

Pointers For Parents

How To Talk To Your Children About “Sexting”

(NAPSA)—Talking to children about relationships has always been a challenge for parents, but in recent years it has become even more so. Not only are children becoming sexually active at younger ages, but today’s technology—computers, cell phones, etc.—tends to make youngsters feel more independent and grown up.

In this environment, the questions young people have about appropriate behavior are increasingly complicated. One common issue is “sexting,” which is defined as the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones. This can be a form of abuse.

According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF), teens and young women are especially vulnerable to relationship violence. Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the U.S. is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner. Females ages 16 to 24 experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, and people ages 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking.

To help parents, coaches, teachers, mentors and others talk to children about healthy, loving, respectful relationships, the FVPF, with national support from Macy’s, has developed RESPECT! Tools, a collection of tips, information and conversation starters. These resources include:

- 10 quick tips for parents on how to talk to your kids about healthy relationships;
- A guide for parents on how to talk to a child of any age about the



Today’s technology plays a key role in young people’s relationships—and parents need to understand what it all means.

importance of respect in healthy relationships;

- 10 “Dinner Table Topics” using everyday examples to talk about the importance of respect in relationships;

- A quiz for teens to help them determine whether or not they or their friends are in healthy relationships; and

- A list of warning signs that a child may be in an unhealthy relationship.

“As a mom, it’s important to me that we teach children about building respectful and healthy relationships,” said singer and RESPECT! Campaign spokesperson Christina Aguilera. “We all have the power to give respect and help create a world free from violence and abuse.”

The Family Violence Prevention Fund works to end violence against women and children around the world, because every person has the right to live free of violence. For more information, visit www.GiveRespect.org or www.EndAbuse.org.