

## Tips for Parents:

- Ditch the baby talk: no more pee-pee, wormy, dinky, wieners or boobies. Use scientific names for body parts. Children need to learn appropriate vocabulary for their safety.
- Think of teaching your child about sexual health not as “The Talk”, but as an ongoing conversation. Have lots of talks, even a two minute conversation is valuable.
- Take advantage of teachable moments. Explain what those monkeys at the zoo are *really* doing. Tell the truth about relevant family situations (No, Uncle Bryan and Uncle Steve aren’t just roommates).
- Use books and Apps created to help parents just like you. They’re lighthearted and fun, they keep children engaged, and they say all the hard stuff for you. Do it before bed, they’ll do anything to keep you from turning off the light and walking out the door!
- Tell your child a bit more than you think, a bit sooner than you think. The key is to stay ahead of the game with accurate information so your child will think critically about what they see and hear in their sexualized world. Plus, they’ll know they can go to you if they have any questions.
- Give body science information before they ask. Some children never ask questions about their bodies, but still need to be educated and protected
- Remember that you can’t tell a child too much. Anything that isn’t relevant, interesting or on their radar yet will just go over their head. Trust me on that.
- Don’t panic when your child asks a question and you have no clue how to respond. Stay cool, congratulate them for asking such a great question and explain that you need some time to think about a scientific answer. Get back to them after dinner or before bed (or when you get out of the grocery store or when your guests leave...). Call me if you need to, we’ll come up with something good! And if you hate the answer you gave, there’s always a chance for a re-do.
- Remember, questions are the most natural opportunity to provide life-saving information. And if your child didn’t trust you as a credible source of information, they would ask their friend’s older brother. Go you!
- Say “penis goes into the vagina to deliver sperm to the egg” over and over again while you empty the dishwasher (in your head, probably). If you can master a few key words or phrases, I promise answering your child’s questions will be way less stressful.
- Lighten up. Don’t take yourself too seriously and enjoy the funny use of words, mispronunciations and questions. I see many entertaining and invaluable conversations in your future!

*Smart decisions start here.*

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