

# ORGAMITES™

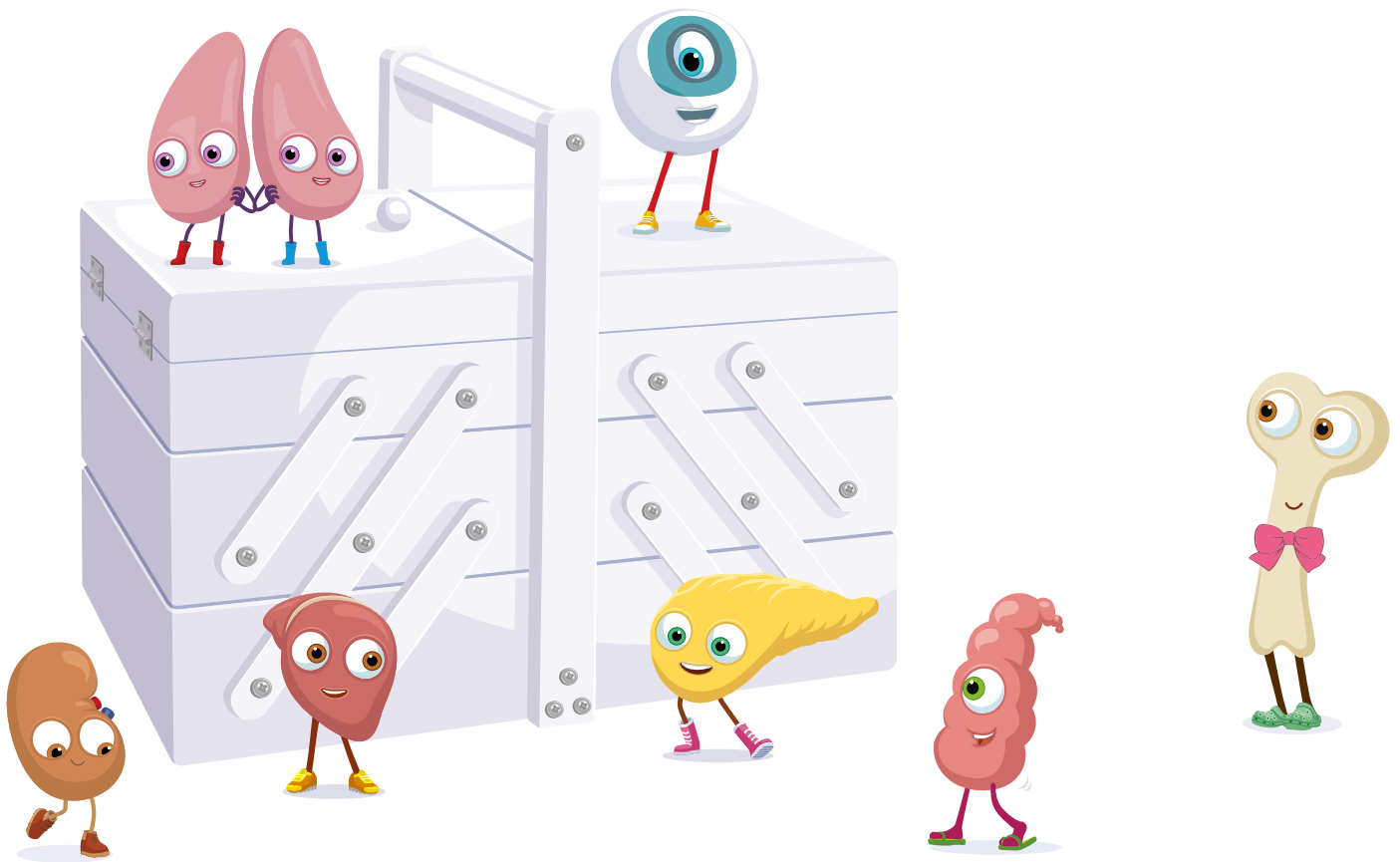
EDUCATIONAL TOOLS



## TOOLKIT 1: MEET YOUR MIGHTY ORGANS

The Life And Death Talk

Discover more educational tools and resources at [Orgamites.ca](http://Orgamites.ca)



