



**AGES 13-15**

# A Parent and Caregiver's Guide to Healthy Sexual Development

**The teen years** bring big physical, emotional, and social changes.

Young people begin to explore attraction, identity, and independence. They need honest, calm conversations — not judgment — to build healthy values around love, respect, and responsibility.



# What's Normal at 13–15

## Physical

Rapid growth, hormonal changes, menstruation, wet dreams, and voice change.

## Cognitive

Thinks deeply, questions beliefs, and seeks privacy and independence.

## Social & Emotional

Peer influence is strong; crushes and first relationships may begin.



## Sexual Development

- May feel attraction and curiosity about intimacy.
- Masturbation is common and healthy when done privately.
- May explore style, identity, or orientation.
- Might experiment with early romantic or sexual behaviour.
- May be exposed to sexual content online or in media.

## Teenagers are learning to navigate identity, love, and responsibility.

When you listen with empathy and speak with honesty, they grow up seeing sexuality as something healthy, respectful, and grounded in self-worth.



## How You Can Help

### **Stay Open and Calm.**

If they talk, listen first. Your reaction teaches them whether they can trust you.

### **Talk About Consent and Respect.**

Consent must be clear, mutual, and ongoing. Discuss how respect and care matter in every relationship.

### **Address Peer and Media Pressure.**

Ask what they see or hear about sex and love. Help them separate fact from fiction.

### **Discuss Safety and Readiness.**

Talk about contraception, STIs, and emotional readiness — not to give permission, but to build responsibility.



### **Affirm Identity and Self-Worth.**

Support questions about gender or attraction without judgment. Help them feel accepted for who they are.

### **Address Body Image.**

Teens often compare their looks with others. Remind them that bodies grow at different paces and confidence isn't about appearance.

## When to Seek Help

Seek professional help if your teen:

- Feels pressured or coerced in a relationship.
- Acts out unsafe or risky sexual behaviour.
- Shows shame, secrecy, or distress about sexuality.
- Withdraws, self-harms, or seems depressed.
- Faces bullying or discrimination about identity.
- Shows physical symptoms such as: frequent urinary infections, vaginal discharge, a missed period, itchiness in the genital area.



**Stay calm, express care, and offer support — your acceptance makes all the difference.**



## Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

Children and adolescents with developmental disabilities are also sexual beings, and like non-disabled children, they also need to understand their bodies and relationships.

They go through the same stages of physical and emotional development as others, though some may experience puberty earlier or later.

They may need extra help to understand privacy, consent, and appropriate behaviour.

Use clear language, visual cues, and gentle repetition to teach about body boundaries and safety.

**Every child — regardless of ability, gender, or sexuality — has the right to know about their body, relationships, and personal safety.**

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### ABOUT US

**Dil Se** is an NGO working for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse in Kochi, Kerala.

Founded in Switzerland in 2000 by Marina Racine and Cristelle Hart Singh, and later established in India as a Trust in 2009, Dil Se works to protect children, educate communities, and support healing for survivors.



### OUR VISION

A world where child sexual abuse is a thing of the past

### OUR MISSION

Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse

### HOTLINE

8111 9111 78

cackochi@gmail.com

[dilse-india.org](http://dilse-india.org)

@dilse.india