

Little Talks to have with your 9- to 12-year-old.

1.

Support healthy body image.

At this age children are vulnerable to what makes them different from their peers, especially physically.

Reinforce the importance of their whole person because they may place a significant amount of their self-esteem on body image.

2.

Discuss drugs and alcohol.

This may seem young, but many adolescents start drinking at age 12 or 13. You want to address this with your child before it becomes an issue.

3.

Talk about puberty.

There are a lot of physical and psychological aspects of puberty that you will want to share with your child.

Armed with the proper education, they'll feel less overwhelmed by all the changes occurring within themselves and be able to make sense of a confusing time of life.

4.

Talk about relationships, consent, and respect.

Set expectations for them about what a healthy relationship should look like. Educate them about consent – for themselves and others. Teach them the role respect should play in their relationships.

5.

Address appropriate boundaries and sexual abuse.

Let them know that they are allowed to set boundaries with the people in their lives. Talk about sexual abuse and what to do if it occurs or has occurred. This can be a difficult topic, but it's important to address it openly at this age.

6.

Teach assertive communication.

You want to empower your child to stand up for themselves, especially when it comes to their physical and emotional well-being.

7.

Talk about media.

This may include discussions about how sexuality, body image, and gender roles are portrayed. It should include a discussion on media that portrays sex. It's within this age group that most children are exposed to their first sexually explicit images.