

SCRIPT: GETTING PARENTS ON BOARD

"It's really important for us to provide (child's name) with correct information about healthy sexuality. We want to give her information so that she/she can feel good about their bodies and positive about sexuality."

(If child's been sexually abused, can say, "Unfortunately, she's been given some incorrect information because of her sexual abuse").

(For non sexually abused kids: "A lot of kids have incorrect information about sex and their bodies, and this can be very confusing.")

"You may worry about putting ideas into his/her head, but kids know a lot more than we think! (if child's been sexually abused, can say "Unfortunately, even though it's hard to think about, the sexual abuse has made (child's name) aware and probably confused about sex.").

"You may also be worried that if we talk about sex, we're kind of giving her permission to go out and have sex. What's important to understand is that (child's name) is going to be curious about sex and us talking to her about it isn't going to increase the likelihood that she'll be sexually active. Also, we're not going to just give her facts about sex. We're going to work together to be sure that we give (child's name) correct information AND also share your family's values about sexuality."

Some additional guidelines on helping parents discuss sex education:

- Encourage parents to begin sex education as soon as possible. This opens the door for on-going communication and makes conversations about sexual issues more acceptable and comfortable for everyone.
- Attend to the child's developmental level: Be sure that parents understand the need to provide information that's appropriate to their child's age and maturity level. For example, preschoolers won't be interested or understand detailed information about conception. However, they can be taught correct names for body parts. On the other hand, school-age children are probably ready to hear about the details of conception, keeping in mind the child's maturity and developmental level. By the teen years, children are ready to discuss sexual desires, feelings, sexual activity, birth control and dating relationships.
- Encourage parents to take the initiative; to provide information as it seems appropriate within their family.
- Help parents learn to be positive and use humor when discussing sexual issues.
- Reinforce the importance of being a good listener.
- Help parents to prepare for difficult questions or issues that may arise, particularly if the offender is a family member.

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