

## 7 EASY TIPS TO MAKE "THE TALKS" ROCK

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### The missing link.

#### Understand why kids need to know about sex.

As human beings we are inherently intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, emotional and... wait for it...sexual! As parents we work hard to make sure our kids are developing appropriately on all these fronts with the glaring exception of their sexuality. When we ignore, punish or minimize this integral part of being human, it puts our kids at risk for significant problems that can be bigger than the dreaded teen pregnancy.


- 🐝 Talking about sex and sexuality is the missing link to prevent a whole bunch of problems later in life. Low self esteem, depression, guilt, body image problems, increased risk of sexual abuse, following the pack, and looking for love in all the wrong places, are just a few of the long term problems.
- 🐝 Your sexual identity defines you. We need to raise whole children into whole adults who embrace their full selves, including who they are as a sexual beings.
- 🐝 When children are comfortable with their sexual identity and understand sex and sexuality they are more likely to feel better about who they are as a person and make better decisions.
- 🐝 Sexuality is core to nearly every aspect of healthy development. Not to sound like Freud here, but sex is a consistent part of daily life for everyone, from babies to octogenarians.
- 🐝 Sex drives everything we do. Think about it. We are wired up to reproduce, be intimate, create families, and connect physically with our partners.
- 🐝 Sex is everywhere and the message kids receive is crazy-making - "It's VERY important and DON'T talk about it!" This is very confusing and not helpful at all.
- 🐝 When the topic of sex is normal and not weird or secret, kids do better.
- 🐝 Imagine who you would be if your parents or caregiver paid as much attention to how you took care of your sexual self, your sexual health and your sexual nature as they did to your academic achievement, spiritual growth, nutrition and overall health. conversations over the years. Gone are the days of one awkward and traumatic "sex talk."




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I'm on a mission to help a gazillion kids grow up to be whole and healthy adults by making sure the people who love and care for them talk about sexuality. A lot. And I need your help to make it happen. Share me, would ya?

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# 7 EASY TIPS CONTINUED

## 2 Embrace “The Talk.” This your responsibility, whether you want the job or not.

School, church, and the Internet should be the last resort for your kid’s sexual health education. You are the most consistent and influential force in their lives - use it to your (and their) advantage.

- 👉 Parents have the most influence over their kids sexual decision making. National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. (2003). With One Voice 2003: America’s adults and teens sound off about teen pregnancy.
- 👉 Schools can’t (and shouldn’t) talk about values related to sex and sexuality, which is key to waiting. Sex Ed class should be supplemental to what kids are learning from you. Churches tend to focus only on values. This lopsided approach does NOT serve kids.
- 👉 Just because your child doesn’t seem interested, doesn’t mean they don’t need to know.
- 👉 This is your responsibility - no one else’s. Kids who “learn on the streets” have increased risk of early sexual behavior, pregnancy and STI transmission.
- 👉 They have a right to this information and they deserve to hear it from you. And kids who know about sex are safer from sexual abuse. If that’s not motivating, I don’t know what is.
- 👉 It’s time to stop allowing your fears and discomfort take the lead. This is unfair to your children. Get over yourself so your kids can do better than you did when it comes to dating, relationships and sex.

## 3 Relax and reflect. Disregard any discomfort and step up to support your children.

Calm down (I mean this lovingly!) and reflect on your own upbringing to help you make better choices for your children. Discover your hopes, dreams and goals for your kids as they become sexually aware and (eventually) sexually active.

- 👉 Breathe and admit this makes you squirm. This is the very first step to great conversations. When you are able to acknowledge your discomfort and then move forward, the conversations are easier.
- 👉 How you learned about sex when you were growing up influences your conversations with your kids today. If you were sexually abused, please consider seeking therapy. It will help with the sex talks.
- 👉 What didn’t work for you, definitely won’t work for them either. There is a better way.

