a carefully planned act. The perpetrator usually builds up a relationship with their intended victim over a longer period of time and gains the child's trust (often also that of the family). The perpetrator usually begins with minor acts of transgression and threats in order to determine whether the child will remain silent.

**THE PERPETRATORS ARE OFTEN KNOWN TO THE VICTIM**

In most cases, perpetrators are not strangers, but people from the immediate social environment. They can also be relatives, good friends of the family or neighbors, a trainer, a leader of a children's group or other people who you would not think would do such a thing. Sexual abuse can also be committed by people of the same age or only slightly older.

**TAKE YOUR CHILD SERIOUSLY**

As parents, it is certainly difficult for you to discuss sexualized violence. Because on the one hand you want to protect your child, but on the other hand you don't want to scare them. Children should also not be overburdened by making them believe that they can defend themselves against a mentally and physically superior perpetrator. If the perpetrator is a trusted and loved person, this makes the situation even more difficult for the child.

If you suspect abuse, it is important to remain calm and seek professional help. Seek advice and support from institutions that have experts on the subject of abuse. Because it's not just your child who needs support, you do too.

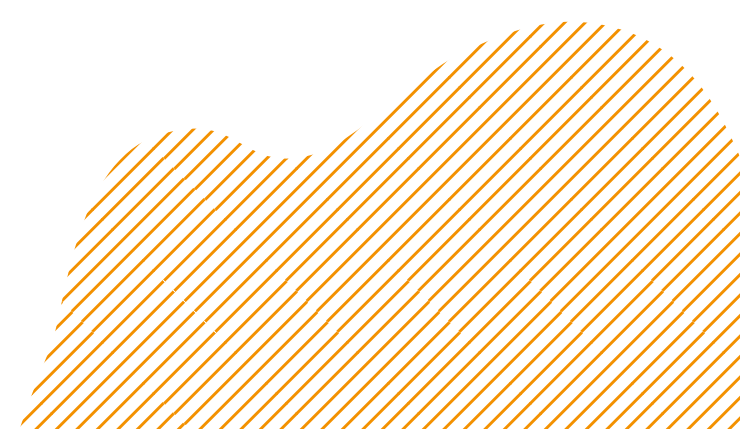
It is therefore important for parents to listen to their child and to believe them if they allude to having experienced sexualized violence. Even if you don't want to believe it at first because you know the perpetrator. The subsequent help process should be organized together and not over the child's head.

