

ROOTS OF EQUALITY

RESOURCES

Kids Help Phone:
<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca>

Assaulted Women's Helpline:
www.awhl.org

Ontario Women's Directorate:
www.ontariowomensdirectorate.gov.on.ca

Springtide Resources:
www.springtideresources.org

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario:
www.etfo.ca

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The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) undertook this project in partnership with Springtide Resources and the Ontario Women's Directorate.



ending violence against women

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TIPS FOR PARENTS



As parents, we can be the biggest influence in our kids' lives, their best teacher and role model. We can help them build positive, healthy friendships and dating relationships free from violence. Each of us can make a difference that will last a lifetime.

Get informed. Talk to your kids about relationships. Learn about the characteristics of a healthy, equal relationship. You can teach your children that everyone deserves to be in a good relationship where you give and receive respect, trust, and friendship.

It's never too early. Introduce your son or daughter to the concept of healthy relationships as early as possible. Demonstrate that girls and boys are equally valuable. Tell your sons and daughters that it's okay for men to be sensitive and for women to be independent. Assign chores based on age and maturity rather than on the gender of the child.

Create the space. Provide an open and safe environment for your son or daughter to talk about friendship or relationship issues. Make the time to listen and respond when they ask questions or share their thoughts. Giving them your attention sends the message that what they have to say is important to you. Discuss the issues rather than giving them a lecture. Listen patiently, and let them come up with their own conclusions, even if they do or say something you don't like. Show them that you trust them and believe them.

Keep talking. The more frequently we talk about healthy, equal relationships the more comfortable our children will be talking to us. Talk about what you see on TV, the Internet and in movies. Children may be receiving harmful ideas that can lead to unhealthy, unequal, and sometimes abusive relationships. Ask them to think of examples of healthy and unhealthy relationships that they have seen.

Take an interest. Listen to your kids' music. Watch their favourite TV shows with them. Look at some websites and play their video games with them. Get to know what your children are doing on the Internet. Consider going onto the Internet with your child; make it a fun and constructive way to spend time with your child. Ask them to tell you when they feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused when using the Internet. Encourage your children to spend time with their friends in your home. Treat their friends with respect and try to get to know their parents.

Show them. Be an example for your children on how to have a healthy, equal relationship. When you have a disagreement with them, resolve it through a discussion without yelling or calling them names. When you solve problems with them or with your partner, listen carefully and respectfully. They will follow your lead.

Think Ahead. It is important for our children to know how to deal with difficult situations before they happen. Teach them to be confident so they can make decisions without being influenced by their friends. How will your son respond if his friends encourage him to be controlling and disrespectful to girls? What will your daughter do if she is being pressured to have sex? Develop realistic scenarios together and discuss how

your son or daughter would handle them. Your children will gain practical experience and confidence in themselves.

Pay Attention. Look for warning signs that indicate your child may be in an unhealthy relationship. Remember that children from any family background may be experiencing abuse in their relationships. Children can be targets of abuse because of their sex, race, religion, culture, abilities, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, country of origin, or economic status. If your child or teen is allowed to date, get to know who he or she is dating. Pay attention to the interaction between your child or teen and their boyfriend or girlfriend. Watch for controlling behaviour, criticism, and jealousy. Some girls who are in an unhealthy relationship become anxious or depressed. They may stop doing the things they love. Some boys who are in unhealthy relationships may anger easily or become unpredictable or moody.

Know what to do. Ask how they feel about their relationship and listen without judging. Be careful not to criticize the friend so that your child will not feel the need to defend him or her. Let them know that you are there to support them. If you suspect that your son or daughter is in an unhealthy relationship, don't be afraid to talk to them about it. Tell them about your concerns. If they don't feel comfortable talking to you, help them to find another trusted adult. Provide them with resources such as confidential counselling services or the Kids Help Phone: 1 800 668 6868.

To find out more about healthy relationships and violence against women and girls, go to: www.springtideresources.org, www.ontariowomensdirectoriate.gov.on.ca, and www.equalityrules.ca.