

Public speaking, private consultations, self-help books & CDs covering sex therapy, parenting and self-development

DR JANET HALL
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST & HYPNOTHERAPIST
POWER AND PASSION



Dr Janet Hall's newsletter

 drjanethall.com.au

 bedwetting.com.au

 sex-therapy.com.au



Sex Education for Toddlers, Betweens and Teens Important Information for Parents!

Dr Janet Hall
Clinical Psychologist, Family, Relationship and Sex Therapist
www.drjanethall.com.au

No matter how liberated you are, talking to your children about sex can be difficult. How much should you say, and when should you start?

Many parents did not have easy conversations about sex with their parents, so they find it embarrassing trying to talk about sex to their kids. For many adults, sex was always a taboo subject even though it is as natural as the birds and the bees. So if parents aren't confident about talking about it, or if they don't have a healthy sexual self esteem, they can struggle to tell their kids what sex is all about.

From periods, erections and why there is hair down there, professional educators agree on early sex knowledge. Ideally, talking about sex should start when children are very young and be done in an easy and comfortable way so that sex is seen as a normal part of life.

Q. At what age should I talk to my kids about sex?

As soon as they start asking you questions, start telling them. Most kids start asking simple questions from about the age of three, so you should be prepared to give them clear, honest answers. One of the best things you can do is to go to the library and get books like *Where Do I Come From* and *Bodies*. These books are very cute, there are loads of pictures to look at and there is nothing quite like the power of something in writing. Sit down and go through the book with your child.

Q. What do young children want to know?

The most common questions you'll hear will relate to sexual body parts and why boys and girls look different. You don't need to go into great details or spell out every single aspect of sex - just answer the question they ask with total honesty, using reference books as a guide if you can.

Q. How do I warn my young child about sexual abuse without scaring him or her?

The careful talk about how private parts are special and the message that you don't let others look or touch is important to bring up often! Parents should take advantage of TV ads and magazine pictures to make a comment. For very young children, *Everyone's Got a Bottom* is a 2007 book which is a collaboration between Family Planning Queensland, writer Tess Rowley, illustrator Jodi Edwards and experts from the early childhood and child protection sectors. *Everyone's Got a Bottom* is a story about Ben and his brother and sister learning and talking together about bodies. It is a tool for parents and carers to gently start a conversation with children

about self protection. It's about children keeping safe in a style that is fun, positive and protective. The main message is that "We all have bodies and we all want to keep them safe".

Buy the book Everyone's Got a Bottom for \$16 and get Sex-Wise for Teenagers for an extra \$5.00 (plus postage and handling of \$8.80 in Australia)

Visit Dr Janet Hall's Online Shop

Things to remember:

Sex education should be started early, answering genuine questions clearly and simply.

It is important not to overload kids with too much information all at once.

Girls reach puberty between 10 and 13 years, while boys reach puberty between 10 and a half and 15 years. Masturbation is normal, healthy and usually innocent in children.

Families who are open in communication and free from sexual hang-ups produce children who develop the most appropriate adult attitudes

For more information on dealing with your kids and sex, contact your Family Planning Centres, GPs or Infant Welfare Centres.

Resources for Under 5s:

Peter Mayle's titles Where do I Come From? and What's Happening to Me?

Resources For 5-10s:

A Victorian government website Better Health discusses how to talk about sex, with suggestions on age related puberty based topics and discussing the biology of sex and reproduction. The Hormone Factory website is fun as well as informative. South Australia has its own Children Youth and Women's Health Services site and is a starting point to Talk About Sex with Teens.

Resources For Teens:

The following delve much further into sexual issues with content including homosexuality, sexual emotionality, safe sexual health and common misconceptions and myths.

Puberty Book (Wendy Davill & Kelsey Powell)

Unzipped (Bronwyn Donagh)

Sex Lives of Australian Teenagers, (Joan Sauer)

Sex-Wise: What Every Parent and Teenager Needs to Learn About Sex (Dr Janet Hall)

See www.drjanethall.com.au, and www.sexedco.com