

ORGAMITES®

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

DISCOVER MORE AT ORGAMITES.CA

THE MIGHTY EDUCATION PROGRAM

TOOLKIT 1: MIGHTY ME

TEACHER OVERVIEW



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



LET'S TALK

Stranger danger, table manners, the birds and the bees... there are so many potentially tricky talks we're told to have with our kids, but one of the most important ones is often left at the very bottom of the list, or worse – never brought up at all!

It's the topic of organ donation and death.

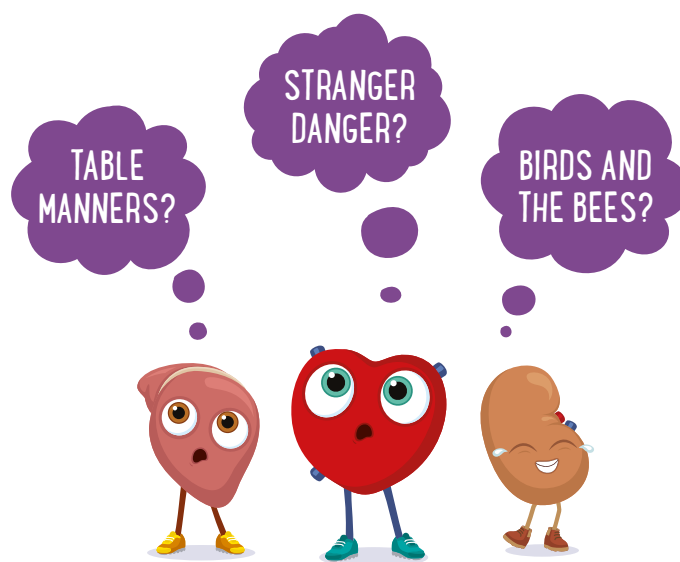
Far from being a mood killer – here's why these conversations save lives (literally).

- Unlike so many of the other 'tricky' topics, 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, for most families, parents will pass away long before their children. However, none of us can know this for certain. If the worst was to happen, and either we (as parents) pass away unexpectedly, or our children do, talking together long beforehand about our thoughts and choices regarding organ donation and death significantly reduces the stress and grief experienced by those left behind.
- Having never talked about death or organ donation with their loved ones, grieving parents seldom consent to donate their child's organs. This, despite there being a critical shortage of organs for kids in need (who typically wait two-and-a-half times longer for an organ – and often die waiting).
- Families who do have these conversations report them being a source of great comfort. What's more, families who go on to donate their loved one's organs often find this to be an additional source of consolation. In the midst of tragedy and loss, knowing that other lives have been saved thanks to organ donation, provides one ray of hope in an otherwise dark time.

Need a little help kicking off the convo? No problem, we're way ahead of you...

“ I've always found it hard to talk about certain subjects with my kids, especially those related to death and organ donation. It's not an easy topic to broach, but it's a conversation that is so important to have. I struggled to find the right way to approach the subject until I discovered Organites. With their help, I was able to have an open and honest conversation with my kids about the importance of organ donation and how it can save lives.”

