

ROBIE HARRIS AND MICHAEL EMBERLEY TELL AN AMAZING STORY OF THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

How an egg and sperm get together and make a baby is a truly amazing story. And that is the main—though not the only—story at the heart of *It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*. Comprehensive, honest, and funny, the newest book by Robie Harris and Michael Emberley, author and illustrator of the acclaimed *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* (Candlewick Press 1994), has been vetted and approved from cover to cover by scientists, health experts, and specialists in child development.



Increasing the comfort level

Widely regarded as a modern classic for preteens and teens, Harris and Emberley's earlier collaboration won more than a dozen major awards. *School Library Journal* called *It's Perfectly Normal* "a wonderful guide for young adolescents setting sail on the stormy seas of puberty." That title also introduced two memorable cartoon characters, a curious bird and a squeamish bee. Emberley says, "The idea was to inject humor into the book to give kids a greater comfort level. We wanted to develop animal characters who would represent the voices of children and say what kids might be thinking."

It's So Amazing! was created in response to repeated requests from parents, teachers, librarians, and health professionals for an up-to-date book about sex and sexuality for children who were still too young for *It's Perfectly Normal*. Once again, the bird and bee are up to their antics, but this time they're younger. In *It's So Amazing!*, these reassuring characters reflect the many moods of children age seven and up: silly, serious, curious, embarrassed. Their voices echo the thoughts, questions, and concerns of a younger audience.

More and more questions

Robie Harris points out that kids this age are "fascinated by 'how things work.' They want to understand where babies come from and be told in a calm, clear, and reassuring way the amazing and scientific story of human reproduction, how bodies make a baby. Younger and younger children are asking more and more questions," the author says, "and while *It's So Amazing!* discusses bodies and babies, adoption and families, it also covers such topics as ultrasound, in vitro (children bring photos of the fetus to school and often know whether they will be having a baby brother or sister), puberty, masturbation, homosexuality, HIV and AIDS, and sexual abuse. The media has brought most of these topics into almost every home before many adults feel able or ready to talk with young children or answer their questions. This book does not, and should not, shy away from tough issues that go beyond what is covered in other books."

Besides providing information to help keep children safe, healthy, and unafraid, *It's So Amazing!* contains values, says Harris. "My family values and Michael Emberley's family values: respect for differences,



"Every single aspect of the text and art was considered for its impact on children age seven and up."

respect for privacy, belief in the right to information. It presents all kinds of babies, children, and adults—and all kinds of families."

Harris and Emberley stress that every single aspect of the text and art was considered for its impact on children age seven and up. The book's large format and fun, accurate, comic-book artwork are paired with a clear, lively text that speaks to an elementary-school child's interest in science.

"An excellent resource"

In an introductory note, author and illustrator admit that "one of the most exciting things about making this book has been all that we have learned from the people who talked with us and taught us. We also learned that science can change, that not all scientists agree, that there are not always answers to every question, and that there can be more than one answer to a question." Harris and Emberley encourage young readers to ask questions, to speak with a "parent, doctor, nurse, health professional, teacher, librarian, school counselor, or clergy member." An author/illustrator acknowledgment-

ments page thanks more than seventy people—representing all of the occupations and perspectives above—for their feedback.

The effort that has gone into creating *It's So Amazing!* has certainly paid off. Penelope Leach, Ph.D., author of *Your Baby and Child* and *Children First*, calls it an "amazingly upbeat and caring book . . . totally 'child-friendly.'"

Leading pediatrician and author T. Berry Brazelton says, "This thoughtful, innovative, and comprehensive book helps children with issues that are on their minds anyway—and gives all of us the language we need to share with them."

Perri Klass, M.D., *Parenting* contributing editor and Medical Director of Reach Out and Read, praises the book's "clarity of explanation, fabulous illustrations, and humor, together with [its] all-important sense of wonder."

And Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., consultant to Bill Cosby for *The Cosby Show* and other projects, and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, calls *It's So Amazing!* an "excellent resource on sex education for young children . . . A book every family should own."

Such high praise speaks for itself.



CANDLEWICK PRESS
2067 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

