

## Parents & Kids, Talking About Sex ©

### Tackling Tough Topics - PEER PRESSURE & OTHER CONCERNS

Teachers continue to report earlier and earlier signs of hurtful behavior and peer pressure in the school grounds. Stories indicate that "girl bullies" are becoming more hurtful.

#### What teachers are seeing and hearing in our schools

1. **Hurtful remarks.** As early as kindergarten students are using slang terms in the schoolyard. It is not uncommon for an angry second grader to shout, "You're gay," to a classmate.
2. **Inappropriate dress** - students appear to be oblivious to what is appropriate dress. Elementary school students frequently attend school in "bootie" shorts and tight hip-hugger pants. Middle school students wear tight tops and extra short skirts.
3. **Inappropriate language and touch** is often seen as a compliment. Girls are happy to be noticed and boys' parents comment, "Hey, he's a boy. What do you expect?"
4. Kids are repeatedly heard talking about "**R-rated movies.**" Some parents buy the tickets for R-rated movies while others let the kids rent the videos. Some parents buy tickets for PG movies but the students sneak into another movie once the parent drops them off.
5. **Games like "Truth or Dare"** take the form of "Kiss the Body Part." This is often the beginning of peer pressure. Students are forced to do something that will make them feel bad or not do it and feel ostracized.
6. Students fear not being included and not being accepted by others. Bullies are masters in ostracizing others with comments like, "You can't sit here."
7. **Hurtful emails** - Teachers comment that some students seem to think that they can say ANYTHING they want about a classmate in an email.

#### What parents can do

1. Make your home a welcome place for your child's friends. Choose your child's friends. Don't dictate or forbid but foster good contacts by making them easier. Encourage activities or groups with good values, use the power of the dollar.
2. Get to know the parents of your child's friends. Agree to help each other's child in need. With low to midlevel risky behavior, first confront the child and warn that if it happens again you will have to tell their parent. If life threatening, tell parent.
3. Give your child an escape plan and a code word that can get you to come immediately
4. Teach your child how to respond to lines and not get painted into a corner or caught in a tidal wave.

5. Teachers have asked parents to encourage children to report “bullying” behavior to their school teacher, counselor or principal.
6. Help your children put “STOP signs” in their lives so they won’t run into dangerous situations. They have to know where to put the “STOP signs.” Most sexual experiences that go too far occur in the students’ home, after school.
7. Discuss why kids go too far. Most students do not plan to go too far. Talk about momentum and the need to slow down before you can stop.