

The Sex-Wise Parent presents

Dr. Rosenzweig's Rules for Parents to Raise Sexually Safe and Healthy Children

- 1) Never forget that sexual arousal is an autonomic, reflexive response. Human beings are not responsible for getting aroused in response to a sight, sound, smell, or memory, but they certainly better be responsible for what they do with it.
- 2) Learn the lesson of Pavlov. The good doctor and his dogs have a valuable message for us. In short, when Dr. Pavlov's canine experimental subjects completed a task correctly, a bell rang and they were rewarded with food. Soon, they began salivating at the sound of a bell with no food in sight. The sound of a bell became contiguous, or stuck together with eating. Point -- feelings and responses can get stuck together in ways that have no real meaning. Our reaction to our child's sexuality or other behaviors can cause feelings that become contiguous with sex. So -- be very, very careful before instilling fear, guilt or shame to be associated with an autonomic response (see Rosenzweig' s Rule # 1)
- 3) Remember that a parent's job is to provide the tools to alleviate fear and obliterate ignorance, not add to them. Everyone has fears and questions about their own sexuality at some point. Your pediatrician, public library, clergyperson and books like this are the tools parents' need, so use them!
- 4) Sometimes good people do really stupid things and really bad things happen in nice families. Know where your community's resources are in case this happens to you or someone you love.
- 5) Never forget that young children are developmentally incapable of protecting themselves from a skilled pedophile. All of the classroom based prevention programs in the world are useless unless adults in the community understand the dynamics of sexual abuse of children in general pedophiles in particular.
- 6) Children will rise -- or sink -- to your level of expectations, even if you don't articulate them.
- 7) A criminal background check on an adult seeking to work with children is necessary, but nowhere near sufficient to ensure that they are safe caretakers for our children.
- 8) Keep the lines of communication wide open, including ensuring that their child is comfortable using understandable language about every part of their body. This is one of the most important things a parent can do to help keep this child safe from the harm of a sexual predator.
- 9) Twenty-first century American communities currently have many more resources in place to respond to a victim than to help prevent victimization. Let's hope you never need the former, after reading this book, you may have some ideas how to change the latter.
- 10) Learn about and keep in mind the difference between sex role, sex preference and gender identity.
- 11) The way a question is presented to a young child will determine the way they answer it; learn more about language development in children and use what you learn.
- 12) Consider that sex education does not happen in one class or from having "The Talk" with your child. It is a life-long process of receiving active and passive messages about gender, bodies, intimacy, respect, pleasure, body-image etc...
- 13) Be realistic and acknowledge that your child will eventually see pornography or other objectionable images on the internet. Prepare them and yourself why they need to avoid it.
- 14) Adolescence is, by definition a time of contradictions. Twenty-first century sociologists tell us adolescence is now lasting longer than ever before, but it will eventually end! Our goal as parents is to ensure that when it does, the result of our efforts is a healthy, productive adult who will eventually produce grand children who become adolescents and pay our children back for the way they behaved to us. That can't happen without sex.