## 4 Clarify your values. What you believe about anything and everything related to sex and sexuality.

What do you believe about nakedness, dating, when it’s okay to become sexually active, teen sexual activity, gay marriage, abortion, birth control, sex outside of marriage, healthy relationships and the importance of waiting until...?

- 👉 Values are half of the effective sex talk equation.
- 👉 Your values are the one and only thing you can teach your kids that no one else can. You want your kids to share your beliefs, right?
- 👉 When you are clear about your sexual values, the conversations are considerably easier.
- 👉 Taking the time to explore your values significantly increases your confidence in having these conversations.
- 👉 Values can change as your kids get older - be prepared to be flexible.
- 👉 Your partner’s values may differ from yours and this is fine. Your children will eventually develop their own, so it’s okay for you both to talk about your perspective as long as you do it respectfully.

## 5 **Get the facts. What they (and you) need to know at each age and stage.**

Start with baby making and birth and build on this. They should have a basic understanding of just about everything before Middle School. Don't worry about giving them too much information, unless it's about your current, personal sex life. Kids begin their sexual development at birth, you need to know what's considered common, so you don't freak out (or freak out less!)

*According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (with some additions from me) by middle school your kids should know...*

- 🐝 Your expectations and values
- 🐝 The names and functions of male and female sex organs
- 🐝 What sexual intercourse is and how females become pregnant
- 🐝 What happens during puberty and what the physical changes of puberty mean
- 🐝 The nature and purpose of the menstrual cycle
- 🐝 Same-sex relationships, masturbation, abortion, oral and anal sex
- 🐝 How to prevent pregnancy
- 🐝 Activities that spread sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), in particular HIV/AIDS
- 🐝 Sexual abuse prevention skills and information
- 🐝 Facts are the other half of the sex talk equation.
- 🐝 They don't know what they need to know by when, so it's your job to figure it out (with my help) and teach them.
- 🐝 Sorry! You don't get to wing-it and make stuff up as you go along. Kids need different specific information at different ages.
- 🐝 When you include sexuality as part of your parenting work from the beginning (or as early as possible), you can easily build on what they already know as years pass. Start early (preschool) and keep it up, even when they tell you they don't want to hear it.
- 🐝 Understanding what is typical sexual behavior at each age and stage will help you feel more confident about your child's safety.
- 🐝 With a plan, guide, roadmap, call it what you will, there are fewer surprises along the way.

Values + Facts =  
Influential sex talks!

Get the facts.  
Start with baby making  
and birth...

# 7 EASY TIPS CONTINUED

## 6 **Initiate the conversations.**

Short and sweet conversations rule the day! Jump in and keep it short. Stop worrying about giving them too much information. You also need to talk about challenging issues like sexual abuse, rape, pornography and anything else that makes you really sweat. No one dies from talking about sex, I promise!

- 👉 Once you've completed Tips 1 - 4, this tip becomes considerably easier.
- 👉 Some kids will never, ever ask their parents a direct question about sex, puberty or anything related to sexuality. This doesn't mean they aren't interested or don't need to know.
- 👉 Kids don't know what they need to know by when, so you need to step up and start the conversations. And they are getting the wrong information at the wrong time, all the time, thanks to our lovely media and Internet. You are the antidote.
- 👉 The more you talk about this stuff, the easier it becomes.
- 👉 If you initiate these conversations, you establish yourself as an expert. Compared to your kids, you are a sex expert!
- 👉 Practice makes progress. Figure out what you want to say before you say it.

## 7 **Repeat. "The Talk" is dead. These conversations need to happen over and over.**

Sneak "the talk" into conversation by using teachable moments. Have conversations as a family. Acknowledge and then ignore their discomfort. Talk to them when they are in the car, in a quiet moment, when something is on your mind. Make these conversations a natural part of your family life. Keep the talks short and sweet.

