

# Disclosure Process for Clients



## Disclosure to a Child

This is the process of telling a child about their own HIV status or the HIV status of their caregiver.

Disclosure is a continuous process not a one-off occurrence.

This depends on the mental and emotional maturity of the child.



## Consequences of non-disclosure (even with the best intentions)

- Keeping secrets from children can make them feel scared, sad, or anxious.
- They may come to believe incorrect information, which can negatively impact their well-being (They may believe a lie).
- They might discover the truth accidentally, which can lead to confusion and distrust.

## Phases of Disclosure



**0-4 years (Non-Disclosure)**

Children at this age are too young to understand, so you wouldn't tell them their status or yours as a caregiver. But make sure that your child is healthy.



**5-9 years: Partial Disclosure**

Teach them about different types of germs (which can make them sick), healthy activities like exercising, eating good food, drinking lots of water, and going to the clinic when they are sick.

You can say they have a Strong Germ that will be put to sleep with 'Goodnight Medicine', but you wouldn't say to them that they have HIV.



**10+ years: Full Disclosure**

Full disclosure is recommended (when you use the word HIV), unless the child is not mentally or emotionally mature or you are not ready to tell them their status.

## Preparing for Disclosure

- 1. Check Your Readiness:**
  - Ask yourself if you feel comfortable and are ready to discuss HIV with your child.
- 2. Educate Yourself:**
  - Take time to educate yourself about HIV so you are equipped to answer questions confidently.
- 3. Choose a Right Time and Place:**
  - Pick a quiet, private setting and a time when you and your child are relaxed.
  - Avoid times of stress, special occasion such as birthdays, examination period etc.
- 4. Consider Your Child's Age and Maturity:**
  - Tailor the conversation to your child's understanding level.
  - Use Simple, Clear Language

## During the Conversion

### Use Simple, Clear Language

- Keep explanations straightforward. For example, you might say, "There's something in your body called "Strong germs" or "HIV", and your medicine helps keep it from making you sick."

### Explain the Importance of Medication

- Help them understand that their medication helps keep them healthy and strong, just like other people take vitamins.

### Be Positive and Reassuring

- Let your child know they are not alone, and HIV doesn't stop them from doing the things they love.
- Be ready to offer extra comfort and support after disclosure, such as hugs or special bonding activities.

### Consider Their Feelings

- Anticipate and plan for their reaction to the news.
- Be prepared for a range of emotions, such as shock, concern, or confusion.
- Let them know it's okay to feel this way and that you are there for them.

### Encourage Questions

- Give your child the opportunity to ask questions and be honest in your responses.
- Reassure them that they can come to you anytime they have concerns.

### Give Time for Processing

- Children may not immediately understand or react. Offer them time to absorb the information and let them know you'll be available to discuss it again.

### Managing Your Own Emotions

- Disclosure can be emotional for caregivers, too. Remember to take care of yourself; reach out to friends, or join a support group if needed.

### Ask for Guidance & Support

- If you feel unsure, speak with your healthcare provider for guidance on how to approach the conversation.

