

Dating



Many people start dating when they are teenagers.

This can be scary for parents to think about.

Not every teenager will want to date.

That is OK.

It is still important for them to learn about dating and relationships.

It will help them to learn about:

- different types of relationships
- social skills
- making safe choices in relationships





It is important to give your child information about dating and relationships early.

This gives them time to learn about dating and relationships.

It is important to talk answer your child's questions about dating in a positive way.

This will help them to feel good about coming to you for information.



What is on this page?

This page is about how you can support your child to learn about dating.

It has information about:

- talking to your child about dating
- ways you can teach your child about dating and relationships
- ways to help your child meet new people
- resources you can use to learn more about dating and relationships



Talking to your child about dating and relationships

Sometimes it can be hard for parents to talk to their child about dating and relationships.

You might not know what to say.

You might feel embarrassed.

This is OK.

Here are some things you can say to start talking to your child about dating.

- “Your sister just started dating a new person. Have you ever thought about dating?”
- “Are you interested in watching that new show Love on the Spectrum?”

It's about real young people with autism trying out dating.

Is that something you're interested in?"

You can also ask your child questions like:



- what is the difference between a friend and a boyfriend/girlfriend?
- what things might boyfriends/girlfriends do that friends do not do?
- is it okay if a person does not have a boyfriend/girlfriend?
- if a woman is friendly to you, is she your girlfriend? If a man is friendly to you, is he your boyfriend?
- what should you do if you like somebody, but they do not like you?

- what should you do if somebody likes you, but you do not like them?

You might watch a movie or TV show with your child.

You can ask your child questions about the different types of relationships in the show.

Help your child to make new relationships

Good social skills are important for dating.

Your child can learn good social skills by meeting new people and making new friends.

You can help your child to meet new people by helping them to join groups and activities after school or on the weekend.



This will help your child to see different types of relationships and to practice their social skills.

Use pictures



Sometimes using resources with pictures can help your child learn new things.

Below are some resources that you can use to help your child learn about dating and relationships.

Some of these resources are for teenagers and young adults.

Some are for young children.

Have a look at the resources and pick the one that is right for your child.

Who is in my orbit?

Instructions

The 'Who's in My Orbit?' activity sheet can help you support your child to understand the types of touch that are appropriate in different relationships.

How does it work?

On the activity sheet, you will see a small planet (Planet Puberty) surrounded by different levels of circles. These circles are 'orbits'. On Earth, the planets orbit, or go around, the sun. On Planet Puberty we talk about the relationships that go around, or orbit, you. Every relationship or interaction in our lives belongs to one of these orbits:

- private orbit
- kiss orbit
- hug orbit
- handshake or high-five orbit
- wave orbit
- stranger orbit

The orbits nearest to the centre are closer types of relationships or interactions. The orbits on the outside are more distant types of relationships or interactions.

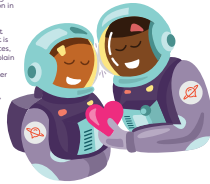
Use this activity sheet to help your child figure out the types of touch they are comfortable with in their different relationships. It will also help you to teach your child about the types of touch that are appropriate in different relationships.

How to use 'Who's in My Orbit'

- 1 Print out the 'Who's in My Orbit' activity sheet
- 2 Have your child place themselves on Planet Puberty by writing their name, drawing their face or sticking a photo of themselves in the centre of the activity sheet.
- 3 Work with your child to identify all the different people in their life. If you have photos of those people, print them. Or your child can draw them on separate pieces of paper.
- 4 Ask your child to stick the photo or drawing of each person in the orbit they belong in. Ask your child why they put that person in that orbit.
- 5 If your child places a person in an orbit you don't agree with, ask them why. It is important to respect your child's choices, but sometimes you might need to explain why something is not a good choice. For example, The postman is a stranger and we do not hug strangers. But it is OK if you want to put grandma in the wave circle and not the hug circle!
- 6 When complete, you can stick the worksheet on your child's bedroom wall.

When your child meets new people, they can add them to an orbit. Your child can move people between orbits if the relationship becomes closer, or the relationship ends. You can refer to the activity sheet if your child needs reminding about the type of touch that happens in relationships.

It is always important to emphasise that no matter which orbit a person belongs to, both people must always consent before any kind of touch.



Resources for you to use

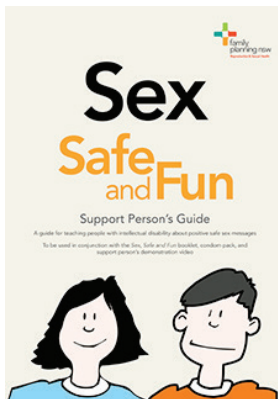
Who is in my orbit worksheet

<https://www.planetpuberty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Whos-in-my-Orbit-F.pdf>

Sex Safe and Fun

Family Planning NSW

<https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sex-safeandfun>



All About Sex – Relationships factsheet

Family Planning NSW

https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet_09_relationships.pdf





What to read next?

- [Ending relationships](#)
- [Making friends online safely](#)
- [Consent in relationships](#)

**For more information go to the
Planet Puberty website**

www.planetpuberty.org.au