- 👉 A one time "talk" has little or no positive impact on kids. Just think about your "sex talk." How helpful was it to you? Didn't have one? 'Nuf said.
- 👉 Sneaking sex related topics into your regular conversations isn't unfair or cheating. It's smart. It makes this topic a normal part of your family life.
- 👉 The parents who have the most impact on their kids have regular conversations about sexuality, love and relationships and are very close to their children.
- 👉 What they understand at 5 is different than what they understand at 8 which is different than what they understand at 14. Repeat yourself, just add more detail.
- 👉 "Do overs" are fair game - you can go back and re-explain whatever it is you think you messed up. Apologize and try it again.
- 👉 Short and sweet, short and sweet. This is your mantra and this is what works.

"Amy Lang is a parent's best friend when it comes to talking to kids about sex!"

DAN SAVAGE

"Amy Lang makes talking about sex feel like talking about winning the lottery - there are a million wonderful things to do, a million awesome ways to have the conversation."

CHERYL MURFIN  
Seattle's Child Magazine



# RESOURCES

## Birds + Bees + Kids Books + Videos

- **Birds + Bees + Kids – The Basics** — This hour long video is packed with information for parents of all beliefs. Bonus Keeping Kids Safe video included. FREE! When you sign up for my news letter!
- **Birds + Bees + YOUR Kids – *A guide to sharing your beliefs about sexuality, love and relationships*** — The “how to” guide to having effective, easy, and values-based conversations with your children of any age.
- **Dating Smarts – *What every teen needs to know to date, relate or wait!*** — My book for teens. All the info you were missing when you first started thinking about dating!

## Ages 3 to 6

- **It’s MY Body – A book to teach young children how to resist uncomfortable touch** — Lory Freeman and Carol Deach
- **Don’t Be Scared To Tell** — Kathy Delgado Chatteron and Sam Lotfi
- **It’s NOT the Stork! A book about girls, boys, babies, bodies, families and friends** — Robie Harris and Michael Emberley
- **What’s the Big Secret?** — Laurie Krasny Brown, Ed.D. and Marc Brown

## Ages 7 to 9+

- **It’s So Amazing! A book about eggs, sperm, birth, babies and families** — Robie Harris and Michael Emberley
- **Don’t Be Scared To Tell** — Kathy Delgado Chatteron and Sam Lotfi
- **Will Puberty Last My Whole Life? REAL Answers to REAL Questions from Preteens About Body Changes, Sex, and Other Growing-Up Stuff** — Julie Metzger, RN MN and Robert Lehman, MD
- **The Girls Body Book: Everything You Need To Know For Growing Up YOU!** — Kelly Dunham and Laura Tallardy
- **The Boys Body Book: Everything You Need To Know For Growing Up YOU!** — Kelly Dunham and Steven Bjorkman

## Ages 10 + older

- **It’s Perfectly Normal! Changing bodies, growing up, sex and sexual health** — Robie Harris and Michael Emberley
- **The “What’s Happening to My Body?” Book for Girls** — Lynda Madaras with Area Madaras
- **What’s Going on Down There? Answers to Questions Boys Find Hard to Ask** — Karen Gravelle with Nick and Chava Castro
- **Spare Me The “Talk” A Guy’s Guide to Sex, Relationships and Growing Up (13+)** — Jo Langford, MA
- **Spare Me The “Talk” A Girl’s Guide to Sex, Relationships and Growing Up (13+)** — Jo Langford, MA
- **Body Drama – Real Girls, Real Bodies, Real Issues, Real Answers, (14+)** — Nancy Redd
- **GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer and Questioning Teens** — Kelly Huegel and Steven Cozza

## Other Resources

- **[Qustodio.com](#)** - Monitoring software — goes on every device
- **[StopItNow.org](#)** - Child sexual abuse support and information
- **[SavvyParentsSafeKids.com](#)** - Sexual abuse and abduction prevention tips and classes for parents and kids
- **[Porn-Ed.com](#)** - Tips for talking to kids about pornography (coming soon!)
- **[BeHeroes.net](#)** - Family contracts for safe Internet use, cell phones, and tons of other stuff