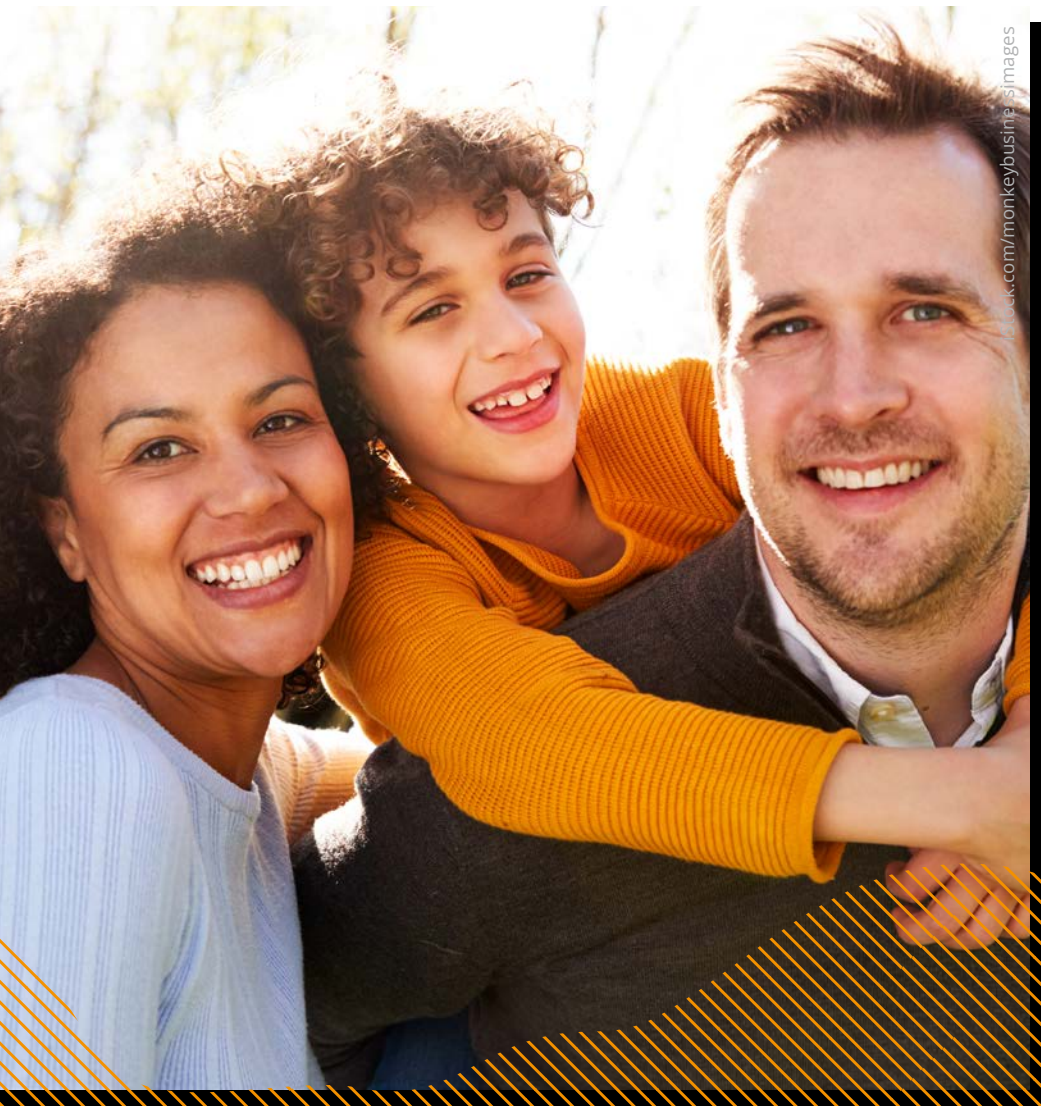
**OPENNESS PROTECTS YOUR CHILD**

Girls and boys who have been well-informed about this matter, whose needs are taken seriously, and in whose families sexuality is an open topic of conversation, are more likely to be able to communicate more easily with their parents. This also applies to "bad secrets." Explain to your child that there are good and bad secrets. Also explain to them that secrets that make them feel bad or scared do not have to be kept to themselves, but on the contrary: That children can turn to people they trust if something seems strange, even if a person forbids them to say something. Feel free to mention to your child that they can also get advice from the child and youth helpline without giving their name if something is bothering them. For example, "Nummer gegen Kummer" is a helpful point of contact in such cases. Further information can be found in the notes.

**SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE**

Sexualized violence is when one person attacks another with words or actions that are "meant" to be sexual and are intended to humiliate or demean them or to initiate sexual contact. When a person acts in this way, they violate the boundaries of the other person for selfish motives.





# THIS IS GOING TO BE INTERESTING

## PUBERTY IS AN EXCITING TIME

Puberty starts around the end of elementary school age. Sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later. What actually happens?? Some children then increasingly distance themselves physically and refuse to kiss their parents goodbye when friends are present. Others react more or less emotionally to seemingly normal questions. Some deliberately seek friction with their parents. The opinions of and trends among peers are becoming much more important than advice from parents. This is simply part of puberty, because your child is just starting to find their own way in life – and it may be different from that of their parents.

**YOU TOO CAN CHANGE**

Puberty is a time of unstoppable change – for children and parents. Yes, because mother and father also have to develop during puberty! The more you want to keep your child “a child,” the more intense and difficult the detachment process will be. If, on the other hand, you manage to accept the many small developmental steps from a relatively dependent child to an independent teenager as something natural, you can remain more relaxed about the coming puberty. It helps to know that your child does not want to offend you personally if they do something that you do not approve of. They just want to try things out.

Children develop and change not only physically, but also in their personality and therefore also in their relationship with you. There may be more fighting around the house or the child may want more time alone. Even if it sometimes doesn't seem that way to you, even during this time, your child needs you as a someone to talk to and as a safe pillar to lean on.

**WHEN THIS DEVELOPMENT BEGINS VARIES**

One thing is certain about puberty: It is different for every person. Some start earlier, others later. In particular, the onset of sexual maturity often occurs earlier than parents suspect. The majority of girls experience their first menstruation (period bleeding) and the majority of boys their first ejaculation between the ages of ten and fifteen. On average, girls develop earlier than boys.

Children with a disability experience the same developments and changes as their peers without a disability. For parents, this means that the challenges are similar, but they may also differ due to developmental delays. For example, due to a delay in the child's development, issues and questions may only arise at a later stage than in children of the same age without a disability.

