



Sexuality is a Part of Growing Up

Promoting healthy sexuality in our children involves teaching them to appreciate their bodies and to understand the changes they'll go through. "Healthy sexuality" is a part of natural human growth and development.—it's not just the appropriate "birds and bees" talk or sex education, but there's a lot more to it. A new guide from Western Australia's Department of Health, "**Talk Soon, Talk Often: A Guide for Parents Talking to Their Kids About Sex,**" lists eight reasons for starting the discussion sooner rather than later:



1. *Many children want to know.* Children are naturally curious!
2. *Breaking the ice/setting the stage.* Talking about sexuality early makes later conversations easier—for both kids and their parents.
3. *It helps children cope with puberty.* Help them learn what to expect.
4. *Children may start puberty earlier*—as early as age 8 for some girls.
5. *It helps young people make healthier choices.* Children whose parents talk with them about sexuality are more likely to wait to have sex, and have fewer unintended pregnancies.
6. *Both Boys and girls need the same information.* Both parents can be especially helpful with their children.
7. *It can make life easier for kids who have different personalities or characteristics.*

Let's get rid of stereotypes about what girls and boys are "supposed to do."



8. *It can help protect them from sexual abuse.* If your children can talk to you about sexual issues, they are more likely to alert you to abuse.

To read this report, go to: [www.public.health.wa.gov.au/cproot/4011/2/HP11643_Talk%20Soon%20Talk_Often%20_Guide.pdf](http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/cproot/4011/2/HP11643_Talk%20Soon%20Talk%20Often%20Guide.pdf)

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