ANNOUNCING THE FAMILY LIBRARY

Answers questions that children of every age group may ask about girls, boys, babies, bodies, families, and friends by the award-winning team of

Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley

THE COMPLETE LIBRARY THAT NO FAMILY SHOULD BE WITHOUT INCLUDES:

Introducing It’s Not the Stork! A Book About Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families, and Friends (for age four and up) to help answer those endless and perfectly normal questions that preschool, kindergarten, and early elementary school children ask about how they began and what makes a girl a girl and a boy a boy.

It’s So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families (for age seven and up) provides accurate, unbiased answers to nearly every conceivable question about reproduction, birth, and babies, while giving children a healthy understanding of their bodies.

It’s Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health (for age ten and up) offers young people the real information they need to make responsible decisions that can help them stay healthy as they approach and experience puberty and adolescence.
A Note from the Creators,
ROBIE H. HARRIS and MICHAEL EMBERLEY

First we created *It's Perfectly Normal* for preteens and teens. Then we created *It's So Amazing!* for children age seven and up. Recently, we created *It's Not the Stork!* for children age four and up. And now with all three books, we finally have our family library of books about healthy sexuality for children of all ages.

We created these three books to answer children’s countless questions and concerns as they grow from being young children to becoming adolescents. It is our hope that our book for the youngest children, *It's Not the Stork!*, will help answer their perfectly normal and amazing questions about their bodies, where they came from, and what makes them either a boy or a girl in the same caring manner that *It's So Amazing!* and *It's Perfectly Normal* help answer older children’s and teens’ questions and concerns about reproduction, puberty, sex, and staying healthy.

As we all know, today’s children are bombarded with information and images about sexuality from many different sources—radio, television, advertising, music, the Internet, and of course, as always, from their friends. But while our children have a great deal of information about sexuality, they also have an alarming amount of misinformation. And it’s clear that it is essential—for our children’s own well-being and health—that the information they receive about sexuality is accurate, up-to-date, and age-appropriate. And that is what we have strived to do in these three books.

We consulted with parents, teachers, librarians, nurses, doctors, social workers, psychologists, scientists, and clergy to make sure that all of the material in these books is age-appropriate, psychologically appropriate, and scientifically accurate. When a book is about to be reprinted, if there is any new information children and teens need to stay healthy and make healthy decisions, the book is updated to reflect the latest health and science information.

All parents want to do the best job they can to keep their children, preteens, and teens healthy. But information ranging from how a baby is made, or what makes a boy a boy and a girl a girl, to puberty and sexual health can be complicated. So it’s no surprise that we are asked over and over again, “What is the best way to use these books with kids and teens?” Every child, family, school, and library is different, so there are many ways. The attached tips and suggestions can help you figure out some of the ways in which to use our books.

We are very pleased that all three of our books on healthy sexuality have been translated into Spanish. And we are proud that they have been published in so many languages and countries around the world, making it possible for even more children to have access them. But most of all, we hope that our family library will arm our children with the information they need to stay physically and emotionally healthy as they experience and weather the day-to-day challenges of growing up.

If you have any further questions about these books, please feel free to contact us through Candlewick Press at:

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SOUND SCIENCE
Parents, educators, librarians, and health professionals have come to trust this revered author-illustrator team because of the careful and extensive vetting process they went through for all three of their books in the Family Library. Harris and Emberley consulted first with parents and then with the most preeminent practitioners and researchers in the fields of child development, education, pediatrics, psychology, and biology to ensure that this series is age-appropriate, psychologically appropriate, scientifically accurate, and up-to-date.

CARING AND RESPECTFUL ILLUSTRATIONS
The cartoon-like illustrations in It’s Not the Stork!, as in It’s Perfectly Normal and It’s So Amazing!, show caring, loving relationships. Hand-in-hand with the text, they visually amplify and clarify the information presented in an accurate and, when appropriate, humorous manner. The two cartoon characters, Bird and Bee, written by Harris and illustrated by Emberley, are the voices of children and are meant to help children identify with the perfectly normal and strong feelings and concerns they, including our young children, may have about sexuality.

OVERCOMING THE AWKWARD
For some parents, talking with their children and answering children’s questions about sex is comfortable. For other parents—because of personal, cultural, or religious reasons or because nobody talked to them about sexuality when they were growing up—sex can be one of the most difficult topics of all to discuss with their kids—kids of any age. The Harris/Emberley Family Library gives children the information they want to know and need in order to stay physically and emotionally healthy. These books also give adults the language they need to be able to talk with children, even young children, about these simple but complicated topics.

FAMILY VALUES
Sharing and reading the Family Library presents a wonderful opportunity for children of all ages and for parents to talk about their own family values with their children. It is a time when they can tell their children and teens what their family believes—and that their values may be different from their neighbor’s or classmate’s family values.

A BOOK FOR BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS
Harris is often asked why she wrote a book for girls and boys and did not write a separate book for each gender. Harris feels that if girls understand what makes a boy a boy, and if boys understand what makes a girl a girl, they just might begin to have more respect for one another starting when they are young and continuing through their childhood and adolescence.

