

# Q&A Library Expansion of *Let's Talk: A Digital Platform for Family-Based Sexual Education*

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## Introduction

- Adolescence is a critical period for shaping long-term sexual health and relationship outcomes.
- Access to comprehensive, developmentally appropriate sex education is linked to
  - Lower unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) risk <sup>1 2 3</sup>
- Many parents want to educate their children but feel uncomfortable or unprepared starting these conversations <sup>4</sup>
- *Let's Talk* is a digital program with the purpose of supporting parent-adolescent communication about sexual health.
- Designed for parents and youth aged 10-13, uses a self-paced, two-user format to guide families through structured content on:
  - Puberty
  - Relationships
  - Sexual health topics

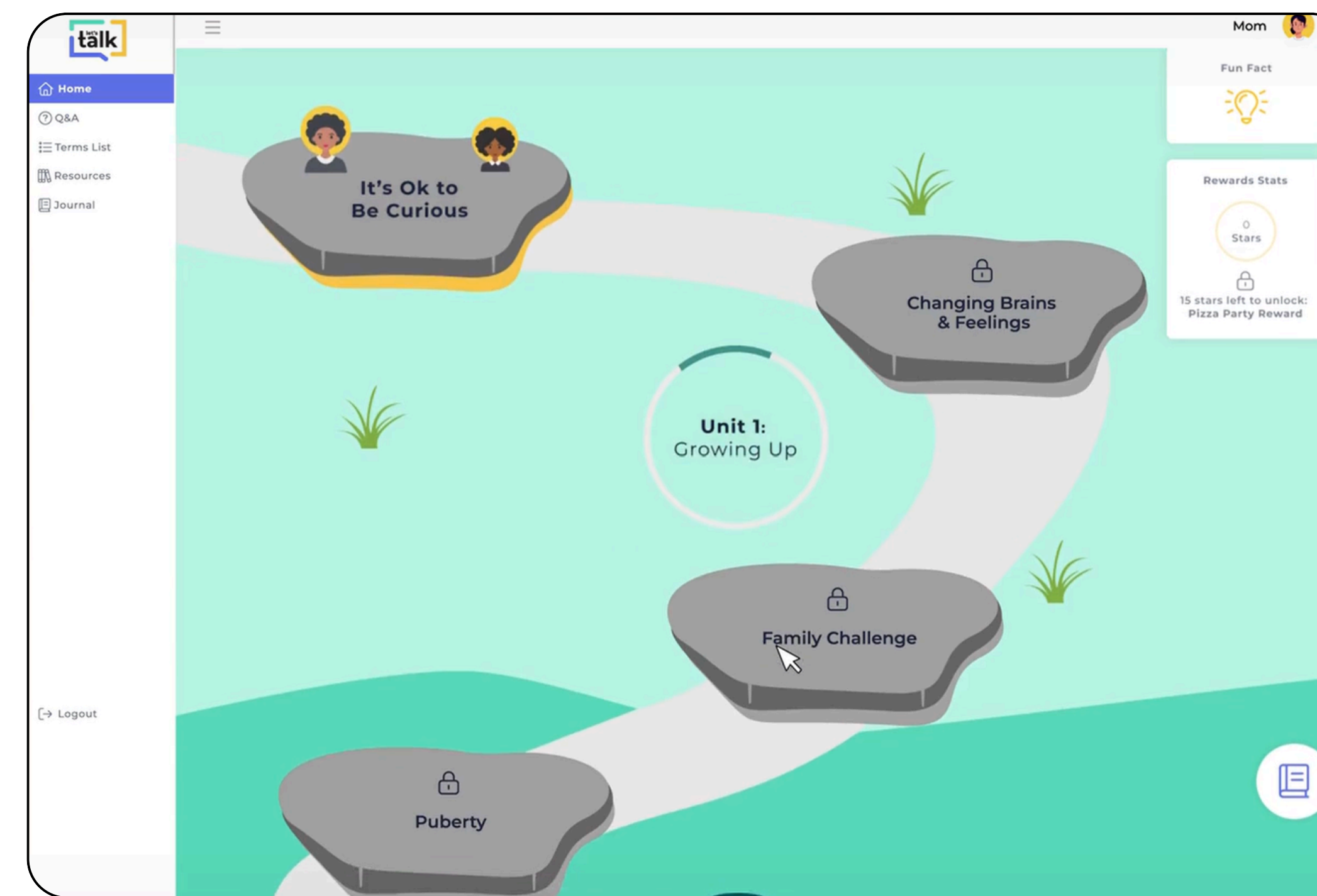


Figure 1. Main landing page of *Let's Talk*

*Let's Talk* uses a stepping-stone format to guide families through content. Parents and children can scroll down the path to find all units and subunits of the program, which include topics such as emotions, puberty, healthy relationships, reproduction, and identity.

