Saleema Noon
sexual health educators

Parent FAQs

Body Science Workshops and the BC PHE Curriculum

How Saleema Noon Sexual Health Educators Supports the BC Physical and Health Education Curriculum in Elementary Schools

Below are answers to the questions parents ask most often.

1 *"Why do your workshops go beyond the BC PHE curriculum?"*

Our workshops are **aligned with the BC Physical and Health Education (PHE)** curriculum, and we address many of the learning outcomes required for each elementary grade level.

However, it's important to understand that while BC's PHE curriculum is one of the most robust mandated curricula in Canada, it also has some limitations.

The current curriculum was last revised in 2016.

Since then, the world our kids are growing up in has changed dramatically.

For example, the curriculum does not explicitly address topics such as:

- human reproduction
- pornography and the importance of critical thinking
- the mental health effects of social media
- sending nudes, sextortion and other safety issues
- misinformation, toxic messaging and sexual slang online

Yet these are topics that many students are already asking about based on what they see and hear in the world they live in…both online and off.

The timing of some topics doesn't match kid's real questions.

Children's curiosity about bodies often begins much earlier than the curriculum suggests.

For example, Kindergarten students are more often than ever asking **how babies are made**, yet human reproduction is not formally included in the BC PHE curriculum for elementary grades.

When these questions come up, educators have a responsibility to provide **clear, factual, age-appropriate answers** rather than leaving children to rely on peers or the internet. And parents are appreciative to have us as experts reinforce these important messages that they want their kids to hear.

The curriculum is intentionally broad.

The BC PHE curriculum is designed to be less prescriptive and more flexible, which allows teachers to adapt lessons to the needs of their students.

However, this flexibility also means that important topics may be interpreted differently or omitted and students may receive **inconsistent information from school to school or classroom to classroom**.

Our workshops help ensure students receive **consistent, accurate, science-based information** that supports the curriculum's goals.

Our workshops follow best practices in sexual health education.

International research shows that comprehensive sexual health education starting in early elementary school supports children's well-being now and in the future.

According to UNESCO and other global research organizations, this kind of education is associated with:

- reduced risk of sexual abuse
- delayed sexual activity
- reduced risk of unintended pregnancy and STIs
- reduced intimate partner violence
- stronger critical thinking skills when consuming media

Our workshops are carefully designed to meet these evidence-based best practices, while remaining age-appropriate and aligned with BC curriculum goals.

2 *"Why teach scientific names for body parts?"*

Teaching accurate names for body parts is an important part of helping children understand their bodies.

It also supports the BC curriculum's emphasis on body awareness, personal safety, and the ability to communicate about one's health and well-being.

When children learn the correct terms for body parts, they are better able to:

- communicate clearly about their bodies

understand personal boundaries

And, most importantly,

- **seek help from trusted adults if something unsafe happens using clear, understandable language.**

And when students learn the names of body parts, they almost always ask this next question:
"What do those body parts do?"

Providing a brief, scientific explanation prevents confusion and misinformation. But these details are not explicitly addressed in the BC PHE curriculum.

3 *"Why talk about human reproduction in elementary school?"*

There are many good reasons; here are a few:

- Human reproduction is amazing…why not share the facts with our kids? If we don't tell our kids the truth about how babies are made, how will we respond to their questions? Our kids are too smart for stories about storks and cabbage patches. They deserve honest answers

- Hearing the truth about how babies are made from a trusted adult isn't traumatic. Hearing misinformation from an unreliable source can be.

- Hiding the truth doesn't protect kids' innocence, it puts them at risk for abuse. Knowing the truth teaches the healthy boundaries they need to stay safe.

- Talking openly about how babies are made establishes parents as a reliable source of information. We want our kids to know from day one where to go for honest answers to their questions, no matter what the topic.

- Research shows us that curiosity, not knowledge and awareness, leads to early sexual experimentation. Kids who learn about healthy bodies and healthy sexuality from reliable adults in their lives actually delay their sexual debut. They're also at reduced risk for sexual abuse.
- Young children only absorb what's interesting and relevant to them. If it's not on their radar, it will just go over their head. Nothing bad will happen.
- Littles are the most enthusiastic body scientists. They're excited to learn about the reproductive system just as they are anything else about the body. Let's engage our captive audience while we can!
- If we don't teach them, someone else will do it for us. Like a friend's older sibling. Or the internet.
- Kids hear more than we think, sooner than we think. We can't control this, but we can be proactive with scientific information about reproduction so they can think critically about what they see and hear.