COMPLETE YOUR FAMILY LIBRARY
With the publication of the Family Library, Harris and Emberley’s books now answer nearly every question about birth, bodies, families, and healthy sexuality for children of all ages. It’s Not the Stork!, for age four and up helps answer those endless and perfectly normal questions kids may have about how they began and what makes a girl a girl and a boy a boy. It’s So Amazing!, for age seven and up, provides answers to nearly every question about reproduction, birth, and babies, while giving children a healthy understanding of their bodies. It’s Perfectly Normal offers young people the real information they need to make responsible decisions that can help them stay healthy as they approach and experience puberty and adolescence.

HONESTY RINGS TRUE
Robie H. Harris says, “If we are not honest when we talk with or create books for children, our words and pictures will not ring true to a child, and we will have no credibility with our audience. Michael’s and my mantra has always been if a fact or piece of information is ‘in the best interests of the child,’ we will include it in our nonfiction book(s), as long as it is age-appropriate, psychologically appropriate, and scientifically accurate.”
WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR TALKING WITH CHILDREN AND TEENS ABOUT SEX?

• Usually a parent is a child's first educator about sexual health. Most young children wonder about and have endless questions about where babies come from and how girls' and boys' bodies are different and the same. And most always, they turn to and count on their parent or parents to give them answers that are honest and make sense to them. Many older children and teens say that they count on their parents to give them straightforward and accurate information, and to listen to their concerns.

• But not every parent is able to talk about sex. That's when another trusted adult might be invited to step in and begin to have those conversations with the child.

• In school, beginning in preschool, reproduction and sexual health may be part of the science curriculum—everything from the class guinea pig having babies to a discussion of X and Y chromosomes.

• And when children and teens have a checkup with their nurse or doctor, these health professionals may also talk with them in an age-appropriate manner about babies, gender, puberty, sexuality, and how to stay healthy.

WHY DO OUR CHILDREN AND TEENS NEED THIS INFORMATION?

• Children of all ages have lots of ideas and questions about their bodies. Answering their questions and responding to their concerns reassures them that they are perfectly normal and healthy.

• When young children's questions about sexuality are answered in a straightforward and honest way, children learn that it is both normal and healthy to think about and want to know about bodies and reproduction.

• By the time kids are nine, ten, or eleven, in addition to thinking about their bodies, they are also wondering about sex. By this age, they have accumulated a lot of information about puberty and sex, and a lot of misinformation as well. Giving kids accurate and up-to-date information matters. It's one way we can help them to stay healthy.

• As they see other children become adolescents, children wonder how and when their bodies are going to change. Knowing what's ahead and being aware and prepared will help them deal with puberty and adolescence in a healthy manner.

WHY IS IT OFTEN DIFFICULT TO TALK WITH CHILDREN AND TEENS ABOUT SEX?

• Many adults find that listening to and talking with children and teens about sex and sexual matters isn't easy, because some of the information is complicated and because our own feelings about sex and sexuality might be complicated.

• As with all science, information changes, and scientists may disagree with each other. So adults are not always certain whether or not their information is accurate.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

• Before you give one of these books to your child, preteen, or teen, first read the book. Chances are you will learn something new—some recent scientific information or something you’d never thought about or weren’t quite sure about. Then you can say to your child, “You might like this book. I read it and think you’ll find it interesting. It might help answer some questions you may have. It answered some of mine.”

• With a younger child, find a comfortable place where you can read and look at the book together and talk together.

• Most older children choose to look at or read the book on their own. Others choose to read it with a parent. Either way is fine. Some read the book right away. Others may say, “I know all this stuff already!”

• Try leaving the book next to the TV or on the kitchen table. Usually kids pick it up in a few minutes, or within or a day or two, and start reading it.

• Let your child know that you are ready to talk with him or her, whenever your child is ready, about any topics in the book or any questions he or she may have.

• If a child asks a question and you don’t know how to answer it, you can say, “I don’t know the answer now, but I will find out, and once I have more information and have had a chance to think about it, we can talk.” This gives you time to find an answer or decide how you want to answer the question.

• Each of these books can provide a common ground for families to talk about sex. It can help everyone develop a common language and vocabulary and a respectful way of talking about sexual matters.

• These books can become trusted resources a child, preteen, teen, or adult can refer to when needed.
No matter what the age of your students, before you start teaching about reproduction, puberty, and sexuality, send a letter to parents, telling them what you will be doing, why this is part of the curriculum, and to contact you if they have any questions. This will help parents be prepared to answer their kids’ inevitable questions while the teaching about the topics is going on at school.

Some families have discussed growing up and sex with their children. Others have not. Understanding this will help you address the disparity of knowledge that may exist in a classroom. Establish a respectful tone by acknowledging that children may have different feelings and values as well as different levels of comfort and discomfort when talking and learning about sex.

It’s Not the Stork! discusses many topics of interest to young children—bodies, gender, birth, babies, families, and friends. Each time you read this book with your class, you will probably want to choose only one or two topics so as to leave plenty of time for questions and discussion.

