

## 30 Days of Sex Talks

*30 Days of Sex Talks: Empowering your child with knowledge of sexual intimacy* is a series of books for parents created by the organization, Educate and Empower Kids ([www.educateempowerkids.org](http://www.educateempowerkids.org)). I found these books while researching my book, *The New Age of Sex Education, How to Talk to Your Teen about Cybersex and Pornography*. The first thing I did upon reading the books was to email a client and tell her she must buy the books. We had just had a session discussing her own discomfort talking to her son about sexuality.

There are three books in this series. The first book is for ages 3 to 7. The second book is for ages 8 to 11 and the third is for children 12 and over. The books are written in a very user friendly fashion. Each has thirty topics ranging from basics in anatomy to discussions about affection and intimacy. Each talk has a suggestion for how to start a conversation with your child as well as other questions to consider. They also offer some sample dialogues. These are not just sex education books. They focus on all aspects of sexuality and are simply the best books I have seen on this topic for parents.

### Ages 3 to 17

Topics for small children do tend to focus on anatomy and body integrity. I love that they bring up forced affection. Forced affection occurs when a child is pressured into some type of physical affection that makes them uncomfortable or that in which they do not wish to engage. For example, “give your Aunt Alice a hug.” Other great topics include teaching about public versus private, respect, bad touch, how to say “No” and love and affection.

Particular to my work, the books also introduce pornography and the internet. Some people may feel that this age group, 3 – 7, is too young to be introduced to the concept of pornography. I believe that we cannot start to talk about these things early enough in an age appropriate manner. When discussing pornography, the authors do so without judgment. It is factual. They also introduce the idea that no one should make them look at pictures that make them uncomfortable (i.e. grooming) and that there are some types of pictures that are not ok to take. These are great topics that can have protective value should the child ever be exposed to an adult trying to sexually groom them.

### Ages 8 to 11

The topics change and grow in complexity in the next age range. The topics also build upon those from the earlier age group. Anatomy is reintroduced here, as are the topics of public versus private and relationships. This age group book introduces sexual identity, body image, self esteem and continues to instill protective practices against child sexual abuse.

The topic of masturbation is raised in the book for this age group and is done so without shame or judgment. They do bring up the possibility of addiction but do not infer that if a child masturbates, he or she will become an addict. The same possibility is addressed for pornography, again without inference that if a child sees pornography they are bad or will become an addict.

This age group book also introduces sexting and social media. This is perfectly age appropriate. Research shows us that young children are being exposed to sexting and sexual interaction in apps and webcam based sites.

### Ages 12 +

This is the meatiest of the three books, as the child entering his or her teens faces an increasingly complex social world and is, presumably, entering the realm of relationships. This book

really does a fabulous job of being real about the sexual issues that a teen faces. Topics include: emotional intimacy, positive aspects of sex, relationship boundaries, consent, shame and guilt, healthy relationships, hook ups and STI's among other things.

The discussion of pornography for this age group is great. Discussions with the teen about pornography include the potential damage to relationships, objectification and the potential for erectile dysfunction. There is not an assumption that any pornography use is addictive, but that extended use can affect brain chemistry and may lead to addiction. This is what the science tells us. The same concept is applied to masturbation. There are no assumptions made about masturbation, there is a discussion of what happens if it becomes a habit.

The discussion about sexting gets more in depth. The possible legal ramifications are discussed as well as possible social consequences. They are very clear that the social ramifications can include cyberbullying and shaming.

This series of books is smart, accurate and straight forward. There are a lot of things that are not in this book. There is no denial. There is no inferred shame or judgment. There is no influence of any religious belief on the topics.

It is the combination of both what is and what is not in this book series that makes it the best book on the topic I have ever read. Every parent should own them.