**MORE INFORMATION**

We recommend our additional brochure *GOING THROUGH PUBERTY TOGETHER* A guide for parents on sexual development in adolescence

On the following pages you will find information on contact persons and offices where you can obtain further information material.

The onset and pace of biological puberty vary from person to person. When it sets in depends on factors such as eating habits, emotional circumstances and genetics: If the mother had her first period relatively early, her daughter will probably experience the same. You will discover various physical signs of maturity in your child that will help you recognize when puberty is coming.

**INFORM YOUR CHILD IN GOOD TIME**

You may not even want to admit that puberty is coming. However, children who develop at an earlier age in particular need to be informed in a sensitive manner about the physical processes. Instead of waiting for what is to come, it is better for your child if you tell them about their first menstruation or first ejaculation in good time.

Girls who are surprised by their first period without being informed about what to expect can experience this as a bit of a shock. And boys who experience their first ejaculation completely unsuspectingly can be confused by this.

# NOTES

## BROCHURES AND WEBSITES FOR PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS  
FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (BIOG):

### SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH LOVE AND CARE

#### A guide to body image and curiosity about the body in childhood

From age 1 until starting school

Article number: 13660500

### GOING THROUGH PUBERTY TOGETHER

#### A guide for parents on sexual development in adolescence

Article number: 13660400

#### Brochure: Time for digital “Medien und Digitales – Elterninfo” (Media and digital – information for parents)

Brochure on media and the digital world in the everyday lives of children and young people.

Article number: 11041410

#### Brochure: Time for movement “Bewegung und sport – Elterninfo” (Exercise and physical activity – information for parents)

Brochure on the importance of exercise and physical activity.

Article number: 11041407

#### Brochure: Time to enjoy food “Essen und Trinken – Elterninfo” (Food and drink – information for parents)

Brochure on the importance of food and drink

Article number: 11041408

#### HPV Elternbroschüre (Brochure for parents on HPV)

This brochure provides parents with essential information about the HPV vaccination recommended by the STIKO (Standing Committee on Vaccination at the Robert Koch Institute) for girls and boys to protect against cervical cancer and other types of cancer.

Article number: 70392002

#### Dem Leben auf der Spur (On the trail of life).

##### The media package for sex education

The package contains:

- the story “Dem Leben auf der Spur” (On the trail of life) *(PDF only)*
- the encyclopedia “Das kleine Körper-ABC” (The little body ABC)  
Article number: 13160005
- the leaflet “Das Baby im Bauch der Mutter” (The baby in the mother’s belly)  
Article number: 13100000
- the double-sided poster “Wenn Eizelle und Samenzelle sich treffen” (When the egg cell and sperm cell meet) Article number: 13160006
- the cover letter for teachers and specialists *(PDF only)*
- the cover letter for parents and guardians *(PDF only)*

[store.bioeg.de/geschichte-dem-leben-auf-der-spur](https://store.bioeg.de/geschichte-dem-leben-auf-der-spur)

#### Trau dich! Ein Ratgeber für Eltern.

##### (Gaining confidence. A guide for parents)

Information on sexual abuse for parents of 8- to 12-year-old children.

Article number: 16100102

#### Online sein mit Maß und Spaß (Being online with moderation and fun)

A parents’ guide to the correct use of digital media.

Article number: 33215001

## WEBSITES FOR PARENTS

### **www.bzkgj.de**

The Federal Center for the Protection of Children and Young People in the Media (BzKJ) provides information on the benefits and risks of media consumption, tips for parents and recommended links.

### **www.schau-hin.info**

An initiative of the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFJFS) and provides parents with practical guidance on media use and education.

### **www.jugendschutzlandesstellen.de**

Here you will find a detailed list of addresses of several specialist and state offices for the protection of children and young people as well as the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Kinder- und Jugendschutz e. V. (federal union for the protection of children and minors). Many of these organizations offer information on the subject of the protection of children and young people on their homepages, which are linked to this website.

### **www.jugendschutz.net**

This website is operated by the “Zentralstelle der Obersten Landesjugendbehörden für Jugendschutz in Mediendiensten” (central office of the supreme state youth authorities for the protection of minors in media services). Their task is to track down content on the internet that is harmful to minors and make it inaccessible to children and young people. Anyone who accidentally lands on websites that are harmful to minors with their children can report them to the authorities using a clickable form.

### **www.familienhandbuch.de**

The multilingual online handbook from the State Institute for Early Childhood Education (IFP) offers everything parents need to know about education, health, support, school, work and leisure.

