

The Objectives and Importance of Sex Education

- The objectives of sex education are to help children understand the body structures of men and women and acquire the knowledge about birth
- Teach children to establish and accept the role and responsibility of their own gender by acquiring the knowledge of sex. Understanding the differences and similarities between two genders in terms of body and mind will set up a foundation for the future development in their acquaintance with friends and lovers and their interpersonal relationship
- Sex education is a kind of holistic education. It teaches an individual about self-acceptance and the attitude and skills of interpersonal relationship. It also helps an individual to cultivate a sense of responsibility towards others as well as oneself

When should sex education be given? By whom?

Nowadays, with rapid growth of information, sex information is everywhere. Children are curious about sex. Therefore, parents need to instill correct concepts of sex to their children as early as possible before they are misled by indecent magazines and irresponsible media.

When children grow up, they need to learn and adapt to the physiological and psychological changes in different stages of development. The learning objectives of sex education vary with the age of children and the environment. They need appropriate and continuous counselling and guidance. Parents are the core people who accompany their children as they grow up, so, parents are also the most appropriate person to give their children sex education. The earlier sex education is given at home, the earlier the children are able to establish correct concepts on sex, and the easier the parents can

handle the situation.

A lot of people consider mother as the most ideal person to give sex education; but in fact, father's participation is equally important. A son can learn from his father the suitable role as a man, while a daughter can learn from her father the responsibilities of a man in his family and the society. She will also understand the expectations others have upon a woman. Children will greatly benefit from all these, and when they grow up, they will know how to interact with other people.

Preconditions for Sex Education

1. Understand sexual education

- Understand the psychological development and perplexity of your growing child

2. Build a good parent-child relationship and establish a foundation for future interaction

- Keep a warm and harmonious family atmosphere
- Let children feel that they are being loved and cared for
- Cultivate children's sentiments by encouraging them to take part in cultural activities such as music or drawing. Parents should participate in such activities as well to improve the relationship between parent and child
- Provide opportunities for children to cultivate different interests and let them participate in group activities



Education Skills and Methods

1. Choose the right time, ask questions and provide answers

- Give sex education in appropriate occasions

- Seize opportunities such as relevant TV programs to induce children to think and ask questions voluntarily
- Avoid discussing sex with children in the presence of other people, in case they feel embarrassed or disrespected

2. Establish their confidence and holistic development

- Emphasize on a holistic development. Teach your children to have correct and enlightened views of sex, so that they are able to accept themselves and affirm their self-worth, which will benefit them for the rest of their life

3. Use proper materials and keep up with time

- Understand the development of your children's intelligence. As they grow up, you should provide more specific answers even for the same question to satisfy their quest for knowledge
- When you answer your children's questions, you should first clarify how much they know about this topic. Then give a brief answer using the words they understand, the ways of speaking and the tones that they are accustomed to

4. Understand your children and understand yourself

- Establish a mutual trust with your children
- Participate in your children's activities. Share their conversations and laughter in order to understand their thinking and their culture. This may help improve the communication with your children on the subjects relating to sex
- Share your children's worries about sex and discuss with them the possible solutions

5. Equality and mutual respect

- Answer your children's questions with an understanding attitude. Give clear and definite replies
- Avoid using a lecturing tone or command your children to obey your instructions. This may make them feel repugnant
- Avoid using words that are offensive or may hinder communication, such as "How can you be so stupid?"

6. Be kind and patient

- Be patient and attentive. Listen to your children carefully. Talk to them with mild and natural tone
- If your children have biased views of sex or when their opinions are different from yours, don't get angry. You should try to understand your children, listen to them, and calmly explain to them your opinions

7. Be honest and objective

- Reply your children's questions on sex with correct answers. Do not make up answers to attempt to satisfy their curiosity
- Tell your children honestly if you do not know the answer, and find out the answer together with your children from books or other sources
- Avoid casting your own view on the other gender upon your children

8. Do as you preach

- You should pay attention to your own behaviour and attitude about sex issues in your everyday life to avoid double standards
- Action speaks louder than words; your behaviour must be consistent with your words

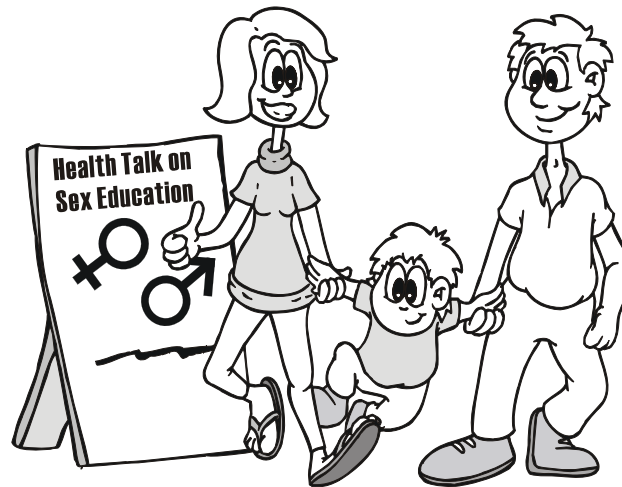
9. Make use of education materials

- Parents can make use of sex education materials such as books or videotapes to facilitate

discussion and explanation on sex issues

10. Broaden their social circle and seek support

- Encourage your children to take part in extra-curricular activities such as joining the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides or volunteer projects so as to enlarge their social circle
- Keep in contact with school and understand the content of the sex education provided so as to cooperate with the school
- Participate in activities organized for parents in the subjects of children's growth and sex education so as to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills

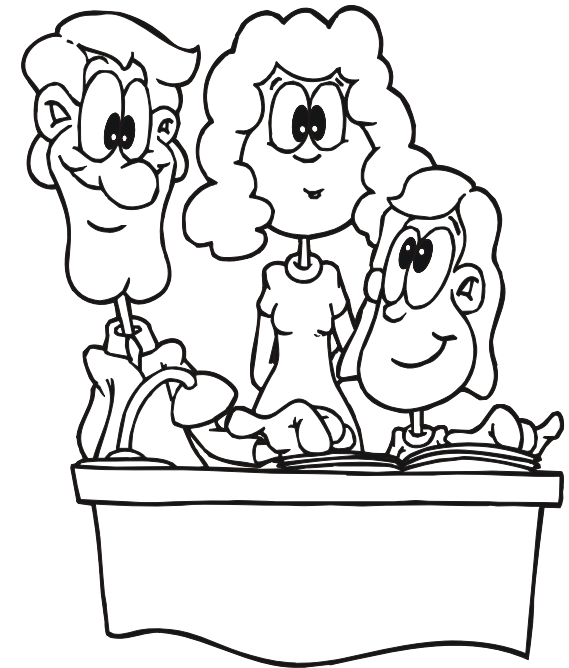


Each person's views on sex can influence his/her attitude towards life. Sex is a part of personality and sex education can help develop a complete personality. That is why sex education should be an important part of family education, and should be given at home since childhood.

If parents can communicate well with their children and also adopt the methods suggested above, they will find it easier to discuss sex with their children.



Sex Education at Home



Student Health Service
Department of Health
www.studenthealth.gov.hk

2010