

Program Guide to **Our Whole Lives for Grades K–1**

The curriculum of *Our Whole Lives for Grades K–1* reflects the SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States) *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Kindergarten–12th Grade*, the first national model for comprehensive sexuality education. First published in 1991 and revised in 1996 and 2004, the guidelines provide key concepts and topics in sexuality education for four stages of development, from age 5 through 18. The topics for grades K–1 reflect the guidelines for Level 1, ages 5 through 8 (early elementary school).

This program guide provides an overview for each session of *Our Whole Lives for Grades K–1* and a list of the topics addressed with age-appropriate messages. Each overview is followed by examples of common parental questions and positive responses to these concerns. Finally, each session gives examples of teachable moments and offers possible parental responses to children's questions. The goal is to help parents comfortably discuss sexuality with their children and convey to them the knowledge and values they want them to have. Parents who anticipate their children's questions, decide which messages to give, and rehearse responses will be more at ease using teachable moments to help prepare their children to become healthy adults.

Our Wonderful Bodies, Part One

SESSION ONE

OVERVIEW

This session focuses on the human body. Children are encouraged to review and build upon what they already know by naming, listing, and categorizing many parts of the human body. Leader Resource 2, *Twin Babies*, is a catalyst for discussing similarities and differences between male and female bodies, for making a list of parts of the body, and for drawing in the journals.

In Session 1 and Session 2, children learn about four areas of human sexual development in age-appropriate ways. The content and activities of these sessions focus on differences between males and females, the importance of appreciating one's own body, equity between and respect for each gender, and respect for all sexual orientations.

Human Bodies: Male and Female

- Each part of the body has a correct name and a specific function.
- A person's genitals, reproductive organs, and genes determine whether that person is male or female.
- Usually a boy/man has nipples, a penis, a scrotum, and testicles.
- Usually a girl/woman has breasts, a vulva, a clitoris, a vagina, a uterus, and ovaries.
- Some sexual or reproductive organs, such as penises and vulvas, are external or on the outside of the body, while others, such as ovaries and testicles, are internal or inside the body.
- Both boys and girls have body parts that feel good when touched.

Body Image

- Individual bodies are different sizes, shapes, and colors.
- All bodies are equally special, including those with disabilities.
- Differences make us unique.
- Good health habits, such as eating well or exercising, can improve the way a person feels about his or her body.
- Bodies change as children grow older.
- People can be proud of their bodies.

Sexual Orientation

- Human beings can love people of the same gender or people of another gender.
- Some people are heterosexual, which means they are attracted to and fall in love with someone of another gender.
- Some people are homosexual, which means they are attracted to and fall in love with someone of the same gender.
- Homosexual men and women are also known as gay men and lesbians.
- Some people are bisexual, which means they are attracted to and may fall in love with people of the same or another gender.
- People deserve respect regardless of whom they are attracted to.

Gender Roles

- There are no jobs that are only for girls or only for boys.
- Both mothers and fathers have important roles as parents.
- Girls and boys have many similarities and a few differences.
- It is a stereotype to think all girls or all boys are or should be alike.

—Adapted from SIECUS *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Kindergarten–12th Grade*, 3rd edition, 2004.

QUESTIONS PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OFTEN ASK

My child uses nicknames for parts of her body. How can I encourage her to use the correct names?

When responding to nicknames or street language, first use the correct term or terms. Let your child know that you know the nicknames but that you choose to use the correct terms because they are more accurate. Language has a great deal of power. Sometimes people use words to exclude others or to make them feel ignorant. Tell your child that you correctly name the parts of the body to provide accurate information and to be clear. (You may become more comfortable calling parts of the body by their correct names if you practice saying them out loud.)

It is a matter of being honest with your children. Telling them the truth nurtures self-esteem and gives them the message that they are worthy of respect. When you teach your children to use correct names for parts of the body, they learn to respect their bodies and to see you as a trusted source of information.

If my child asks me about masturbation, what do I say?

Self-touching is common and normal. Children will touch parts of the body because they are curious, just as they explore aspects of their environment. Explain that touching and rubbing one's own genitals is called *masturbation*. Masturbation is one way people express their sexuality, and it is a normal part of growing up. It is natural to be curious about your own body and to explore its sensations. Some children masturbate; others do not.

Be careful not to shame your child for touching themselves or give the message that your child's genitals are a shameful part of the body. Teach your child that this behavior is private, just as using the bathroom is private.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Your 5-year-old daughter asks, “Jamil has a thing between his legs. Why don’t I?”

Determine what she is really asking: Is there something wrong with me? Will I grow one? Are boys better than girls? What’s the difference between boys and girls?

Decide what messages you want to give. For example:

- It’s good to ask me questions.
- It’s good to be curious about these things.
- You can learn correct words from me.
- You are fine just the way you are.

Possible Response: “Because you are a girl, you have a special part of your body called a vulva. Jamil has a penis because he is a boy. Do you have any more questions?”

—Adapted from *Healthy Foundations: The Teacher’s Book* by Peggy Brick et al. (Planned Parenthood of Greater Northern New Jersey, Inc.), © 1993 by The Center for Sex Education. For more information please visit SexEdCenter.org

You discover that your first-grader is masturbating.

Determine why your child is doing this: Does it feel good? Does it reduce anxiety? Does it mimic another child’s behavior?

Decide what messages you want to give. For example:

- Masturbation is okay.
- Do it in private because it is personal.

Possible Response: “I know it feels good to touch your vulva (penis). It’s okay to do that, but your vulva (penis) is a private part of your body. People usually touch their vulva (penis) when they are alone in a private place. Can you name a private place?”

You walk in on your 5-year-old playing doctor with another 5-year-old from the neighborhood.

Determine why they are exploring each other’s bodies: Are they curious about each other’s bodies? Are they mimicking behavior they have seen on television or at home?

Decide what messages you want to give. For example:

- It’s okay to be curious about bodies.
- Your body is private, and you should not let other people look at it or touch it unless you want them to.
- It’s okay to say “No” if you don’t want to play a game another child wants to play.

Possible Response: “I see that you are examining each other just as the doctor examines you. Your body is private. When you play with other children, I want you to keep your clothes on. If you have questions about what girls’ or boys’ bodies look like, you can ask me. I will be happy to show you some pictures.”