CELEBRATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF
IT’S PERFECTLY NORMAL

Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley’s
award-winning book for preteens and teens
now includes a new and essential chapter on
STAYING HEALTHY AND SAFE ON THE INTERNET.

THE COMPLETE LIBRARY THAT
NO FAMILY SHOULD BE
WITHOUT INCLUDES:

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.

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 school-age children a healthy understanding of their bodies.

It’s Not the Stork! A Book About Girls, Boys, Babies,
Bodies, Families, and Friends (for age four and up) answers 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.
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. And then, 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!*, helps 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 puberty, sex, reproduction, and sexual health.

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 to know 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. Discussing the new information in *It’s Perfectly Normal* and *It’s So Amazing!* about staying safe on the Internet can help children make healthy and useful decisions about Internet use.

**FAMILY VALUES**
Sharing and reading the Family Library presents a wonderful opportunity for a parent or 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.

**BOOKS FOR BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS**
Harris is often asked why she wrote books 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*, 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.

**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 also 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 schools, 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.
• As school-age children 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.
• 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.
• Today, many kids use the Internet to find out about sex and to communicate with friends. There is excellent, accurate, and helpful information to be found on the Internet. But there is also information on the Internet that is inaccurate, or scary, or possibly even dangerous. Our children need to learn to navigate the Internet in ways that keep them safe.

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 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.

• 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—all 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.

• 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.

ORDERING INFORMATION
It’s Not the Stork!, It’s So Amazing!, It’s Perfectly Normal, 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.
PRAISE FOR THE FAMILY LIBRARY

For It’s Not the Stork!
“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

“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, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY; Director, Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center

“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)

★ "In their previous landmark volumes . . . Harris and Emberley established themselves as the purveyors of reader-friendly, straightforward information on human sexuality for readers as young as seven. Here they successfully tackle the big questions . . . for even younger kids.”
—The Horn Book (starred review)

★ "Harris’s respectful writing targets children’s natural curiosity without cloaking matters in obfuscating language.”
—Booklist (starred review)

“Adults will gratefully draw on the book’s frank language and friendly tone when talking things over with their kids in the car or at the zoo . . . . This must-have family resource addresses all kinds of funny misconceptions, supplying instead the real facts of life.”
—San Francisco Chronicle

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

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

“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

“It’s Perfectly Normal is the ‘go-to’ book for every young person. Why? Because it educates our youth about sexuality in the most honest and respectful manner and does not shy away from giving them the very information they are looking for and need.”
—Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League

“How can a book be fifteen years old and be as fresh as a newborn baby? The answer is simple. When it is brilliant! What our kids want most as they learn about themselves and their sexuality is to be normal. With Robie and Michael on our home team, it is easy to assure our kids that it is just what each of them is—perfectly normal.”
—Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

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

“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

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

“A cleverly illustrated guide to everything from adoption to zygotes.”
—Child Magazine

“As a pediatrician, I know that children have many questions about reproduction, birth, bodies, babies, and families. Finding the answers, in a comfortable, appropriate, and interesting way, is an essential part of growing up healthy in body and mind. This book provides an opportunity for children to find answers to their questions with clarity of explanation, fabulous illustrations, and humor, together with an all-important sense of wonder.”
—Perri Klass, M.D., Professor of Journalism and Pediatrics, New York University, New York, NY; contributing editor, Parenting Magazine
UPDATED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

CELEBRATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF

IT’S PERFECTLY NORMAL,
THE DEFINITIVE BOOK ON SEXUAL HEALTH FOR YOUTH

by Robie H. Harris
illustrated by Michael Emberley

“"A book about sex that manages to be honest without losing its sense of humor.”
—The New York Times Book Review

More than 1.5 million copies in print worldwide

Completely updated, including a brand-new chapter focusing on safe Internet use—one of parents’ key concerns—this universally acclaimed classic by Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley continues to be a cutting-edge resource for pre-teens, teens, and their parents, teachers, librarians, health professionals, and clergy. Providing honest and accurate answers to nearly every imaginable question, from puberty and conception to birth control and HIV-AIDS, *It’s Perfectly Normal* offers young people real information they need—now more than ever—to make responsible decisions and stay healthy.

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UPDATED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

ROBIE H. HARRIS and MICHAEL EMBERLEY

A New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year
A Boston Globe–Horn Book Award Winner
An Association of Booksellers for Children Booksellers’ Choice
An American Library Association Notable Children’s Book
A Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year
A Will Solimene Award Winner for Excellence in Medical Communications
★ Five starred reviews (Booklist, Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal)
“It’s Perfectly Normal gives growing children a chance to read an honest and explanatory view of their developing bodies. The text and pictures will give them a chance to understand and value themselves. I recommend it to parents and children who are coming into adolescence. They will love it!”
—T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., author of Touchpoints

“How can a book be fifteen years old and be as fresh as a newborn baby? The answer is simple. When it is brilliant! In 1994, Robie Harris and Michael Emberley gave the world’s families an awesome gift—It’s Perfectly Normal. Never before or since have we had such a clear and concise guide for family discussions about sex and sexuality. It’s Perfectly Normal is also kind, informative, positive, witty, wise, charming, and, most important of all, helpful. What our kids want most as they learn about themselves and their sexuality is to be normal. With Robie and Michael on our home team, it is easy to assure our kids that it is just what each of them is—perfectly normal.”
—Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

“Now more than ever, America’s preteens and teens, in every community across our nation, need the latest and most accurate information about sexual health as they go through the challenging ups and downs of puberty and adolescence. It’s Perfectly Normal is the ‘go-to’ book for every young person. Why? Because it educates our youth about sexuality in the most honest and respectful manner and does not shy away from giving them the very information they are looking for and need.”
—Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League

“At last! A book that tells preteens and teenagers what they need to know about sex without turning off the less sophisticated, turning on the more sophisticated, or offending the moral values or sensibilities of parents and teachers. It’s Perfectly Normal is informative and interesting; reassuring and responsible; warm and charming. I wish every child (and parent) could have a copy.”
—Penelope Leach, Ph.D., author of Your Baby & Child and Children First

“If you have ever found it difficult to talk to your child about sex, or even if you find it easy, this book will be an invaluable friend. The quality of the information it provides is superb. Its language and illustrations speak in a direct, nonjudgmental manner and present diverse families, diverse relationships, and diverse bodies. Harris and Emberley cover everything a young person needs to know about sexual health, including how to safely use the Internet, by providing strategies for finding reliable information and ways to prevent potential hazards of Internet use. It will draw in tweens, teens, and parents and totally engage all.”
—Angela Diaz, M.D., M.P.H., Professor, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY; Director, Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center

“For more than a decade, It’s Perfectly Normal has been an excellent resource in the effort to provide young people with comprehensive, holistic, age-appropriate sexuality education. With important updates and new information, Harris’s book remains an important tool both for preteens and teens learning to make responsible and healthy decisions and for parents, educators, and religious professionals seeking to help guide them.”
—Reverend Mara J. Dowdall, Youth Ministry Director, Unitarian Universalist Association