Research shows that curiosity about reproduction often begins between **ages 4–6.**

When children ask these questions, experts recommend answering with **simple, factual explanations.**

For example, this is what we say in our Body Science workshops:

“When a tiny egg cell from one body meets with an even tinier sperm cell from another body, a baby usually (but not always) begins to grow.”

4 *"Why teach about puberty before it happens?"*

Puberty often begins earlier than many adults expect.

Research shows:

- breast development can begin around **age 8**
- testicular development can begin around **age 9**
- experiencing a first period around age 8 or 9 is well within the range of normal.

When children learn about puberty **before these changes happen**, they are less likely to feel scared, shocked, confused, or ashamed.

For example:

- A child who understands menstruation won't panic when their first period begins.
- A child who knows about wet dreams will understand that they're a normal part of development and not something to worry about.

Preparing children ahead of time helps them experience puberty **with confidence and calm instead of fear and secrecy.**

5 *"Does early sexual health education cause kids to experiment or just grow up too fast?"*

No, research consistently shows the opposite.

Children who receive sexual health education from reliable adults in their life tend to:

- delay sexual activity
- make safer decisions
- communicate more clearly about consent and boundaries

In fact, curiosity — not knowledge — is what drives experimentation.

Accurate information helps children feel informed, confident, and better prepared to make healthy decisions later in life.

6 *"How detailed are explanations about human reproduction?"*

Students learn:

- that sperm and egg cells exist

- that pregnancy begins when those cells meet

- that the penis usually (but not always) delivers the sperm to the egg

- that there are different ways for people to become parents, including sex.

- that sex involves *"the penis entering the vagina to deliver the sperm to the egg."*that as a result of these different ways for people to become parents, all families are unique…and that's something to be celebrated.

In the primary grades, learning about sex is a 30 second explanation within a 30-40 minute presentation using this exact script:

“There are lots of ways that the sperm and egg can join and lots of ways that people can become parents. For example, I bet you’ve heard of people who become parents through adoption. And maybe you’ve also heard of people getting the help of a doctor to make a baby. Sometimes they can even do that outside of the body in a hospital lab if you can believe it! The most common way for two people to make a baby is for the penis to be placed into the vagina to deliver the sperm to the egg.

We call that having sex, or doctors call it sexual intercourse. Have you heard that word before? It’s okay if you haven’t because it’s only for grownups so nothing you have to worry about any time soon!

There are no graphic images or explicit descriptions.

Information is presented using **simple, scientific language**.

7

"Will teaching this create more playground conversations about sex?"

Playground conversations about bodies already happen.

Children hear words and ideas from:

- older siblings
- media and online content
- other kids
- overhearing adult conversations

Providing accurate information helps replace rumours, myths and slang words with science.

When children understand something, it often becomes **less mysterious and less interesting to talk about on the playground.**

8 *"What if parents prefer to teach these topics at home?"*

Parents play the most important role in their child's development.

Body Science workshops are designed to **support families — not replace them.**

Many parents appreciate our workshops because they:

- introduce and reinforce scientific vocabulary
- normalize conversations about bodies
- encourage children to ask thoughtful, scientific questions
- don't teach values (that's for parents to do!).
- offer a springboard for meaningful conversations at home.

9

"Do you teach kids what values they should have about relationships or sex?"

No.

Our role as educators is to provide accurate, age-appropriate scientific information about bodies, safety, and development.

We do not teach personal values about topics such as:

- when someone should start dating
- when someone should have sex
- when someone should have children

These are **family decisions**, and we encourage students to discuss values-based questions with their parents or caregivers.

Our goal is not to replace family conversations — but to **support them** by giving children the vocabulary and understanding that help those conversations happen more comfortably at home.

10 “What is the overall goal of these workshops?”

Our goal is to help children develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to:

- recognize unsafe situations and seek help from trusted adults
- understand their bodies, including basic anatomy and human reproduction
- build self-awareness and confidence in who they are
- learn how to practice consent and have healthy boundaries
- develop the skills to build healthy, respectful relationships
- understand and prepare for physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty
- make safe and responsible choices online and offline

Children who understand their bodies, consent, boundaries, and relationships are better equipped to communicate clearly, respect others, and protect their own well-being.

Ultimately, our Body Science workshops supports the same goals outlined in the BC Physical and Health Education curriculum: helping students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need for personal safety, healthy development, and respectful relationships throughout their lives.

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For more information, please visit https://www.saleemanoon.com or email us at info@saleemanoon.com.