

## Talk Soon, Talk Often- A guide for parents talking to their kids about sex

### Description

Parents and carers are the primary source of sexuality information of their children. To support families, the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District aims to provide all families with a free copy of 'Talk soon. Talk often. A guide for parents talking to their kids about sex'. The book can assist families in the development of happy, healthy and confident young people. Research shows that young people who are able to talk within their families about sexuality are more likely to postpone their first sexual experience<sup>1</sup> and to have safe, positive relationships when they are ready for these<sup>2</sup>.

The NSW adaptation of 'Talk soon. Talk often' was successfully completed by the NBMLHD Health Promotion Team in January 2015. Designed for parents and carers, 'Talk soon. Talk often' was developed La Trobe University for the Western Australia Department of Health in 2012. It was written following research which identified parents wanted a high quality, attractive resource that would be long lasting and well used by families and communities<sup>3</sup>.

### Aims

'Talk soon. Talk often' aims to establish open and honest communication from early in childhood. It is a comprehensive resource that reflects the diversity of parent's voices. It is a great companion to the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Curriculum and enables families to extend the classroom learning without fear or awkwardness about language and challenging questions. The book provides tips on creating easy conversations about bodies, relationships, health and sexuality, as part of routine communication with children of all ages.

1 Grunseit A, Kippax s. (1993) Effects of sex education on young people's sexual behaviour. WHO: Geneva.

2 Marie stopes International. (2008) Sex — telling it like it is: A parent and teen insight

3 Sue Dyson (2008) Parents and sex education in Western Australia - A consultation with parents on educating their children about sexual health at home and school. La Trobe University



### Achievements

- Department of Education primary schools were selected as the first point of distribution of the book, with the intention of providing one copy of 'Talk soon. Talk often' to every family in every school. The Independent school sector is now also being offered the opportunity to distribute the book to families within their schools. Over two hundred copies have recently been made available via the local Home Schoolers network
- Distribution is also underway within the network of non-government agencies that provide support for children and families across the LHD. This is being led by Nepean Community Neighbourhood Services who are distributing the book through parenting programs and within individual case work sessions.
- The resource has been widely distributed to LHD staff for their professional and personal use after its promotion on the Intranet Bulletin Board.

### Planned Improvements

'Talk soon. Talk often' forms a key component of a larger community wide project being developed in partnership with Family Planning NSW that will include forums for parents and training for teachers.

#### Fast Facts – Talk Soon, Talk Often

To date Health Promotion has responded to requests from more than 60 local Primary Schools across the LHD and:

- Distributed over 13,000 copies of Talk soon. Talk often.
- Distributed 200 copies of Talk soon. Talk often. to home-schooler families
- Presented 12 Parent & Carer Information Sessions through school P&C committees
- Participated in 2 Kindergarten Orientation Days
- Received requests for Parent Workshops from 9 schools (to be conducted in partnership with FPNSW in 2016)
- Received invitations to attend 2 staff information sessions in 2016.