



## **Three tips for starting a difficult conversation with your child**

### **1) Take the plunge**

As a parent, there are lots of conversations you might rather not have with your kids. Talking about sex, substance use, peer pressure and other sensitive topics may feel like a step too far. But it's important to remember that your kids are relying on you for information and, most importantly, support about some of life's most important issues. Starting the conversation makes it clear that you're there for them, and encourages them to come to you with future concerns.

### **2) Be prepared to listen**

More than ever, kids are able to use the internet to access information on just about anything. They're also increasingly tuned in to the behaviour of their peers via social media, and they may well have strong opinions about difficult topics. Few things turn a young person off a conversation faster than feeling like they're not being listened to, and if you want to talk to your kids about sensitive subjects, you'll need to be prepared to hear what they have to say. Approach conversations with an open mind, and make it clear that you're committed to actively engaging with their opinions...even if you're still the boss!

### **3) Trust yourself**

As a parent, you're already one of the leading experts on your child. It's easy to get paranoid about all the potential risks out there, or feel like you don't know enough about certain topics to speak to your kids with any authority. But if you're willing to talk and willing to listen, you're already most of the way there. Don't worry too much about saying the right thing or having all the answers – your instincts are probably stronger than you think.