

The Right Words in Under 10 Minutes

Home + classroom safe (ages 5–16)



A simple, story-supported framework that helps parents, carers, and teachers explain organ and tissue health journeys — calmly, gently, and without medical jargon or pressure.



Anita Demchenko

Founder, Donate Buddies & Every Breath She Takes

Double-Lung Transplant Recipient,
Parent/Carer Communication Resource (Ages 5–16)

“Most families don’t need more information — they need the right words when a child asks a big question. Donate Buddies makes those conversations feel calm, safe, and possible.”

Ages 5–16

Emotionally safe
language

Under 10 Minutes

To use the framework

4-Step Framework

Safety → Simple words →
Calm answer → Close

Home + Classroom Safe

For parents, carers &
teachers

A calm way to talk about big health journeys (Ages 5–16)

For: Parents, carers, teachers, hospital support teams & community organisations

Solves: “I don’t have the right words to explain this to a child.”

✓ Ages 5–16 ✓ Under 2 minutes to start ✓ 4-step framework. ✓ Home + classroom safe

What this is / what this is not

✓ What this IS

- Simple, calm language for real conversations
- Age-appropriate words a child can understand
- A tool to open the door — not close it

✗ What this is NOT

- Medical advice or clinical information
- A script about surgical procedures
- Pressure to decide, act, sign up, register, or “choose donation”
- Scare-based or graphic explanations
- A replacement for your care team

The “Right Words” Framework (4 steps • under 2 minutes)

Step 1 — Open with a Safety Sentence

Choose what feels natural:

- “You’re safe, and it’s okay to ask big questions about donation.”
- “We can talk about this gently — and we can stop anytime you want.”
- “I might not have every answer, but I’ll explain it calmly and simply.”

Step 2 — Name the body part (one sentence only)

Keep it body-positive and calm:

- “Organs and tissues are body helpers — like hearts, lungs, skin, and corneas.”
- “Sometimes a donated organ or tissue can help someone’s body work better again.”
- “Doctors and families handle donation with care, respect, and permission.”

Step 3 — Explain what’s happening (without fear)

Pick one:

- “Sometimes doctors talk about donation when a person is very sick or has died.”
- “A trained team matches donated parts carefully, and explains each step.”
- “Captain Buddy helps kids understand donation and transplant in calm, kid words.”

Step 4 — Keep it calm (Short vs Story)

- Short version: “That’s the main thing about donation. You can ask more anytime.”
- Story version: “Captain Buddy can explain donation gently — short story or longer story?”
- Buddy version: “Captain Buddy explains donation and transplant in kid words.”

Quick Guide – DO / DON'T

✓ DO

- Start with safety – reassure before you explain
- Use body-positive, simple language
- Let the child lead with questions
- Pause and breathe – your calm is contagious

✗ DON'T

- Use medical jargon or clinical terms
- Make it about urgency, time pressure, or numbers
- Let adult worry lead the conversation
- Promise outcomes you can't guarantee

Ready-to-use scripts (Common hard questions)

“What does organ and tissue donation mean?”

Ages 5–9:	“Donation means a kind gift that can help someone’s body.”
Ages 10–12:	“It means sharing an organ or tissue to help another person.”
Ages 13–16:	“It means donating organs / tissues to help others, handled with care.”

“What is a transplant?”

Ages 5–9:	“A transplant is when doctors give someone a new body helper.”
Ages 10–12:	“It’s when a healthy organ or tissue helps someone’s body work.”
Ages 13–16:	“A transplant replaces / supports a part that isn’t working properly.”

“Where do donated organs and tissues come from?”

Ages 5–9:	“They can come from someone who died, with family permission.”
Ages 10–12:	“Often from a person who has died, when the family says yes.”
Ages 13–16:	“Usually from a deceased donor, with consent and trained teams.”

“Does donation hurt the donor?”

Ages 5–9:	“No. Donation happens with care. Grown-ups handle details.”
Ages 10–12:	“No. Doctors keep the donor safe and treat them respectfully.”
Ages 13–16:	“No. It’s managed by trained teams with safety and respect.”

“How does donation help someone?”

Ages 5–9:	“It can help someone breathe, move, see, or feel better.”
Ages 10–12:	“Donation can help a body do an important job again.”
Ages 13–16:	“It can save lives or improve life, depending on what’s donated.”

“Will someone need a transplant?”

Ages 5–9:	“Maybe, maybe not. Doctors decide step by step.”
Ages 10–12:	“We don’t know yet. The team will explain the options.”
Ages 13–16:	“Not decided yet. Your team will review options and next steps.”

The One-Minute Close (end well)

Choose one:

- “I’m really proud of you for asking about donation. We can talk again anytime.”
- “Right now, you’re cared for and not alone. Let’s do something normal – what next?”
- “If you want, Captain Buddy can help us find the right words – no rush at all.”

For support teams – how organisations can use this

This mini-pack fits inside resources used by hospital support teams, school counsellors, and community health organisations. No specialist training needed – print or share digitally as a gentle starting point for families and classrooms learning about organ and tissue donation and transplant. The language is designed to complement, not replace, professional guidance.

Disclaimer: Educational resource only – not medical advice. Always follow the guidance of your treating care team.