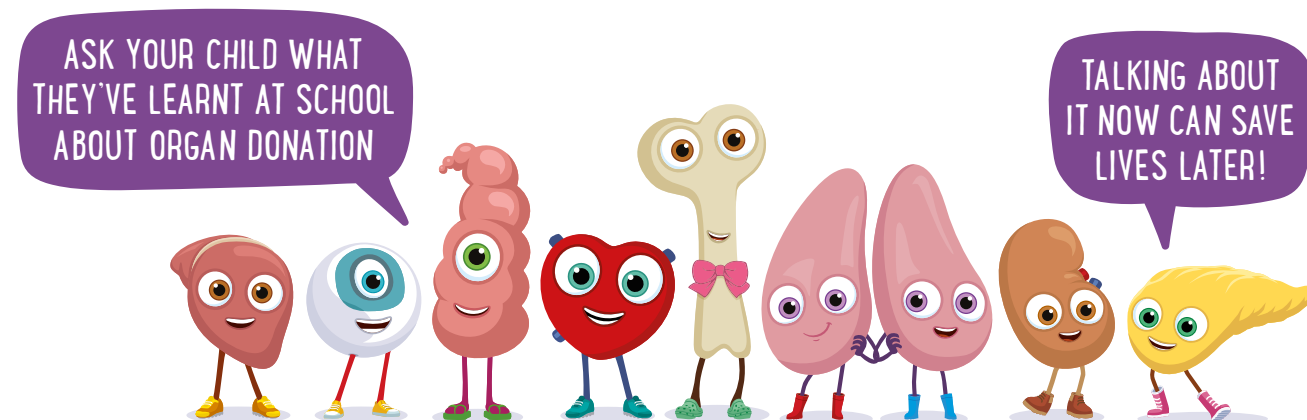
- Glynn Gibb , dad of two kids



MEET THE ORGAMITES

A team of nine life-saving organs found in each one of us, the Organites were created to help empower more families to have more conversations about organ donation, all in the hopes of slowly but surely increasing the amount of organs donated, and the number of subsequent lives saved. They're known as the 'mighty organs' because they represent the organs most needed for donation and transplantation.

Together with Canadian Blood Services, the Organites are here to get families talking about how amazing our organs are, as well as the mighty impact organ donation can make.



At school, your child has been learning about:

1. Organs and the amazing things they do.
2. Organ donation and the positive, life-saving impact it can have.

You can find out what they have been learning at learn.organtissuedonation.ca or organites.ca.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT ORGAN DONATION AND DEATH

- As with every important topic, don't aim to have one big, heavy conversation but many smaller, lighter ones instead. The aim is not to 'fire hose' your kids with information, but rather drip-feed a little at a time, in keeping with what they are able to hear and absorb. Think of the first conversation as the first step in a long and winding journey.
- Try to keep it upbeat! Children are often surprisingly unsentimental and accepting of the concept of life and death (especially if you, as their parent, are too). From the age of around 5 to 7, most kids have thought about the reality of death – perhaps their pet fish has died, or a grandparent, or they've wept for a movie character. Make sure they're processing this dawning realisation of life's fragility and finiteness in the healthiest way possible. Provide honest answers to their questions that can be built on over time, and give them lots of opportunities to express their feelings.
- Let them share their thoughts, fears, and questions. Really listen. It's okay not to have all the answers, but just make sure you validate their feelings (whatever they may be). This goes for all big parent-kid conversations – the less negative or dramatic our reaction, the more honestly they'll share with us in the future.

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT

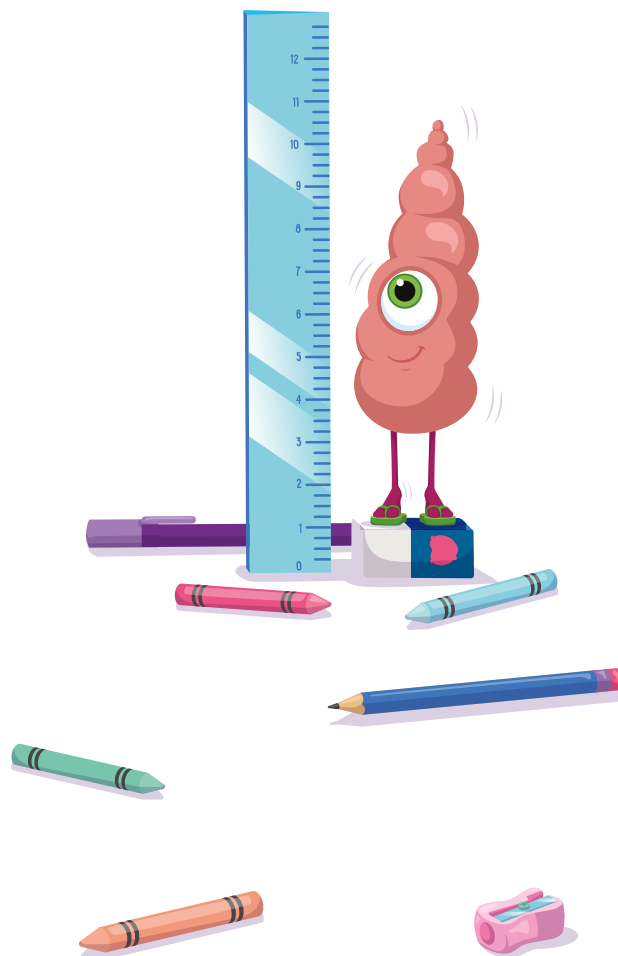
- Talk about the fact that life as we know it is precious, precisely because it isn't never-ending. None of us know what tomorrow may bring and that's why we should be grateful for every new day and the opportunities it brings with it for us to love and be loved.
- Let your kids know that you are okay with this reality - it's part of what makes you be more present - and 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 donation and our remains.
- Perhaps this would be a good time to let them know what you have decided in both cases, and ask them if they have any questions or choices of their own.

