

## **TALKING WITH YOUR 8 – 12 YEAR-OLD ABOUT SEXUALITY**

- ❖ Before you talk, prepare yourself. Determine the essential message you want to get across to your child.
- ❖ It's not important to know all the answers before you begin talking about sexuality.
- ❖ It's not essential to feel completely comfortable when discussing sexuality both for you and your child.
- ❖ Take the responsibility seriously. Parents are the most important source of information children receive about sexuality.
- ❖ Establish a comfortable climate for questions. Listen to and hear what your child is asking and sharing. Be sensitive to their needs. Don't tease or joke about body changes. Open communication is essential to establish when discussing sexuality.
- ❖ Take the initiative; use opportunities in everyday life to bring up topics about sexuality. Be alert to these teachable moments.
- ❖ Respect your child's privacy. This fosters trust and open communication.
- ❖ Don't force a heavy talk. Let your child direct you; make it clear that you will remain available.
- ❖ When answering questions, get to the point. Answer what they really want to know.
- ❖ Discuss, don't dictate. Ask thought provoking and open ended questions.
- ❖ When discussing values, let your own value system guide your answers.
- ❖ Don't demand compliance. Develop mutual respect; recognize that your teen is becoming independent in thoughts and actions but ask them to consider your point of view as well.
- ❖ The most important message that you want your child to get is that you welcome questions. Your child can trust you. By encouraging communication, by providing accurate information, by listening willingly and by offering some sensitive support, you can foster your child's self-esteem and help him or her deal with sexuality in a responsible way.