

# Ways Parents can Improve Communication about Sex with their Child

## Start Early - when your child is young

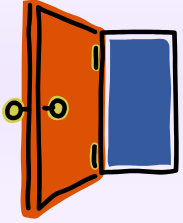
- ♥ Have a bedtime ritual about growing up. Read the book "I'll Love You Forever" by Robert Munsch or "Leo the Late Bloomer" by Robert Kraus and then come up with your own ritual that talks about love, kindness, and growing up.



- ♥ Trigger opportunities: Don't miss them! You know the kind. Your child sees something in a grocery store check-out line of a glamorous, skimpily dressed, voluptuous young maiden and comments about her body and yet you know that "real" women don't look like that! Now's your opportunity to talk about the reality of the human body!
- ♥ Media opportunities: Once upon a time, we had the "family hour" when kids and parents could watch the tube together. Now, with the advent of a computer or television in every room, we disengage too often from one another. Watch a sit-com together, mute the sound at the commercial and ask the following questions: Does that look like our family? Who is your favorite character? Do they communicate very well? Was that ending realistic? How would you have ended the story? You get the idea; this is the time to talk about family values!



## And Keep the Conversation Going when Your Child is Older



- ♥ Keep the door open. Some kids may never ask questions, so don't be afraid to bring up the subject of sex.
- ♥ Go for a walk around the neighborhood. Engage your child in a talk about the night sky, and then who knows what might follow.
- ♥ Use opportunities in the car whether you're on the way to soccer or basketball or tutoring or music lessons, or on the way home from an after-school program, use transport time to strike up a conversation.



- ♥ Use a weekend campout with each one of your children to mark a period in time when changes occur that may need attention. Great conversations happen around a campfire and under the stars.



**Kathy Payne**