Children under 4:

Young children are generally not able to grasp any complex ideas about their bodies and organs. They are certainly interested in what's on the outside of their bodies though. Pointing these things out is a good basis to build on for later conversations about what's going on in the inside. Point out their ears, tummy, fingers and toes, with simple explanations about what they do.

Children 5-6:

Start talking about what's on the inside: the different organs and what they do. You could say, "Here is your heart, can you feel it going ba-boom, ba-boom?" or "Here is your tummy where the food goes" or "Here are your lungs that are like big balloons inside, filling with air every time you breathe." Take the lead from your child and don't worry if they really don't seem interested – all children develop at different rates. You can also start to talk to them about what healthy foods and exercises strengthen which body parts and organs.



Children 6-8:

Use the Organmites as a way of introducing the subject of organ donation and transplantation in a friendly and positive way, focusing on how each organ works, where it is, and how many can be replaced. There are loads of resources and conversation-starters on [Organmites.ca](https://www.organmites.ca).

Children over 9:

Children can now understand proper explanations of their organs and realise that people can get sick and die. You should always stress that this is very unlikely in children - that most live long, happy lives. Talk about your own feelings about death, and what your choices are regarding organ donation. You can access more fun and informative resources on the Organmites website, or point out news stories where a child has had their life saved as a result of receiving a donor organ.

COMMON REACTIONS

Not bothered:

A lot of kids are surprisingly unsentimental and will move on from these chats fairly quickly.

Quiet:

It's also normal for kids to not say much at all as they process the information they're learning. They're probably okay, but be sure to check in with them a bit later to see if they have any questions or concerns.

Upset:

In this case, stop the conversation, reassure your child, and change the subject. Come back to it when they're ready.

If your child is positively receptive, consider making the 'Mighty Pledge' together (it's on the back of this booklet). You could even stick it on your fridge, their bedroom door, or frame it for their wall!

“Far from turning into a heavy discussion, my kids loved learning a little more about organ donation and transplantations—I suspect the fun Organmites characters had a lot to do with this! We talked about how amazing our bodies and organs are, and how clever medical advancements now allow so many more people a second chance at life. They were thrilled to hear about my choices regarding organ donation, and happy that they could voice their own decisions too.”

- Julie Williams, mom of five kids



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should we really talk to kids about organ donation?

The majority of school-going children appreciate being made aware of organ donation and transplants, and yet the majority of teachers, parents and healthcare professionals feel that they lack the necessary information and resources to broach the subject. In every country in which the Orgamites educational tools and resources have so far been implemented, the feedback has been consistently positive. This kind of multi-pronged, long-term approach is critical to slowly but surely increase the amount of organs donated, decreasing the long waiting lists, adding to the number of lives saved, and ultimately making organ donation the accepted norm.

What is the organ donation situation in our country?

Currently, there are around 4,000 people on the transplant waiting list in Canada and every day someone dies while waiting for an organ transplant. Children tend to wait two-and-a-half times longer than adults. Around 9 in 10 people in Canada support organ donation, but two-thirds of adults have not shared their choice with their family. Families are more likely to agree to donation if they know their loved one wanted to be an organ donor.

