

## **For Young Children**

### ***Amazing You! Getting Smart About Your Private Parts***

*Gail Saltz; illustrated by Lynne Cravath, Dutton Publishing, 2005.*

This is a picture book.

### ***Bellybuttons Are Navels***

*Mark Schoen and illustrated by M.J. Quay, Prometheus Books, 1990.*

This children's book is intended to create a relaxed environment for the discussion of sexuality. It will help parents initiate and guide matter-of-fact, accurate discussions with their young children about sexual anatomy.

### ***Did the Sun Shine Before You Were Born?***

*Sol and Judith Gordon, Prometheus Books, 1992*

Targeted to children three to seven years old, this book focuses on the family and how it grows. It explains everything from conception to birth. Illustrated with charcoal drawings of multicultural images, this book fosters communication between parents and children by the sharing of values and ideas.

### ***How You Were Born***

*Joanna Cole, Harper Collins Publishers, 1993.*

This book is designed to tell children about birth in simple terms. Using colorful photographs, it can be read to children or pictures can be discussed.

### ***It's So Amazing!: A Book About Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families***

*Robie Harris and illustrated by Michael Emberley, Candlewick Press, 2002.*

This book provides a solid combination of appealing cartoon humor and intelligently presented, straightforward information, presented at the middle elementary age level, about many topics kids wonder about: bodily changes, abuse, intercourse, birth control, pregnancy and birth, genetics, love, masturbation, homosexuality, HIV and AIDS.

### ***What's the Big Secret? Talking About Sex with Girls and Boys***

*Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown, Little Brown Publishing, 1997.*

This inviting children's picture book for children presents information and answers about sexuality. It addresses how boys and girls differ, anatomy, reproduction, pregnancy, and birth. It also discusses feelings, touching, and privacy.

### ***Where Did I Come From?***

*Peter Mayle with illustrations by Arthur Robins, 1997.*

Celebrating its twentieth anniversary, this book uses humor and bright illustrations to explain anatomy, intercourse, orgasm, fertilization, pregnancy and birth to children.

### ***Your Body Belongs to You***

*Cornelia Maude Spelman, Albert Whitman Publishing, 1997.*

This book shares positive encouragement for children to use their own judgment to be in charge of who touches their body and how.

October 2006

**American Association for Health Education**

1900 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-1598  
Phone: 703.476.3400  
<http://www.aahperd.org/aahe/>

**American Association of Sex Educators,  
Counselors & Therapists**

PO Box 1960  
Ashland, VA 23005-1960  
Phone: 804.752.0026  
Web: <http://www.aasect.org>

**American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists**

409 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2188  
Phone: 202.638.5577  
Web: <http://www.acog.org>

**American Medical Association**

515 N. State Street  
Chicago, IL 60610  
Phone: 312.464.5315  
Web: <http://www.ama-assn.org>

**American Red Cross, Health & Safety Services**

8111 Gatehouse Road, 6th Floor  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Phone: 703.206.7421  
Web: <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/>

**American School Health Association**

P.O. Box 708  
Kent, OH 44240  
Phone: 330.678.1601  
Web: <http://www.ashaweb.org>

**Children's Defense Fund**

25 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202.628.8787  
<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

**CDC National Prevention Information Network**

P.O. Box 6003  
Rockville, MD 20849-6003  
Phone: 1.800.458.523  
Web: <http://www.cdcnpin.org>

**Family Health Productions**

PO Box 1639  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
Phone 978.282.9970  
Web: <http://www.abouthealth.com>

**Girls Incorporated**

120 Wall Street  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: 212.509.2000  
Web: <http://www.girlsinc.org>

**National Council of La Raza**

1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20009-6207  
Phone: 202.785.1670  
Web: <http://www.nclr.org>

**National Education Association Health Information Network**

1201 16th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202.822.7570  
Web: <http://www.neahin.org>

**National PTA**

330 N. Wabash Avenue, Suite 2100  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Phone: 312.670.6782  
Web: <http://www.pta.org>

**Planned Parenthood Federation of America**

810 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10019  
Phone: 212.541.7800  
Web: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

**Search Institute**

700 South Third Street, Suite 210  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
Phone: 612.376.8955  
Web: <http://www.search-institute.org>

