

Five Universal Needs

Affirmation: Children and adolescents need adults to recognize the ongoing nature of sexual development and to positively affirm each particular stage of normal sexual development.

Information giving: Children and adolescents need ready sources of factual knowledge and concepts about sexuality and to have information presented in ongoing and age-appropriate ways.

Values clarification: Children and adolescents need adults to clearly share their personal values, and as children become more socially aware, they need adults to clarify and interpret competing values and value systems in the surrounding culture.

Limit setting: Children and adolescents need adults to create a healthy and safe environment by clearly stating and consistently reinforcing age-appropriate rules and limits.

Anticipatory guidance: Children and adolescents need adults to help them learn how to avoid or handle potentially harmful situations and to rely, when necessary, on themselves to make responsible and healthy choices.

Developmental Needs Regarding Information About Sexuality

2 to 3 Year Olds: Should be able to identify body parts. May ask, "What's that or where's mine?"

4 Year Olds: Ask questions about geography. Understand a bit about time and place. May ask, "Where did I come from?"

5 Year Olds: Ask questions about transportation. Understand before, now, later, place, time, and movement. May ask, "How did I get out?"

6 Year Olds: Ask questions about cause and effect like, "How did I get in there in the first place?" Understand the concept of existence.

8 Year Olds: May ask questions about Aids, rape, and what it means to be gay.