

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION FOR YOUR CHILD WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES (SEND)

Relationships and sex education (RSE) supports every child to be happy, healthy and safe. It includes learning about puberty, hygiene, sex, sexual health, friendships, relationships and families. At your child's school this will be taught a pace and level that is appropriate for your child.



WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND?

Children with SEND are often more vulnerable because-

- They may rely on others for personal and intimate care.
- They may have communication differences that make it hard for them to express their choices, understand what's happening to them or keep themselves safe.

Some of the challenges that a child with SEND may experience when learning about RSE include-

- Sensory concerns e.g. about the feel of body fluids
- Concerns about growing into adulthood.
- Behaviours, such as masturbation and grinding, or lacking awareness of boundaries.
- The need for information presented in specific ways, such as through symbols or objects.
- Taking learning very literally or finding it difficult to transfer and apply in their own lives.
- Feeling different from their peers and a sense of 'not fitting in.'



Each child is unique and has a different story. Their needs can vary a lot and so they need a very personalised approach.

Whatever their level of understanding every child's body goes through puberty. Most will have crushes or develop sexual feelings. Many will have intimate relationships in adulthood.

RSE can help them understand and manage body changes and sexual feelings, understand appropriate behaviour, develop healthy relationships and know how to stay safe.

WHAT DO PARENTS AND CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH SEND SAY ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S NEEDS?

They don't want their hair or nails cut, it's part of their body.

My son doesn't really understand consent- if someone asked him to do something nine times of out 10, he would.

We need to explain public and private spaces- do it in your bedroom. – they've constantly got their hands down their trousers.

Our parents weren't open with us, so we don't have a role model.

Sometimes they walk in when someone's having a shower, they don't understand other people's boundaries.

WHAT HAVE PARENTS AND CARERS FOUND HELPFUL?

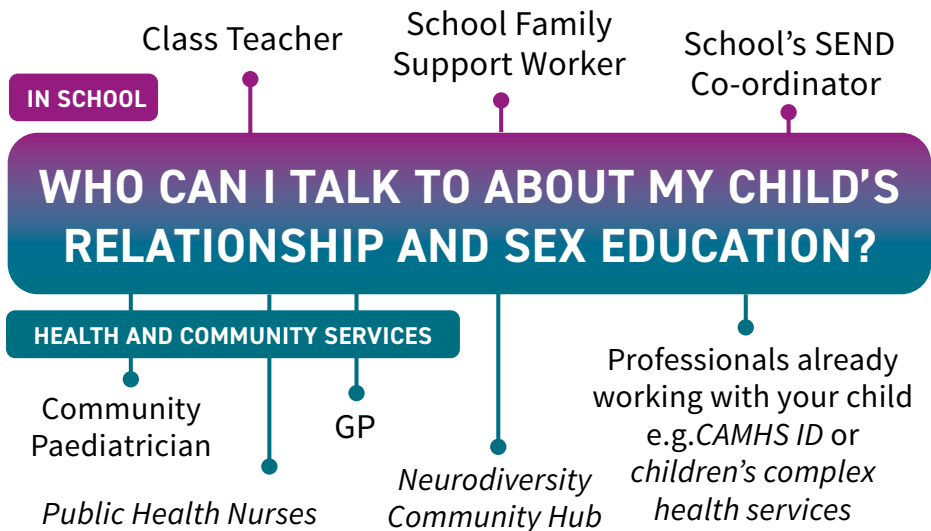
My GP mentioned that my daughter was clearly approaching puberty- he told me to talk to her about it before it happened. I'm glad I did – she was quite distressed when it happened, but it would have been worse if I hadn't prepared her.

My daughter started her periods. The Public Health Nurse had some books and sheets I could share with her.

The Family Resource worker at school gave me ideas so that my child understood which spaces were public and private.

I can ask the teachers at my son's school anytime for ideas on how to explain things, they are so helpful.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT



Click *HERE* to watch the film

<https://www.localoffer.derbyshire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/relationships-and-sex-education-rse/relationships-and-sex-education-rse.aspx>

Made in Derbyshire with parents and carers of young people with SEND.
Click on the useful links to access the resources listed.

USEFUL LINKS

Take a look at the links below to find information and resources suitable for your children with SEND.

- ✓ **Sex ed & puberty books for kids with a disability**
www.sexedrescue.com/puberty-books-disability
- ✓ **Learn and Thrive - Free Educational Resources**
www.learnandthrive.org.uk
- ✓ **Planet Puberty**
www.planetpuberty.org.au
- ✓ **PANTS guides & resources | NSPCC**
www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/pants-guides
- ✓ **Sex education - a guide for parents**
www.autism.org.uk