**Sexuality Information & Education Council of the U.S.  
(SIECUS)**

130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350  
New York, NY 10036-7802  
Phone: 212.819.9770  
Web: <http://www.siecus.org>

**YWCA of the U.S.A.**

350 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10118  
Phone: 212.273.7800  
Web: <http://www.ywca.org>



*Compiled by Barbara Huberman, RN, MEd  
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***Flight of the Stork: What Children Think (and When) About Sex and Family Building***

Anne C. Berstein  
Perspective Press, 1996  
ISBN: 0944934099

***From Diapers to Dating: A Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children***

Debra W. Haffner  
Newmarket Press, 2000  
ISBN: 1557044260

***The Go Ask Alice Book of Answers: A Guide to Good Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Health***

Columbia University's Health Education Program  
Henry Holt & Company, Incorporated, 1998  
ISBN: 0805055703

***Happy Birth Day!***

Robie Harris  
Candlewick Press, 2002  
ISBN: 0763609749

***"But How'd I Get in There in the First Place?": Talking to Your Young Child about Sex***

Deborah Roffman  
Perseus Press, 2002  
ISBN: 0738205729

***How Can You Tell if You're Really in Love?***

Sol Gordon  
Adams Media Corporation, 2001  
ISBN: 1580624723

***How to Talk to Your Children about AIDS***

SIECUS, 1994  
www.siecus.org

***How You Were Born***

Joanna Cole  
Morrow, William & Co., 1994  
ISBN: 068812061X

***It's Perfectly Normal: Growing Up, Changing Bodies, Sex and Sexual Health***

Robie Harris  
Candlewick Press, 1996  
ISBN: 1564021599

***It's So Amazing: A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies & Families***

Robie Harris  
Candlewick Press, 2002  
ISBN: 0763613215

***Lesbian and Gay Youth: Care and Counseling***

Donna Futterman & Caitlin Ryan  
Columbia University Press, 1998  
ISBN: 0231111916

***My Body, My Self for Boys: The What's Happening to My Body? Workbook***

Lynda Madaras & Area Madaras  
Newmarket Press, 2000  
ISBN: 1557044406

***My Body, My Self For Girls: The What's Happening to My Body? Workbook***

Lynda Madaras & Area Madaras  
Newmarket Press, 2000  
ISBN: 1557044414

***Now What Do I Do?***

Robert Selverstone  
SIECUS, 1996  
www.siecus.org

***Out With It: Gay and Straight Teens Write about Homosexuality***

Paul Fell Cartoons, 1996  
ISBN: 0966125606

***Period***

JoAnn Loulan, Bonnie Lopez & Bonnie Worthen  
Book Peddlers, 2001  
ISBN: 0916773965

***Raising a Child Responsibly in a Sexually Permissive World***

Sol Gordon & Judith Gordon  
Adams Media Corporation, 1999  
ISBN: 1580621775

***Raising Sexually Healthy Children: A Loving Guide for Parents, Teachers and Care-Givers***

Lynn Leight  
Morrow, William & Co, 1990  
ISBN: 0380708574

***Sex and Sensibility: The Thinking Parent's Guide to Talking Sense about Sex***

Deborah Roffman  
Perseus Press, 2001  
ISBN: 0738205206

***The Sex Education Dictionary for Teens and Preteens***

Dean Hoch & Nancy Hoch  
Landmark Publishing, 1990  
ISBN: 0962420905

***Sex Stuff for Kids 7-17***

Carole Marsh  
Gallopade Publishing Group, 1997  
ISBN: 0793368901

***Sexual Development of Young Children***

Virginia Lively & Edwin Lively  
Delmar Thomson Learning, 1991  
ISBN: 0827341989

***Ten Talks Parents Must Have with Their Children about Sex and Character***

Pepper Schwartz & Dominic Cappello  
Hyperion Press, 2000  
ISBN: 0786885483

***Two Teenagers in Twenty: Writings by Gay & Lesbian Youth***

Ann Heron  
Alyson Publications, 1995  
ISBN: 1555832822

***What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys: A Growing-up Guide for Parents and Sons***

Lynda Madaras  
Newmarket Press, 2000  
ISBN: 1557044430

***What's Happening to My Body? Book for Girls: A Growing-up Guide for Parents and Daughters***

Lynda Madaras  
Newmarket Press, 2000  
ISBN: 1557044449

***What's the Big Secret?: Talking About Sex with Boys and Girls***

Laurie Krasoy Brown  
Little, Brown and Company, 2000  
ISBN: 0316101834

***When Living Hurts: A Lively What-to-Do Book for Yourself or Someone You Care about Who Feels Discouraged, Sad, Lonely, Hopeless, Angry or Frustrated, Unhappy or Bored, Depressed, Suicidal : For Teenagers and Young Adults***