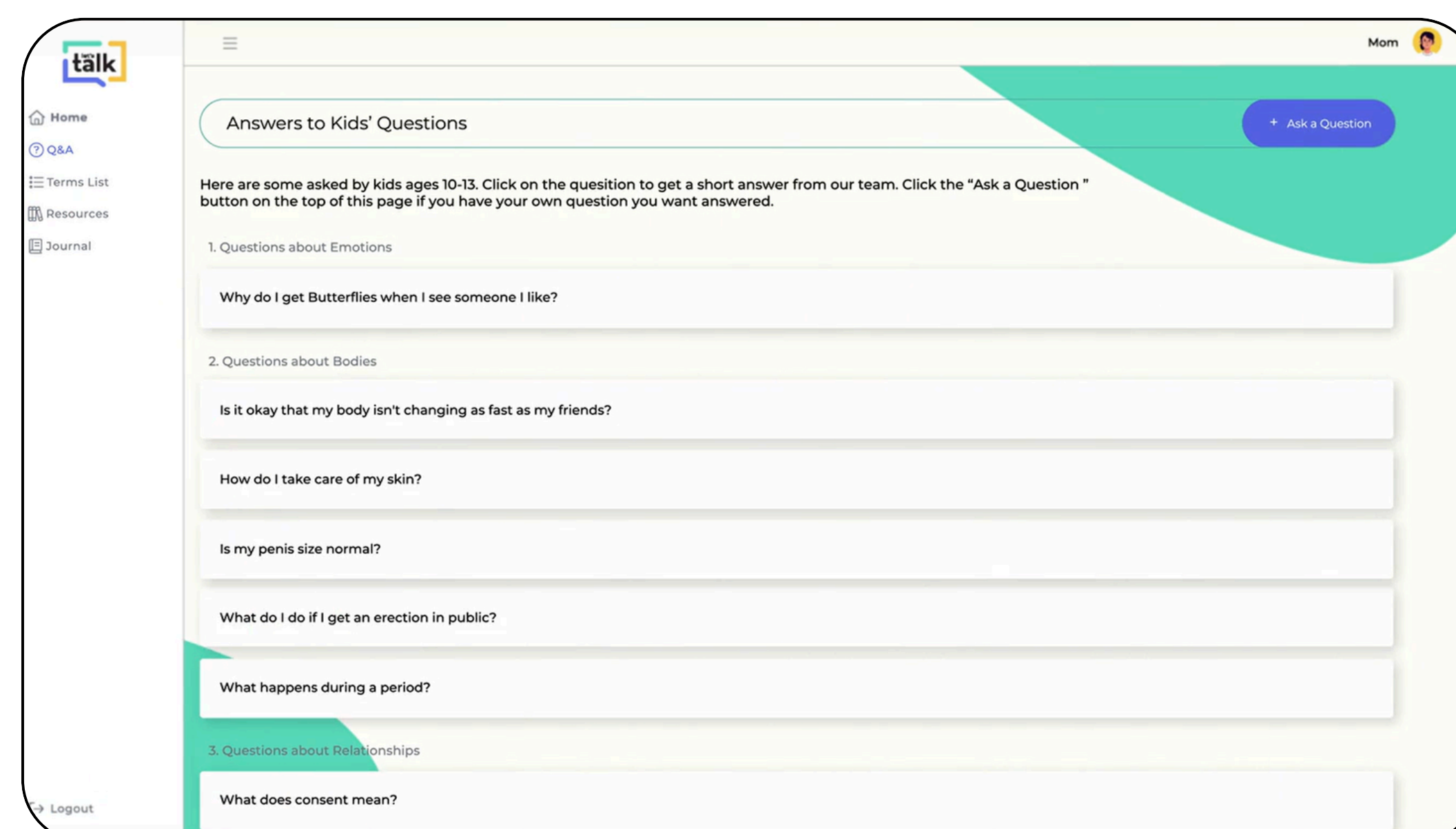


Figure 2. Q&A Library of *Let's Talk*

*Let's Talk* has a feature in the side panel, a Q&A Library, which aims to answer specific questions that adolescents may have that needs clarification, or may be embarrassed to discuss with others. Responses are evidence-based and use many forms of media, such as animation videos, infographics, and audio.

## Preliminary Results

Questions in ongoing development include topics such as emotions, bodily changes during puberty, relationships, physical health, and sexual identity. Examples include:

- "I am having trouble focusing at school and with homework, what do I do?"
- "When should I ask for help with my strong feelings?"
- "Is it normal to get my period earlier/later than my friends?"
- "What does it mean to have boundaries in friendships?"
- "What does a healthy diet look like, especially for a growing body?"
- "How do I support a friend who is LGBTQ?"

Example of a developed question and response:

1. Questions about Emotions

**I am having trouble focusing at school and with homework, what do I do?**

Lots of kids have trouble focusing sometimes, especially when they're bored, stressed, running on low sleep, or thinking about other things. This is completely valid.

4 tips that can help:

1. **Organizing your time, space, and materials.** By organizing your workspace and needed materials, you are ensuring that you don't get sidetracked. Organizing your time is important too. Block out a period of time for you to do your work - find what works best for you and stick to it. By creating a habit, you are telling your mind that it is time to focus on schoolwork, and schoolwork only.
2. **Break tasks into smaller steps.** When you split larger assignments into smaller chunks, it doesn't seem so daunting anymore! Start your work one step at a time, and you will have conquered your homework in no time.
3. **Make sure to get enough sleep and regular meals.** Getting enough sleep and eating nutritious meals make sure that your body is well rested and fueled with the energy needed to focus.
4. **Take breaks.** After completing a task, take a break. This could mean getting up from your workspace and walking around, stretching in one spot, getting a drink of water, or going outside to take a breath of fresh air.

**Purpose:** Join a Youth Advisory Board, offer perspectives on existing program, and collaborate with members to create new content that centers youth voice

## Methods

- As a **Youth Advisory Board** member, youth perspectives are centered in program development.
- After joining the board, members went through an **onboarding process:**
  - CITI Research Ethics Training
  - Critically reviewing and evaluating *Let's Talk's* existing content & features
- Ongoing work focuses on expanding the program's **Q&A Library** to improve engagement and inclusivity.
  - Using evidence-based responses <sup>5</sup>
  - Prioritizing clarity, inclusivity, and sensitivity to diverse family structures

## Overall Significance

- Overall, this project intends to strengthen *Let's Talk* by centering youth voices directly within program refinement and future development.
  - Expansion of the Q&A Library is expected to better reflect adolescents' real questions, concerns, and lived experiences
- Significant personal skills in ethics training intervention development gained
- Next steps include gaining experience working directly with participants, gathering feedback about the program and new features

## References

