



Reflecting on our own RSE: activity guide

In this tried and tested activity, people are invited to think back to their own Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) when growing up and to share their experiences with others. This, in turn, brings about consideration of the needs of children and young people and a discussion about what kind of RSE they would like children, including their own children, to have.

The activity can contribute to consultation and engagement with parents and carers. It can also be used to stimulate discussion with school staff and other educators, school governors and trustees, community members and with young people themselves.

The activity is a great conversation starter at parent information events and serves as a warm-up activity for further activities such as group discussions and forming an RSE values agreement. It could also be run through a virtual coffee morning for small groups of parents or in an online parents' evening.

The steps in this activity guide are written

with parents and carers in mind.

PART 1: PREPARATION

For many parents, this activity could be the first time they are talking about their own RSE experiences and many will have anecdotes they want to share.

Likewise, there may be parents who have painful or uncomfortable memories of how and what they learnt and they may not want to share much.

Parents may not even have discussed this with co-parents or carers, spouses or partners.

Consider how you will manage the activity:

- Is this activity planned as a quick warm-up before presenting separate discussion material or is it intended as an extended activity which will generate the full discussion you wish you have?
- Have an idea about how much time you want to dedicate to the activity as many parents will fully engage in a discussion and may want to keep talking.
- Think about the faith and cultural background of the parents in the group: will

any find it difficult to share their experiences with the opposite gender?

- You may need to ask the parents to get up and move around and find another parent to speak to – that way they will have more control over who they share with.
- Use 'chat' functions within digital apps such as Zoom or Teams to ask parents to comment in response to the facilitators prompts.
- Plan where and how you will signpost parents to information and support on RSE and related topics.

PART 2: INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITY

Explain that many parents' view of RSE is shaped by what they learnt.

Few parents will have had good, comprehensive education around growing up, sexuality and sex, and some will have had none.

Explain that the purpose of the activity is to reflect on our own RSE experiences and then consider what this means for the kind of RSE we would like our own children to have.

PART 3: DOING THE ACTIVITY

Remote version

Invite parents to reflect on their own experiences of RSE when growing up. This reflection can be by themselves, or to discuss with co-parent or carer if they are attending with them.

Introduce a live poll with an anonymous multiple choice question: 'How would you rate the Relationships and Sex Education that you received when growing up? (Very good, Good, OK, Poor, Very poor). Share the poll results with the group.

The poll findings could be compared with national data (Sex Education Forum Young People's RSE Poll, 2019) or a survey carried out with pupils at the school.

Face-to-face version

Invite parents to find a partner or small group to work with. Ask parents to share their own



experiences of RSE when growing up.

Read out and display on screen the following questions:

- What and when did you learn about growing up and sex? (Phrase this according to your audience, faith, culture, primary, secondary etc. For example, instead of the word "sex", you can use "how a baby is made").
- Who taught you or where did you find out about what you needed to know?
- Overall was it enough or not enough?

Take feedback by using questions such as:

Remote version

- What was good?
- What was bad?
- What surprises you from hearing and reading comments from others?

If asking participants to write comments into the 'chat' also invite parents to share orally.

Give time between each question so that it is clear which comments relate to which question.

Face-to-face version

- Who would like to share what you talked about in your pair?

- Did you have similar or different experiences? (International, multicultural and transient parent communities will have a particularly wide-ranging set of experiences).

- What was good?
- What was bad?
- What surprised you from talking in your pair?

Extension questions:

- What is different now for your children compared with the time when you were growing up?
- What do you want your children to learn about growing up, relationships and sex?

PART 4: USING THE FEEDBACK

The feedback can be used in different ways to achieve your objectives. You can:

Remote and face-to-face

- Use the feedback from the 'chat' and discussion to summarise themes and aspects about which there is greater or lesser agreement.
- Write down and display the feedback on a flipchart or board and use for extension activities or for parents to view at the end of the activity.
- Ask pairs to get together with another pair to brainstorm their discussion and write this down on poster paper. Can the group identify one or two things they all agree about that they want for their children's RSE?
- Use the feedback from the parent discussion as a springboard to share research on what children and young people say they want in RSE.
- Share a summary of the findings from the parent discussions in an RSE newsletter, with governors or trustees, in the staffroom etc.
- Carry out the same or a similar activity with staff and pupils.

References

[Sex Education Forum \(2019\) Young people's RSE Poll 2019 SRE.](#)

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