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## MEET THE ORGAMITES

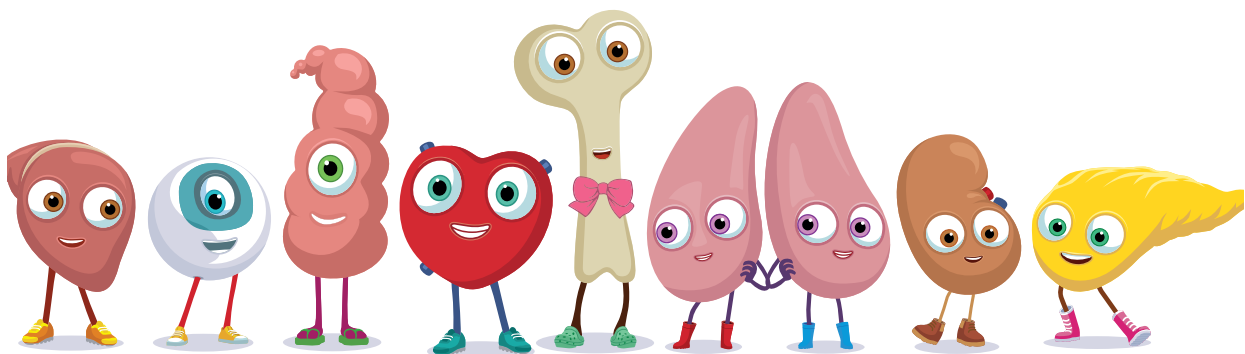
**They're a team of 9 life-saving organs (led by Captain Marrow) found in every one of us.**

They're known as the mighty organs because they represent the most-donated parts of the body. These lovable characters help kids to connect with and appreciate the roles of their organs, while learning what organ donation and transplantation is all about. The Orgamites also inspire children to live healthier, show more compassion for others, and be more environmentally aware.

Consisting of an ever-growing range of fun, educational tools and resources – our hope is that more parents, teachers and healthcare practitioners can be empowered to have more conversations with more children, all in the hopes of changing the way people of all ages view their mighty organs and organ donation, and thereby increasing the amount of organs donated and the number of subsequent lives saved.

Every tool created has been designed in such a way as to empower you with the ideal, most informative and exciting resources to equip and educate the children in your care.

Join in the conversation @MightyOrgamites   . Please tag us, we'd love to share all your mighty artwork #MightyOrgamites To download our educational tools and resources please visit: [Orgamites.ca](http://Orgamites.ca)



# INTRODUCTION

## Have you had the life & death talk with your kids?

Learn how and why to talk to your kids about death ...

### The life & death talk every parent should have with their kids

How and why to talk about death with your kids ...

Stranger Danger, Table Manners, the Birds & the Bees ... there are so many tricky topics we're told to broach with our kids, but isn't it strange that one of the most critical ones is often left at the very bottom of the list? Or worse – never brought up at all!

It's the topic of death.

This is a uniquely modern phenomenon, by the way ... in many other cultures and in every other time in history, children were far more exposed and familiar with the reality of death.

Now, with our chicken nuggets and burger patties sold miles away from the farm and their actual origins, and our children lovingly shielded from so much of the world's hardships, the reality of death can feel like a very unappealing (even offensive) topic to broach. I mean, why would we ever want to?

## Here's why it's so important to start a conversation with your kid:

- Consider that (unlike so many of the other must-have topics we talk about as families) death is a certainty. If we don't have these tough conversations, we leave our kids (and ourselves) less equipped to deal with death when (not if) it strikes.
- Thankfully, in the vast majority of families, us parents will pass away long before our children, when they are already grown-ups. However, none of us can know this for sure. If the worst was to happen, and either we (as parents) were to pass away unexpectedly, or our children were to, talking together beforehand about our thoughts and feelings toward death significantly reduces the stress and grief experienced by those left behind.
- Many of families have not taken any time to have these crucial conversations and then, if tragedy does strike, surviving family members are left to deal with overwhelming choices on top of their grief.
- Not having thought about death, nor talked about it, with their kids sadly, grieving parents have difficulty consenting to donate their child's organs. This, despite there being a huge need for organs from kids for kids (sadly, there are kids on the waiting list – and most of these kiddies need kid-sized organs).
- Families who do have these conversations report them being a source of great comfort – whether children are left behind ... or parents are.
- What's more, families who do go on to donate their loved one's organs have found this to be an additional source of comfort. In the midst of tragedy and loss, knowing that other lives have been saved thanks to organ donation, provides one real light of hope in an otherwise dark time.

### Did you know?

One organ donor can save eight lives and improve the quality of life for many more.