### **www.klicksafe.de**

The site provides information on a wide range of relevant youth protection topics. It also provides tips, brochures and materials.

### **www.juuport.de**

The site provides information and advice on various online topics.

## WEBSITES FOR CHILDREN

### **www.wdrmaus.de/hoeren**

Maus Radio provides podcasts and music for children.

### **www.fragfinn.de**

Search engine for children with an extensive list of child-friendly websites which have been editorially reviewed by media educators.

### **http://sexedu.eduskills.plus**

Is a sex education app for children. The topics are adapted for children at different stages of development. There is an accompanying handbook for parents, which is also available free of charge.

## CONTACT ADDRESSES

### Information hotline of the Federal Institute of Public Health on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections:

0221/892031 (price according to the price list of the telephone provider for calls within the Cologne local network)

Monday to Thursday: 10 am to 10 pm

Friday to Sunday: 10 am to 6 pm

BIÖG's online advice service on the internet: [www.liebesleben.de](http://www.liebesleben.de)

### Further services from BIÖG

#### Brochures and media are available from BIÖG

#### by quoting the article number:

BIÖG, 50819 Cologne

by fax: 0221/8992-257

by email: [bestellung@bioeg.de](mailto:bestellung@bioeg.de)

or [www.bioeg.de](http://www.bioeg.de)

[www.sexualaufklaerung.de](http://www.sexualaufklaerung.de) or [www.loveline.de](http://www.loveline.de)

### BIÖG websites for young people:

[www.loveline.de](http://www.loveline.de) (sexuality, love and contraception)

[www.liebesleben.de](http://www.liebesleben.de) (HIV and STIs)

[www.drugcom.de](http://www.drugcom.de) (addiction and drugs)

(smoking and quitting)

## COUNSELING SERVICES FOR PARENTS

If you have further questions, need more information or have a specific problem, parents (or their children) can get advice from experts by phone, email or in person. The following nationwide associations offer this option at their local counseling centers or can refer you:

### Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e. V.

Heinrich-Albertz-Haus

Blücherstraße 62/63, 10961 Berlin, tel.: 030/26309-0

[www.awo.org](http://www.awo.org)

### Deutscher Caritasverband e. V.

Karlstraße 40, 79104 Freiburg, tel.: 0761/200-0

[www.caritas.de](http://www.caritas.de)

### Der Paritätische

General association

Oranienburger Straße 13–14, 10178 Berlin, tel.: 030/24636-0,

[www.der-paritaetische.de](http://www.der-paritaetische.de)

### Diakonie Deutschland – Evangelischer Bundesverband

Caroline-Michaelis-Straße 1, 10115 Berlin, tel.: 030/65211-0

[www.diakonie.de](http://www.diakonie.de)

### donum vitae e. V.

Thomas-Mann-Straße 4, 53111 Bonn, tel.: 0228/369488-0

[www.donumvitae.org](http://www.donumvitae.org)

**pro familia – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Familienplanung,  
Sexualpädagogik und Sexualberatung e. V.**

Federal association

Mainzer Landstraße 250–254, 60326 Frankfurt/M., tel.: 069/2695779-0

[www.profamilia.de](http://www.profamilia.de)**Sozialdienst Katholischer Frauen Zentrale e. V.**

Agnes-Neuhaus-Straße 5, 44135 Dortmund, tel.: 0231/557026-0

[www.skf-zentrale.de](http://www.skf-zentrale.de)

Municipal or district health offices also often offer advice on sexuality, sex education and sexually transmitted infections. Bundeskonferenz für Erziehungsberatung e. V. offers anonymous email counseling, moderated discussion forums and a chat especially for parents: [www.bke-beratung.de](http://www.bke-beratung.de)

**Bundesverband Trans\* e. V.**

Prinzregentenstraße 84, 10717 Berlin

Tel.: 030/23949896

[www.bundesverband-trans.de](http://www.bundesverband-trans.de)**Intergeschlechtliche Menschen e. V.**

Slebuschstieg 6, 20537 Hamburg, tel.: 0170-7090385

[www.im-ev.de](http://www.im-ev.de)**IVIM – OII Germany**

Office partnership

Naunynstr. 30, 10997 Berlin

[www.oii germany.org](http://www.oii germany.org)

# TELEPHONE, CHAT AND EMAIL ADVICE FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS

**NUMMER GEGEN KUMMER**

Nummer gegen Kummer is a telephone helpline and counseling service for children, young people and parents.

