

10 SEX ED BOOKS

TO HELP YOU SURVIVE FROM BABYDOM TO YOUNG ADULTHOOD



1. Sex & Sensibility by Deborah Roffman. Before I get into the titles that can be read with or by your offspring, allow me to recommend something for all the caregivers out there. While there are some fantastic books out there that break down what your young charges should be learning at every age and stage (hello Debra W. Haffner's From Diapers to Dating), Roffman simplifies things even further, emphasizing what children truly need from us during conversations around sexuality and giving caregivers a blueprint for opening those lines of communication. I STILL dip into this one on the regular.

2. Sex Positive Talks to Have with Kids by Melissa Pintor Carnagey. And if you're the type who likes to be told EXACTLY what to say, I got you (and I feel you). This title from Carnagey includes over 150 conversation starters, reflection exercises, and activities you can use around topics like bodies, consent, pleasure, sex, menstruation, gender, sexual orientation, safe & unsafe touch, pornography, feelings, relationships, and media literacy.

3. These are My Eyes, This is My Nose, This is My Vulva, These are My Toes by Lexx Brown-James. In baby's first sex ed book, Brown-James normalizes ALL the body parts and shows the kiddos that humanity comes in all different sizes, skin tones, abilities, and genders.

4. Consent by Rachel Brian. My daughter owns a handful of consent-specific books, but she really gets a kick out of this one. This playful, illustrated guide to consent and bodily autonomy doesn't take itself too seriously... but it's still smart as hell. Readers will learn about boundaries and how to set them; how to respect themselves and others; what to do if someone makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe; and more.

5. It's Perfectly Normal by Robie Harris. I have inundated my poor child with approximately eleventy-billion Robie Harris books, but this one is my favorite — and it was recently released in a new edition that contains more inclusive language and experiences. An ideal read for pre-teens, it includes information on everything from conception, consent, and gender to puberty, birth control, and abortion. Basically, everything these growing kids need to make responsible decisions and stay safe and healthy.

6. Puberty Is Gross But Also Really Awesome by Gina Loveless and Lauri Johnston. This newer title ably straddles the line between eschewing the fear-based language we often hear around puberty and acknowledging that — yes — some of the changes that occur in our bodies can be a serious pain in the ass. For all genders, sexualities, and races, this book gives the full lowdown on everything puberty.

7. S.E.X. by Heather Corinna. Corinna is the founder of Scarleteen, the longest-running sex ed site by and for teens, so I would follow her anywhere. And this all-you-need-to-know guide to sexuality for teens and young adults doesn't disappoint. It starts with those basic anatomy lessons but then goes on to tackle body image, arousal, gender and sexuality, relationships, and sooo much more.

8. Come As You Are by Emily Nagoski. Someday, your child will leave your house. I know. It seems impossible now. But there WILL come a time when you don't have to sneak-eat cookies while locked in the bathroom. At that time, I recommend you send your child off with the gift of Nagoski. This book demystifies the science of sexual response and shows folks that whatever they're experiencing? It's normal.

9. Pussypedia by Zoe Mendelson and Marie Conejo. And while you're at it, add this one to their farewell gift basket or care package. It's basically Our Bodies, Ourselves for the next generation, though with a lot more irreverence. This delightful and accessible book is an essential guide for anyone with a pussy.

10. A Dirty Word by ye olde Steph Auteri. I'm going to end with my own book here because I'm proud of it, because it was the inspiration for Guerrilla Sex Ed, and because readers have told me that they've gifted copies to their daughters, their nieces, and their besties, or have used it to generate discussions with their partners. This reported memoir is about how I became a sex writer in order to fix what I saw as my own sexual dysfunction. Eventually, I learned I wasn't broken and, in fact, it is the way our culture views female sexuality that is broken.