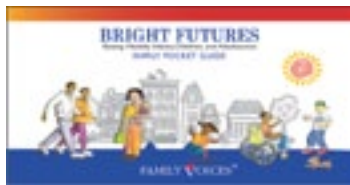




January 2013

PROMOTING HEALTHY SEXUALITY



The information in this issue is taken from the new Bright Futures Family Pocket Guide, developed by Family Voices IMPACT. To order a copy, go to: <http://bit.ly/BrightFutures-FamilyPocketGuideorders>

With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, Family Voices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. www.familyvoices.org and www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org. This digest is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Child, Adolescent, and Family Health UCMC21535.

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Healthy Bodies, Healthy Relationships

Healthy sexual development and sexuality includes developing a healthy body image, building healthy relationships, and learning about the body. It also includes learning appropriate ways to show affection; the difference between love and sex; and learning to make responsible decisions about being sexually active. Children and youth make better decisions when they have trusted adults to talk to, and strong connections with their families.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (1-4 years): Encourage healthy sexual development



Expect your child to be curious about his own and others'

bodies, including genitals. Use correct terms for all body parts. Explain that some body parts are private.

Ask your health care provider about how to talk to your child about his or her body.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (5-10 years): Changing Bodies



Before it seems necessary, prepare your child for the changes of puberty (body odor, acne or pimples, menstruation for girls, wet dreams for boys, etc.).

Encourage your child to ask questions. Provide answers appropriate to your child's understanding. Discuss these issues with all of your children, including children with special needs, even if sexual activity seems unlikely. If your child receives family life education at school or in the community, discuss the information. Talk to your health care provider for advice, help, and resources.

RESOURCES:

Children Now: Talking with Kids About Tough Issues: www.talkingwithkids.org

Sexuality Education for Children and Youth with Disability or Chronic Illness www.med.umich.edu/yourchild//topics/disabsex.htm