**Phone number for children and young people**

Tel.: 116111 (free nationwide), Mondays to Saturdays 2-8 pm,

"Jugendliche beraten Jugendliche" (young people advising young people), Saturdays 2-8

pm; email advice at

[www.nummergegenkummer.de](http://www.nummergegenkummer.de)**Phone number for parents 0800/1110550**

Mondays to Fridays – 9 am to 5 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays also until 7 pm,

free of charge nationwide

[www.nummergegenkummer.de](http://www.nummergegenkummer.de)

Around the clock, free of charge nationwide

# POINTS OF CONTACT REGARDING SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ)**

[www.bmbfsfj.bund.de/bmbfsfj/themen/kinder-und-jugend/kinder-und-jugendschutz](http://www.bmbfsfj.bund.de/bmbfsfj/themen/kinder-und-jugend/kinder-und-jugendschutz)

**Independent commissioner for the investigation of child sexual abuse**

[www.beauftragter-missbrauch.de](http://www.beauftragter-missbrauch.de)

**[www.bundeskoordination.de](http://www.bundeskoordination.de)**

Federal Coordination of Specialized Advice Against Sexual Violence in Childhood and Youth (BKSF)

Political representation and information and service points for the specialized advisory centers working against sexual violence in childhood and youth

**[www.dgfpi.de](http://www.dgfpi.de)**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Prävention und Intervention bei Kindesmisshandlung, -vernachlässigung und sexualisierter Gewalt e. V. (German society for the prevention of and intervention in cases of child abuse, neglect and sexual violence)

Under the page [www.jugendschutzlandesstellen.de](http://www.jugendschutzlandesstellen.de) you will find a list of the real and virtual addresses of several specialist and state offices for the protection of children and young people as well as the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Kinder- und Jugendschutz e. V. (federal union for the protection of children and minors). Many of these organizations offer information on the subject of child and youth protection on their websites.

**Nationally known institutions are:**

**Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft**

**Kinder- und Jugendschutz e. V. (BAJ)**

Mühlendamm 3, 10178 Berlin, tel.: 030/40040300

Email: [info@bag-jugendschutz.de](mailto:info@bag-jugendschutz.de)

[www.bag-jugendschutz.de](http://www.bag-jugendschutz.de)

**Deutscher Kinderschutzbund Bundesverband e. V.**

Federal office

Schöneberger Straße 15, 10963 Berlin

Tel.: 030/214809-0

[www.dksb.de](http://www.dksb.de)

**Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Kinderschutz-Zentren**

Federal office

Bonner Straße, 145, 50968 Cologne

Tel.: 0221/569753, fax: 0221/5697550

[www.kinderschutz-zentren.org](http://www.kinderschutz-zentren.org)

**Sexual abuse helpline**

Free and anonymous service for victims of sexual violence, for relatives, persons in the immediate circle, for professionals and all interested parties

Tel.: 0800/2255530

**[www.hilfe-portal-missbrauch.de/startseite](http://www.hilfe-portal-missbrauch.de/startseite)**

Support for people who have experienced sexual violence in their childhood and adolescence, as well as for relatives, professionals and anyone with questions or concerns about a child – in person, online or by phone.

**[www.wildwasser.de](http://www.wildwasser.de)**

Association against sexual abuse

**[www.zartbitter.de](http://www.zartbitter.de)**

Contact point for help against sexual abuse of girls and boys, Cologne

**[www.nina-info.de](http://www.nina-info.de)**

N.I.N.A. is the national infoline, network and point of contact for sexual violence against girls and boys.

**Dunkelziffer e. V.**

Initial counseling and telephone help for boys and girls, parents and caregivers:  
040/421070010

Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays 10 am – 1 pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 2 pm – 4 pm

**[www.dunkelziffer.de](http://www.dunkelziffer.de)**

## TELEPHONE, CHAT AND EMAIL ADVICE FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS REGARDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**[www.schreib-ollie.de](http://www.schreib-ollie.de)**

Online counseling regarding sexual abuse and part of the sexual abuse helpline offering. It is a service offered by N.I.N.A. e. V. – sponsored by the Independent Commissioner Against Child Sexual Abuse.

**[www.unddu-portal.de/de](http://www.unddu-portal.de/de)**

The platform of Innocence in Danger e. V. is aimed at young people and relates to sexual violence among young people. The platform provides knowledge and seeks to strengthen skills. It is also possible for users to seek help directly.

