



# RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY

## FASD BEHAVIOURS

- Children and adolescents with FASD may be sexually curious, but have difficulty interpreting social cues from peers.
- These children may have no fear of danger, stranger anxiety, and poor understanding of social boundaries.
- Younger children are highly tactile and may expose or explore their bodies at inappropriate times.
- Adolescents may engage in high-risk behaviour such as promiscuity, unsafe sex, and impulsiveness due to an inability to remember past mistakes and foresee future consequences such as pregnancy.

## STRATEGIES

- **Talk about it:** Be open and willing to talk to older children and adolescents about puberty and healthy, safe sexuality. Teach sexual education repeatedly. Use the real names of body parts and sexual acts to avoid confusion. Teach your child healthy boundaries early.
- **Role play:** Teach how to hug and touch others respectfully, how to ask someone out on a date, or how to say no to sexual advances.
- **Plan a 'safe spot':** For children who run away, provide a safe spot they can run to, calm down, and come back when they're ready.
- **Supervise:** Especially on outings and group activities, supervise your child of any age.

Children with FASD of all ages may exhibit inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Use clear and simple rules about sexuality, and repeat them over and over.

*For younger children: "Ask permission before touching others", "Everyone has to be an arm's length away" and "Don't talk to strangers".*

*For older children and adolescents: "Unprotected sex is never safe" and "Masturbation is only done in private, in your bedroom, at home".*

## QUICK TIPS

- BE AWARE OF YOUR CHILD'S RELATIONSHIPS TO PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR.
- DON'T LET BEING UNCOMFORTABLE GET IN THE WAY OF TALKING ABOUT SEX - IF THEY DON'T LEARN IT FROM YOU, THEY WILL ASK SOMEONE ELSE OR BECOME SEXUALLY ACTIVE WITHOUT KNOWING ABOUT SAFETY.

