



## PROMOTING HEALTHY SEXUALITY

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With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, FamilyVoices 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](http://www.familyvoices.org) and [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org).

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## 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:

- Many children want to know. Children are naturally curious!
- Breaking the ice/setting the stage. Talking about sexuality early makes later conversations easier—for both kids and their parents.
- It helps children cope with puberty. Help them learn what to expect.
- Children may start puberty earlier—as early as age 8 for some girls.
- 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.
- Both boys and girls need the same information. Both parents can be especially helpful with their children.
- 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."
- 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/HPI1643\\_Talk%20Soon%20Talk\\_Often%20Guide.pdf](http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/cproot/4011/2/HPI1643_Talk%20Soon%20Talk_Often%20Guide.pdf)

