

# NATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING BOARD

*An Agency of the Ministry Of Health*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE : TEACHABLE MOMENTS FOR PARENTS**

Do you dread the thought of having to respond to any of your child’s questions that smack of sexual and reproductive health issues? Their timing is not always opportune, for you that is – but for them it might be perfect. Perfect to make you squirm with embarrassment. Just think of your child blurting out the question “Where do babies come from?” in the middle of a church service. Awkward!

Health officials advise that it is important to relate information that is age-appropriate to children. That way it’s presented in bite-sized pieces that they can comprehend. As children grow you have to get ready to provide answers to life’s ‘most pressing questions’. That means you need to be constantly learning as much about the subject matter to keep up-to-date and be honest with your responses.

Here is how you can handle those otherwise awkward moments and emerge in their eyes as the coolest mother or father. Firstly, keep your composure. Smile if you have to as that can make them feel at ease as they approach you and you detect any nervousness or hesitancy. Whether they are very young or are adolescents don’t dissuade your children from asking you questions. Instead, see these times as teachable moments.

Be prepared to listen to them without interrupting. Maybe it took a lot of courage to broach the particular concern they have on their minds. Allow them to ask as many questions as they desire and at appropriate points you can open up the conversation even more, or lead them to a point where they can then figure it out themselves. Pay keen attention to them as the interaction unfolds, as a lot can be detected from the cues they give you, that is, those verbalised and their body language.

They trust you that is why they have come to you in the first place, get ready they may ask for your opinion. Remember this, you are invariably their most trusted source for correct information as they navigate the world in search of answers.

Remember, keep composed. As you answer you get to articulate all of that knowledge that you have acquired making you sound so cool.