Why are there family resources for kids to take home?

These have been specifically created to inform parents and equip families to have more conversations about organ donation at home. In Canada, family members are asked to make the decisions about organ donation at the end-of-life.

What is an organ transplant?

It's a special operation when doctors replace a failed or damaged organ with a healthier one. For this to happen, organs need to be donated by organ donors.

“ I had a voice and a classroom, but I didn't have the resources. I wanted to share my son's story with my class on Green Shirt Day to encourage family discussions about registering as an organ and tissue donor. But when I went looking for Elementary-level educational materials about organ donation, at that time I couldn't find any. It's important to teach kids about citizenship and altruism. Organ donation is not just about death, it's part of a medical treatment. Let's treat it the same way as the topic of blood donation; the idea of giving and helping other people.”
- Bernie Boulet, Grade 2 Teacher and mom of Logan Boulet, Alberta, Canada



DID YOU KNOW? ONE ORGAN DONOR CAN SAVE UP TO EIGHT LIVES!



Who can be an organ donor?

Children (the specific age dependent on the province) always require parental consent for their organs to be donated. So ultimately, parents of minors always have the final legal say for their children. Specialist healthcare professionals decide in each individual case whether a person's organs and tissue are suitable for donation.

What can be donated?

The following can be donated after death: heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas, small bowel (small intestine) and tissues which include bone, eyes (cornea), skin, tendons, heart valves and arteries. Living donors can donate a kidney or part of their liver, bone marrow and stem cells, blood and plasma. Where a child is involved, living donors are normally a close relative with parents being the most common donors.

Can children and adults donate organs to one another?

While some organs can be donated regardless of the age and size of the donor and recipient, other organs (like the heart and lungs) need to be a certain size, and therefore require that donor and recipient are in a similar age bracket. Sadly, children tend to wait two-and-a-half times longer for organs due to this fact.

For more FAQ please visit Organmites.ca

Got questions or would like to share your Organmites art?

For any questions or to share your Organmites art with us, please write to info@organmites.ca.

To download additional Organmites educational tools and resources, please visit Organmites.ca.

The Organmites Mighty Education Program is brought to you by All Good Co. in partnership with Canadian Blood Services. Our mighty thanks go to all teachers, parents, and healthcare professionals for taking part in this program.

YOUR INPUT MAKES A BIG IMPACT!

Click on the link or scan the QR Code to provide us with much-needed feedback, and please encourage as many other teachers, students and parents to do so too. Don't forget to...



1. Have the conversation (talk about organ donation with your family)



2. Make the Mighty Pledge (with a pinky promise)



3. Be Mighty Proud (voice your choice wide and far)



Click here to give your feedback!



ORGAMITES®

MIGHTY PLEDGE

Our world is precious, and fragile too
I commit to look after it and take the long view...
I'll try to recycle and put litter in bins,
I'll upcycle too and reuse my things.

Every person is special, whether old or young
We all just want love so I honour each one.
I'll treat all the people I meet with respect every day
And be as kind as can be in my own unique way.

My body is mine and it's perfect for me
So I'm thankful for it, I'm as proud as can be.
I pledge to look after it and to be kind to each part
From my head to my toes, from my kidneys to heart.

And if one day, these parts I don't need,
You can pass them along as my final good deed.
After all, it's not outside looks or clever tricks that truly astound,
We're all beautiful and precious - it's what's inside that counts!