With older students, give them plenty of time—a few days or so—to look through It’s Perfectly Normal or It’s So Amazing! before you begin your discussions of sexuality. Each book discusses in an age-appropriate way many topics of interest—including gender, reproduction, sexual health, and safety. Once you begin to use these books with your older students, and each time you use them, make sure to leave plenty of time for questions and discussion.

Let students of all ages know that sexuality, puberty, and reproduction are normal parts of the human life cycle. Understanding how the systems in our bodies work, including the reproductive system, can help them make responsible decisions about their bodies and their health.

Librarians, health professionals, clergy, and leaders of after-school programs and community programs also help children, preteens, teens, and their families learn about healthy sexuality.

When there is a partnership that includes a child’s family, teachers, and health professionals, our children, preteens, and teens feel valued and cared for because they know they can get accurate information from grown-ups they trust. In some communities, religious leaders are also part of this partnership.

When librarians have the book on an open shelf rather than a restricted shelf, children and teens often find the book on their own because they are looking for it. Or they may come across it by accident and find that it provides them with information they had wondered about. Some may ask a school librarian or a public librarian to recommend a book. Others feel very private about this topic and might prefer to find the book on their own. Some will read it only at the library. Others will check it out to take home. Either is fine.

When health professionals have the book on their desk or on a shelf or in the waiting room—anywhere kids will see it and pick it up or ask about it—it’s an opportunity to talk about sexual health and ask a child if he or she has any questions. Some health professionals recommend the book and then discuss it with the child on the next visit. Some let children borrow their copy.

Religious groups and nonprofit groups also use the book as part of their curriculum or as an opportunity to teach about sexual health.

ORDERING INFORMATION

It’s Perfectly Normal, It’s So Amazing!, It’s Not the Stork!, and other fine books for children from Candlewick Press are available at bookstores nationwide. We encourage you to visit your local bookseller to obtain copies of these books. For organizations or corporations interested in multiple-copy sales, please contact the in-house sales representative at Candlewick Press: (617) 661-3330.
“This carefully researched and ‘road-tested’ guide . . . is written with deep respect for its young readers.”
— T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., and Joshua Sparrow, M.D., co-authors of Touchpoints 3 to 6 and the Brazelton Way series for It’s Not the Stork!

“Not all parents know just what to tell and when and how. This book does!” — Penelope Leach, Ph.D., author of Your Baby & Child for It’s Not the Stork!

“It’s Not the Stork! completes this brilliant and much-needed series of books for children of all ages and their families by helping them address and understand the issues of healthy sexuality and development from early childhood through adolescence in an age-appropriate manner.” — Angela Diaz, M.D., M.P.H., Professor of Pediatrics and Community Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital School of Medicine, New York, NY; Director, Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center for It’s Not the Stork!

“Robie Harris and Michael Emberley have done it again! They understand the complexity, the humor, and the urgency of young children’s curiosity about bodies and babies and the whole great mystery of life, and they offer clear words and delightful illustrations to help parents enjoy the process of helping their children learn and understand.” — Perri Klass, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Boston University School of Medicine; pediatrician, Dorchester House, Boston, Massachusetts; and contributing editor, Parenting Magazine for It’s Not the Stork!

“We recommend Harris and Emberley’s sensitive, level-headed, and delightful books wherever we go. Now, with the arrival of It’s Not the Stork!, even younger children age four and up benefit from this team’s honest answers to the questions that make parents blush.”
— Justin Richardson, M.D., and Mark A. Schuster, M.D., Ph.D., authors of Everything You Never Wanted Your Kids to Know about Sex (but were afraid they’d ask) for It’s Not the Stork!

“A book about sex that manages to be honest without losing a sense of humor. The cartoon, style illustrations are witty, expressive, and accurate.” — The New York Times Book Review, Notable Books of the Year 1995 for It’s Perfectly Normal!

“The book . . . is sophisticated, comprehensive, reassuring.” — USA Today for It’s Perfectly Normal!

“Highly recommended for talking your way through just about any embarrassing interrogation your ever-curious kids can devise.” — Los Angeles Times for It’s Perfectly Normal!

“This refreshingly candid tour of the facts of life is just the ticket for jittery parents when it’s time to explain the birds and the bees to their curious kids.”
— People Magazine for It’s Perfectly Normal

“A family-friendly guide to everything your kid ever asked you about sex, but you were afraid to answer.”
— Child Magazine for It’s Perfectly Normal

“This is a book you’ll wish someone had given you as a child.” — Scientific American Explorations for It’s So Amazing!

“It’s a beauty; it’s your privilege to use it. Enough said.”
— Boston Globe for It’s So Amazing!

“Even if your child hasn’t reached puberty, talk with him or her about what lies ahead. If you’d like some help, check out the excellent picture book It’s So Amazing! . . . It could help prepare your son or daughter—as well as reassure you.” — Time Magazine for It’s So Amazing!

“Beyond biology, It’s So Amazing! is finally about love, and that, we hope, is where babies come from.”
— The New York Times for It’s So Amazing!

“A cleverly illustrated guide to everything from adoption to zygotes.” — Child Magazine for It’s So Amazing!

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