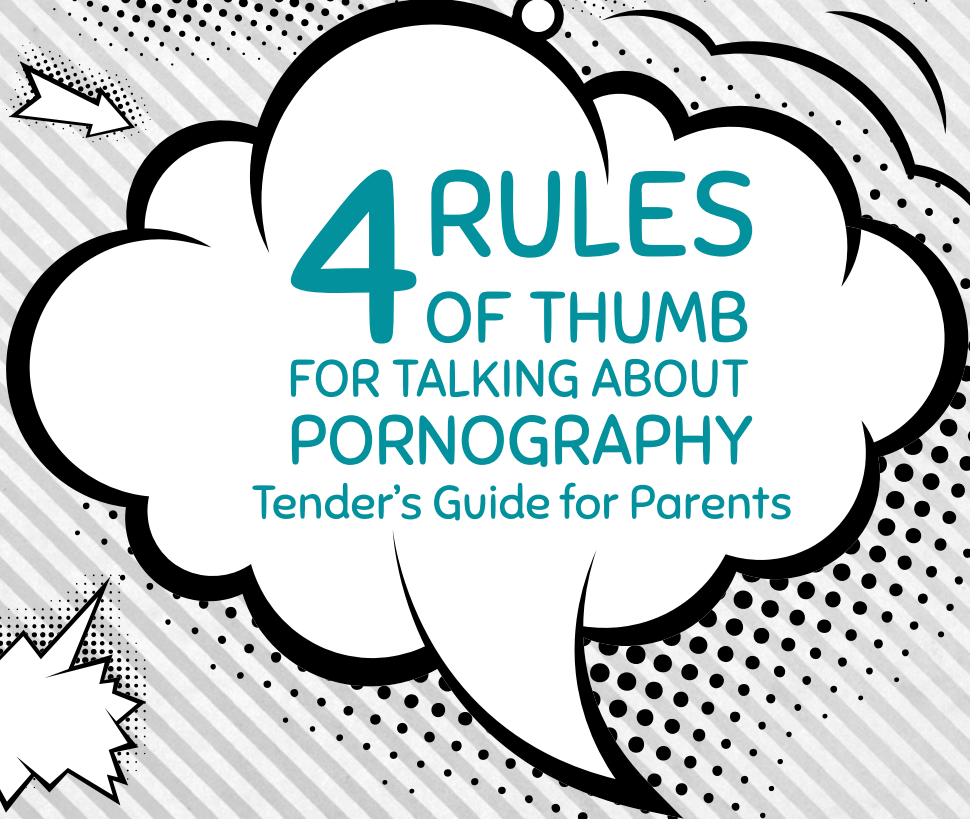




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4 RULES OF THUMB FOR TALKING ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

Tender's Guide for Parents

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With the development of technology, pornography has never been more accessible and widely viewed by young people. For most parents though, the thought of speaking to their child about pornography is at best uncomfortable and at worst terrifying.

However with limited knowledge and experience of sex and relationships, young people's reliance on pornography can have negative consequences. Therefore here are four suggested themes to weave into conversations with your child.

Tips for approaching the topic:

- Be patient and don't force a discussion
- Allow your child to go at their own pace
- Keep an open mind
- Reassure your child that you are not angry with them
- Use examples from media such as music videos or advertisements as an entry point
- As much as possible try and incorporate the following themes into every-day conversations rather than allocating a specific time to approach the subject

Promote Healthy Perceptions of Body Image

For some young people it will be their first experience of sex, or even seeing someone of the opposite sex naked. Pornography perpetuates unrealistic images of what men and women look like, and many young people will feel pressured to look a certain way. Remind your child that most people don't look like this, and many of these images have been digitally altered. Encourage them not to compare themselves and to know that they deserve to have happy and healthy intimate relationships.

Unpick Myths

Pornography is based on fantasies and artificial situations and therefore it can generate numerous myths and misconceptions. These can be around sexual performance, preferences, consent or safety. Many young people will watch pornography so they can learn how to have sex, so it's important to unpick these myths and discuss what 'real' sex is like. Examples could be that sex isn't always wild and noisy; not everyone climaxes; and passionate sex shouldn't be confused with violent behaviour.

Promote Gender Equality

A lot of pornography perpetuates negative representations of gender. Women often take submissive roles, and men take on dominant roles. There is also an increasing amount of material that is violent and degrading. Discuss the importance of equal status within sex and relationships. Ensure that your child is aware of their boundaries and that sex should be mutually beneficial as well as consensual, as in both people have agreed.

Explore Pressure

Some young people may feel pressured to watch pornography, or replicate what they have been shown by their peers. Explain to your child that other people's ideas of what is 'normal' or 'expected' in a relationship might be different to theirs and that's okay. If something makes you uncomfortable, it doesn't matter what it is or how comfortable anyone else is with it – you have the right to say no. Remind them that they can always speak to you if they need to.

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