NAME OF PLEDGEE

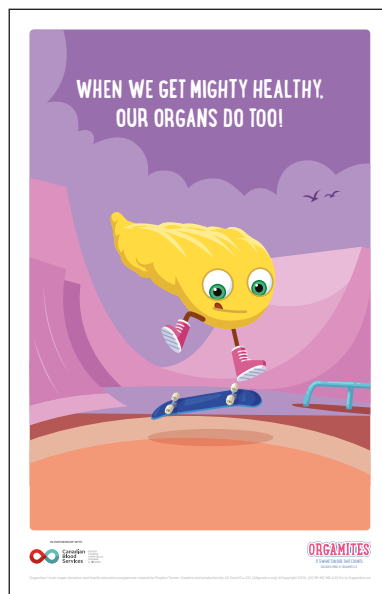
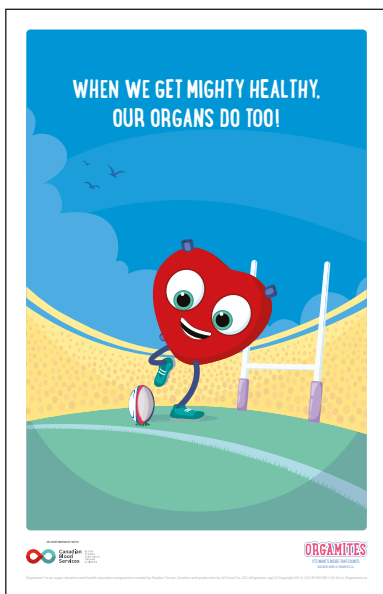
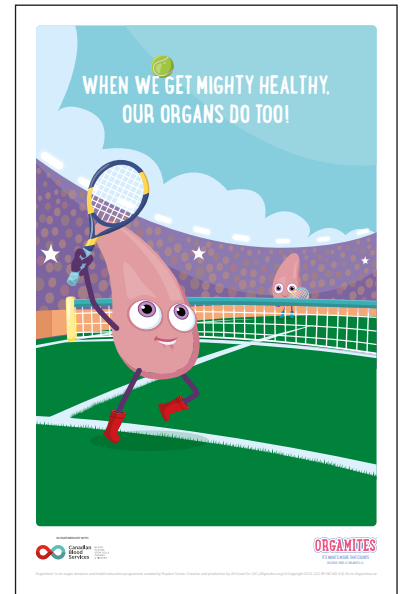
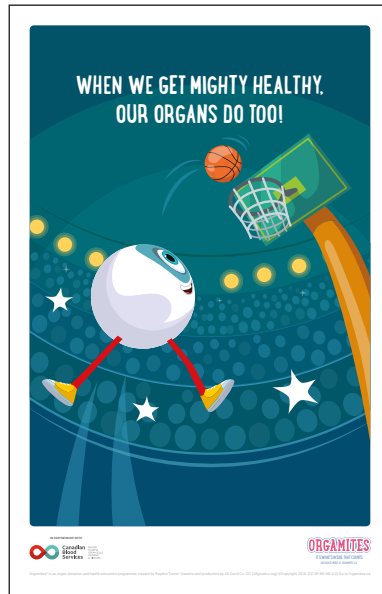
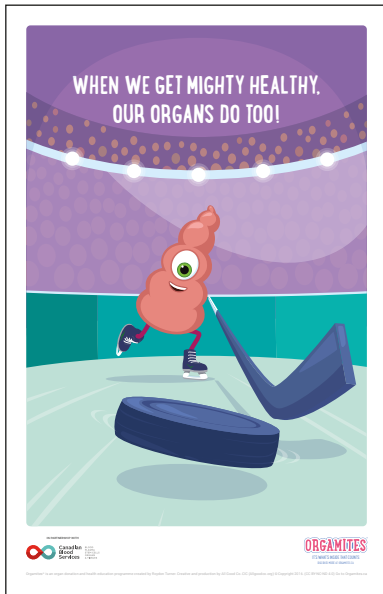
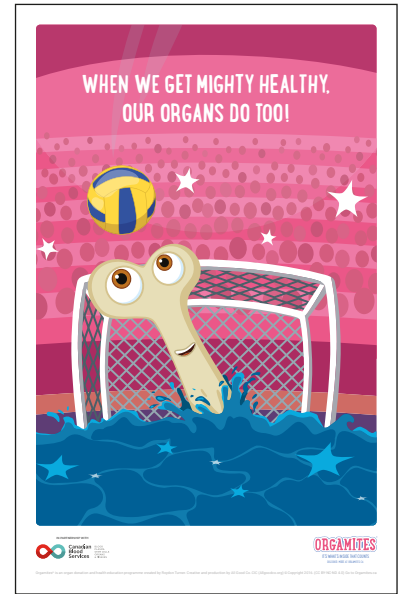
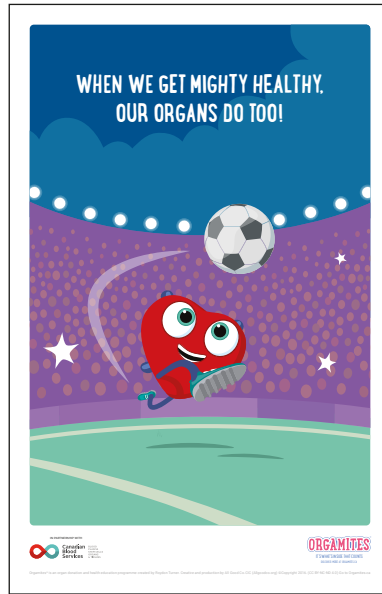
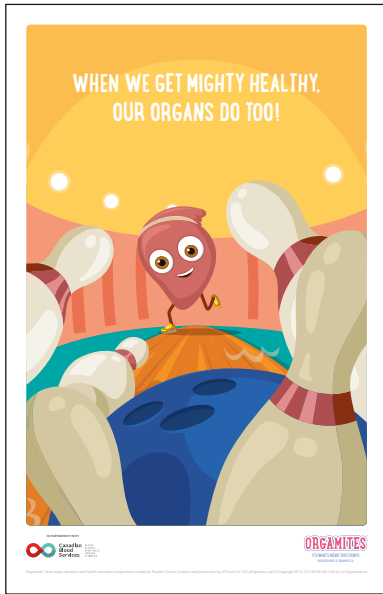
BE MIGHTY PROUD