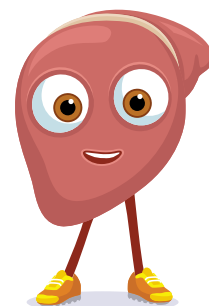
## How to talk about death without killing the mood:

- As with every big, important topic, don't aim to have one big conversation, but many smaller ones. The aim is to not to firehose our kids with information, but offer them a little at a time, in keeping with what they are able to hear and absorb at any given moment. Think of the first conversation as the first step in a long and winding journey.
- Broach the subject casually, provide a little information, then wait for your kid to ask questions. Answer those questions as honestly and sensitively as you can. But don't go into more detail than your child may be ready for.
- Try to keep it upbeat, or at least not terribly depressing. The concept of our lives as we know them ending at some point doesn't have to be a super-heavy conversation. In fact, kids are often surprisingly unsentimental and okay with the concept of life and death (especially if we as their parents seem to be too). From the age of about eight, most kids have thought about the reality of death to some degree – perhaps their pet fish has died, or a grandparent, or they've wept for a favourite movie character. It's up to us as parents to make sure they're processing this dawning realisation of our (and their) fragility and finiteness in the healthiest way possible.
- Try to keep it real, but not emotionally raw. Most kids have a remarkable 'realness radar' – they can pick up on their parents' real emotions and actions far more than they do their words.
- Don't talk over your kids, let them share their genuine fears, as well as their questions. Really listen. It's okay not to have all the answers, but just make sure you validate their feelings (whatever they may be) – and, whatever you do, remain unshockable! This goes for all big parent-kid conversations – the less negative or dramatic your reaction to their questions, thoughts and confessions, the more honestly they'll share with you in the future.

## What to talk about ...

- Talk about the fact that life as we know it is precious, precisely because it isn't never-ending. None of us know what tomorrow may bring and that's why we should be grateful for every new day and the opportunities it brings with it for us to love and be loved.
- Let your kids know that you are okay with this reality ... it's part of what makes you treasure every single day.
- One day, when you (as their parent) pass on (hopefully in a very, very long time from now), what do you want them to remember most about you? Talk about this with them. Perhaps you also would like to share what you believe will happen when we die – depending on your religious or spiritual beliefs.
- When our lives do eventually end, let them know about the various choices available – regarding organ donations and our remains.
- Perhaps this would be a good time to let them know what you have decided in both cases. Ask them if they have any questions or choices of their own.
- To help your kids understand organ donation better, watch this video, presented by the Orgamites, together.
- There is also a host of resources freely available for families to download and use at [Orgamites.ca](https://www.orgamites.ca)

DID YOU KNOW? ONE ORGAN DONOR CAN SAVE EIGHT LIVES AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR MANY MORE.



## Conclusion

We tell our kids that they can do hard things. But, parents, we can do hard things too. And we must. One of these includes having courageous conversations with our kids - conversations that we'd probably like to avoid altogether, but that are ultimately one of the primary ways we prepare our kids for real life (not just death). We are equipping them for the road ahead – no matter what bumps and unexpected turns there may be along the way.

### Did you know?

Orgamites is the only organisation of its kind – helping parents to have really important conversations with their kids. No matter what you believe about life after death, organ donation is something certain that we can do to make a positive difference for those we leave behind. For a host of resources freely available for families to download and use, visit [Orgamites.ca](https://www.orgamites.ca)

## REAL STORIES

### **Addison (British Columbia)** *Heart transplant recipient*

Three weeks after Addison was born, her heart began to fail. Her condition was so serious that doctors at BC Children's Hospital knew her only chance of survival was a heart transplant. She was placed on the cross-Canada heart transplant list. Three days later, a heart for Addison was found. Thanks to the generous decision of a donor family to donate their child's organs, Addison's life was saved.



### **Liam (Newfoundland & Labrador)**

#### *Double Lung Transplant Recipient*

When Liam was just 13 days old, his parents were told his lungs weren't working properly and that he needed a double lung transplant to survive. Doctors estimated he only had months left to live, and thought he'd only be able to survive a few more months. Thanks to some thoughtful and courageous parents, donor lungs were found for Liam.



### **Zacari (New Brunswick)** *Kidney transplant recipient*

Just before his first birthday, Zaccari went into complete kidney failure and had to start dialysis. Diagnosed with a rare kidney disease called congenital nephrotic syndrome, Zaccari remained on dialysis, until at age three he received a kidney from a generous donor who passed away but had shared his decision to become an organ donor and help save a life like Zacari's.

