



With Talk of Pregnant Teens, Talk to Your Kids

Parents can use 'baby boom' at Massachusetts high school as teaching moment

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By Megan K. Scott

With a lot of attention on teen pregnancy these days, parents can use the news to talk about sex and pregnancy with their children:

Here are some tips from experts.

— Have age-appropriate discussions about sex. Answer their questions openly and honestly.

— Talk about teen pregnancy. Ask your kids what they think about “Juno” and Jamie Lynn Spears’ pregnancy, says Bill Albert, spokesman for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

— Make sure your teen knows you are there for her. Say something along the lines of “I love you and I really hope you’ll wait until you get married or at least are older and more responsible. If you think about it, please come to me,” says Dr. Nicole Karjane, an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics/Gynecology at Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Medicine.

— If your teen says she wants to have a baby, ask her why. Then you can get a sense of what she is missing — love, attention, career goals, says Ellen deLara, assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Syracuse.

— Talk about how hard it is to raise a family. Tell her about the huge responsibility that comes with being a parent, says Karjane.

— Have her talk to other teen moms, who can share their experiences about how hard it is, says Karjane.

— Connect with a religious institution, whether a synagogue or a church, says deLara. She says that may give teens hope that their future is bright.