DISCOVER MORE AT ORGAMITES.CA

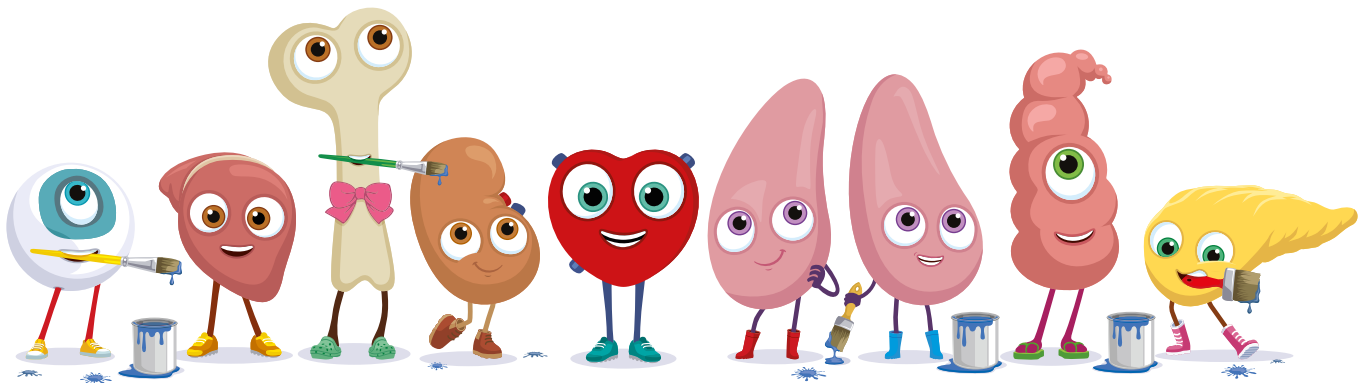


CHILD AND PARENT
PINKY PROMISE PRINTS



More examples of free posters to download at Organites.ca

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS!



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**Canadian
Blood
Services**

BLOOD
PLASMA
STEM CELLS
ORGANS
& TISSUES