

Pediatricians are one of the most important resources for parents and guardians for all aspects of child development. Pamphlets and booklets covering many topics in child development can be found in the waiting areas and exam rooms of all well-resourced pediatricians' offices across the country. For children under the age of 8, commonly addressed topics including toilet training, healthy food choices, developmental milestones, enrolling children in sports programs, and many more. However, in general there is very little information available about talking to younger children about sex and sexuality. While sex education materials for parents of adolescents and teenagers are relatively abundant and available in the doctor's office, and talking about sex with these age groups is widely considered to be one of the most important aspects of their development, there is a dearth of clear, concise, and readily accessible resources for parents of younger age groups. Even more troubling is the finding from the American Academy of Pediatrics that most sexuality education for children comes too late: a study published in 2010 reported that more than 40 percent of children had engaged in sexual intercourse before they had had any discussion about sex, condom use, STIs, and birth control with their parents.

This project was designed as an answer to that problem. The pamphlet, entitled "Talking to Your Child About Sex: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers of Children Ages 6-8", was made to be displayed in a pediatrician's office, children's clinic, or alongside other educational resources for parents of young children. It includes detailed, developmentally appropriate information for teaching children in the early elementary years about sex and sexuality. The pamphlet answers common questions that parents might have about starting the conversation, what to expect from their child, and suggested activities to make the talk more comfortable and fun. In addition, it gives a list of online and print resources where parents can look for more information and guidance. The pamphlet is designed to be printed on 8x14" paper and folded into four columns. Medical students are encouraged to print and use in their clinical years, or in any environment where it would be beneficial to parents of this age group. In addition, if there is interest in translating this pamphlet into another language (which would be welcomed!), please contact the author, Arija Weddle, at arija.weddle@gmail.com

Sources:

The sources listed in the Resources section of the pamphlet cover a lot of what was written. Here are other sources I used in writing this pamphlet:

- "Talking To Your Child About Sex." <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/puberty/pages/Talking-to-Your-Child-About-Sex.aspx>
- "Talking To Your Young Child About Sex." <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Talking-to-Your-Young-Child-About-Sex.aspx>
- "Facts for Families: Talking to Your Kids About Sex." http://www.aacap.org/galleries/FactsForFamilies/62_talking_to_your_kids_about_sex.pdf
- "Guide to Talking to Kids About Sex." <http://www.parenting.com/article/talking-to-kids-about-sex-21335549>
- "Facts on American Teen's Sources of Information about Sex." <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/FB-Teen-Sex-Ed.html>
- "Sex and HIV Education." http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_SE.pdf
- "How to Talk to Your Kids About Sex." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8fiP3yuBEM>
- "Sex Education: Talking to your school-age child about sex." <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sex-education/CC00076>
- Beckett MK, Elliott MN, Martino S, Kanouse DE, Corona R, Klein DJ, Schuster MA. "Timing of parent and child communication about sexuality relative to children's sexual behaviors." *Pediatrics*. 2010; 125(1):34-42
- Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health and Committee on Adolescence. "Sexuality education for children and adolescents." *Pediatrics*. 2002;109(3):556-7
- Wilson EK, Dalberth BT, Koo HP, Gard JC. "Parent's Perspectives on Talking to Preadolescent Children About Sex." *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. 2010;42(1):56-63