



# The Nitty Gritty on The Talk Institute

## What you need to know!

**Our mission is to build and support open communication between parents and their children about sexuality and growing up. We are committed to providing factual, age-appropriate information about sex and growing up in a stress-free, fun group environment. Our goal is to create a bond between parents and their children so that children see their parents as approachable on the subject and grow up to be sexually healthy adolescents and adults.**

### ***When are children ready for “THE Talk”?***

Parents often ask us when they should start telling their children about sex. One answer is, when the child begins to ask questions. However, if you wait for your child to ask or only discuss sex when your child asks some sexual topics will never get discussed, at least not at the proper time, unless parents take the initiative. This includes certain aspects of sexual maturation that a child may not consider until he or she experiences them. It is important that young people are aware of the physiological changes before they actually happen. The “Talking The Talk Together” curriculum is an age appropriate curriculum that just about all children in the age group designated will be ready for. For more information on what changes are normal in adolescences visit [www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/)

### ***Who will be teaching the class?***

Jennifer Barber, Executive Director for The Talk Institute, has been an expert in the field of sex education for over 15 years now. She has her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Cal State University, Fullerton and a Master’s Degree in Public Health from Cal State University, Long Beach. In addition she has taught Human Sexuality and Women and Their Bodies at two local colleges. All other educators have Bachelor’s or better degrees in education, psychology/sociology, or in a related health fields and have experience teaching and working with kids.

### ***How are sensitive and controversial issues dealt with?***

Parents are encouraged to talk with their children both in and outside of class about their family’s values and morals. In respect of the many views and opinions of families attending, the instructor does not share personal opinions on controversial matters. If a question is off topic it may be diverted to be discussed at home with their parents or if age-appropriate the instructor will factually explain what the term means and then discuss the two opposing view points. After that the instructor will say to the kids that this is an excellent thing to talk to their parents about on the way home tonight to learn about their family values and beliefs on this issue.

### ***Will talking about sex too soon with my child make them sexually active?***

Parents may hesitate to discuss sex with their children for fear that this would encourage early sexual experimentation. However, there is no clear evidence that sex education in the home contributes to either irresponsible sexual activity or an increased likelihood of adolescent sexual behavior. Moreover, adolescent children who openly, positively, and frequently communicate with their parents about sex are more likely to have fewer sexual partners and later and less frequent sexual activity than teenagers who do not talk to their parents about sex (Jaccard et al., 2000; Meschke et al., 2000; K. Miller et al., 1999). Furthermore, positive parent-adolescent communication about sex has been linked to decrease risk of contracting STDs, more effective and consistent use of birth control, and decrease incidence of teenage pregnancies (Halpern-Felsher et al., 2004; Lehr et al., 2005; Stone & Ingham, 2002).

### ***What if my child is reluctant to come to class?***

It is normal for children to be nervous and embarrassed on the first night of class. After a few sessions though they usually are dragging the parent to class because they are learning about their bodies and having tons of fun. Many students are even disappointed when the course is over and wish it was longer. That’s when we know we did our job right!!