Sol Gordon  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1994  
ISBN: 0807405011

***When Sex is the Subject: Attitudes and Answers for Young Children***

Pamela Wilson  
ETR Associates, 1991  
ISBN: 1560710640

***Words Can Work: When Talking with Kids about Sexual Health***

Jeanne Blake  
Family Health Productions, Inc., 2004  
ISBN: 097531470X

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**Recommended Videos\***

***In Our Own Words: Teens and AIDS***  
Family Health Productions, Inc., 1995  
Boston, MA

***The Power of Girls: Inside and Out***  
Family Health Productions, Inc., 2003  
Boston, MA

***Raising Healthy Kids: Families Talk About Sexual Health***  
Family Health Productions, Inc., 1997  
Boston, MA

***Talking About Sex: A Guide for Families***  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1996  
New York, NY

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**Recommended Organizations**

**Advocates for Youth**  
2000 M Street NW, Suite 750  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202.419.3420  
Web: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
141 Northwest Point Boulevard  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Phone: 847.228.5005  
Web: <http://www.aap.org>

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\*See the list of recommended organizations for address information to order videos.



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## Sex education: Talking to school-age children about sex

Sex education often begins as simple anatomy lessons during the toddler years. During the school-age years, you might wonder how much your children really need to know about sex. Never fear. Sex education doesn't need to be a single tell-all discussion. Instead, follow your children's cues about what they need to know — and when.

### Expect detailed questions

Younger children are often satisfied with vague answers to questions about where babies come from or how babies are born. But school-age children tend to make stronger connections between sexuality and making babies. As their questions about sex become more complex — and perhaps more embarrassing — they may turn to friends or other sources for information.

When your school-age children ask questions about sex, you might want to first ask your children what they already know. Correct any misconceptions, and then offer enough details to answer the specific questions. Avoid long lectures.

Consider these examples:

- **What's an erection?** You might say: "A boy's penis is usually soft. But sometimes it gets hard and stands away from the body. This is called an erection." Describe how an erection can happen while a boy is sleeping or when his penis is touched. This might also be the time to describe a wet dream.
- **What's a period?** You might say: "A period means that a girl's body is mature enough to become pregnant." Explain how menstruation is an important part of the reproductive cycle. You might offer details on bleeding and feminine hygiene products.
- **How do people have sex?** If your children wonder about the mechanics

of sex, be honest. You might say: "The man puts his penis inside the woman's vagina."

- **Can two girls have sex? Or two boys?** For some children, it might be enough to say: "Yes. There are many types of intimate relationships." If your children want to know more, you might take the opportunity to talk about respect for others or to share your personal thoughts about homosexuality.
- **What's masturbation?** You might say: "Masturbation is when a boy rubs his penis or a girl rubs her vagina." Remind your children that masturbation is a normal — but private — activity.

Even if you're uncomfortable, forge ahead. Remember, you're setting the stage for open, honest discussions in the years to come.

### Preteen angst

Between ages 8 and 12, children may worry whether they're "normal." Penis size and breast size often figure heavily in these worries. Explain what happens during puberty for both boys and girls. Offer reassurance that children of the same age mature at wildly different rates. Puberty might begin years earlier — or later — for some children, but eventually everyone catches up. You might want to share experiences from your own development, particularly if you once had the same concerns that your children have now.

### Everyday moments are key

You might have been using everyday opportunities to discuss sex all along. Keep it up! Teachable moments are everywhere. If there's a pregnancy in the family, talk about how a baby develops inside a woman's body. If you see a commercial for a feminine hygiene product, use it as a springboard to talk about periods. If a couple on a favorite TV show begins dating, talk about relationships and falling in love.

Take your role in sex education seriously. Encourage your children to take care of their bodies, respect themselves and seek information from trusted sources. Your thoughtful approach to sex education can help your children develop a lifetime of healthy sexuality.

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By Mayo Clinic Staff

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