Maternal Involvement in Preschoolers' Sexuality Education: A Comparison of Single and Married Mothers

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MATERNAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRESCHOOLERS' SEXUALITY EDUCATION:
A COMPARISON OF SINGLE AND MARRIED MOTHERS

by

Ginger S. Sandweg

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
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in
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ABSTRACT

Maternal Involvement in Preschoolers’ Sexuality Education:
A Comparison of Single and Married Mothers

by

Ginger S. Sandweg, Master of Science
Utah State University, 2003

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Department: Family, Consumer, and Human Development

This study examined the responses to a sexuality education questionnaire completed by 30 single mothers and 43 married mothers with preschool-aged children. Chi-square analyses were used to examine differences between married mothers and single mothers; mothers of males and mothers of females; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males and single mothers of females. Age at which their preschool children first exhibited behaviors, frequency of that behavior, and comfort level of mothers’ responses to those behaviors were addressed for each topic: male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play.

Very few statistically significant differences were apparent in the comparisons that were made. Married mothers were more comfortable than single mother in responding to their child’s questions about male-female differences and their child’s use of taboo or obscene words. In addition, some interesting trends emerged. For instance,
mothers tended to express more comfort when responding to hypothetical situations than when responding to actual situations. Questions about male-female differences, reproduction and birth, and privacy or modesty were responded to more frequently than questions about taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play. Moreover, maternal observation of behaviors that appeared to be more sensitive (and less comfortable, such as taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play) was lower than observation of less sensitive behaviors (male-female differences, privacy or modesty, and reproduction and birth). The implications of this study and directions for future research are discussed.
The completion of my thesis was a lengthy process. There are many people whom I would like to thank. Without the continuous contact and help from Dr. Shelley L. K. Lindauer, I would not have been able to finish this degree. Shelley stuck with me for a number of years while I struggled to collect and analyze data. She commented on revision after revision with professionalism. Thank you, Shelley.

My family has been a source of encouragement throughout the entire process. Moving out of state to attend graduate school was difficult for my mother. She put on a smile and continued to encourage me. She and my father helped to support me through the move and through school. They also were willing assistants in the data collection process (making sure participants had pens, a place to sit, and entertainment for their children). Without my parents continual questions about when I was going to finish and continual encouragement to keep trying even though there were many roadblocks, I would not have finished this degree. Thank you, Mom and Dad.

Lastly, I owe a great deal of thanks to my husband, Bill. He helped me navigate the enormous campus of ASU and spent many hours at the library while I looked up journal articles. He also kept me focused on work before play. Thank you, Bill.

Ginger Sandweg
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sexuality education of young children is an important issue for parents. Many parents believe they should be primarily responsible for educating their children about sexuality, although they may be uncomfortable and anxious when talking to their children about sexual matters (Bundy & White, 1990; Valentich & Gripton, 1989; Wurtele, 1993). Chrisman and Couchenour (2002) believe that, in the United States, there is an attitude that children do not need to know about sexuality. This inconsistency between the strong belief that parents should be the primary sexuality educators of their children and the actual sexuality education practices of parents is illustrated by Driskill and DelCampo (1992), "...Americans have not resolved the ambiguity we feel about human sexuality...sexuality is openly discouraged in the typical American family as children develop and there is little discussion" (p. 181) about sexuality. The discrepancy between parental attitudes and practices is also illustrated by a study using participants from the 16th Annual Child Abuse Symposium and the 4th Annual Conference of the National Adolescent Perpetration Network (Ryan, 2000). The adult participants completed an anonymous survey in which they responded to events/activities they remembered from childhood. The authors found that “35.6% of the respondents said ‘sex education was never discussed in the home’, 17.2% discussed it ‘once’, and 41.4% reported ‘very little but intermittently’” (p. 38).

Sexuality education for young children seems to be beneficial. For instance, researchers have suggested that sexuality education might reduce the number of child
sexual abuse cases. Sanford (1982) has asserted that giving children accurate, age-appropriate information about their body parts, body functions, and appropriate/inappropriate touching may help to protect them from sexual abuse. Likewise, appropriate sexuality education for young children might also reduce the number of sexual abuse cases that go unreported. Wurtele (1993) found that preschool-aged children are largely unaware of anatomically correct terminology for their genitals, which may make it difficult for them to disclose inappropriate sexual activity. As Hacker and Rembor (1988) suggested, unintentional messages given about sexuality are often stronger than the intentional ones. The taboo in America today of talking about sexual issues may influence children to withhold information about inappropriate sexual behavior. Lenderyou (1994) asserted that making sexuality education explicit may expose myths and prejudices as well as make it easier and more comfortable to talk about sexuality in our society.

Sexuality education has also been associated with healthy self-esteem development. Bates and Joubert (1993) found that sexuality education by a parent was highly correlated with self-esteem. Hacker and Rembor (1988) report that self-esteem is enhanced in sexually abused children when an easy, matter-of-fact way is used to discuss sexuality.

Sexuality education of young children has an impact in later years as children enter adolescence. Frequency of parent-child communication about sexuality has been linked to the knowledge of birth control methods and responsible sexual behavior among adolescents (Fisher, 1987). In an article by the National PTA (2000), it is stated that
“children whose parents have not talked to them about sex...are more likely to try it sooner. Knowing less, they are more likely to make sexual mistakes – from getting pregnant to catching sexual diseases” (p. 1). Katz (1998) suggested that when discussions about sexuality are postponed with children, curiosity is heightened and experimentation may occur.

Within the family context, sexuality education for young children may present a considerable dilemma. While parents believe they should be primarily responsible for the sexuality education of their young children, other factors may discourage them from discussing sexual information. Parents’ comfort level has been found to impact whether discussions about sexuality occur in the home (Katz, 1998; Reis & Seidl, 1989). Topic sensitivity is another factor that may encourage or discourage parents from educating their children about sexuality (Elrod & Rubin, 1993). Lastly, parents’ knowledge about sexuality education has been found to impact whether they discuss such topics with their children (Davis, Koblinsky, & Sugawara, 1986).

Gender differences have been shown to influence the sexuality education of young children. Mothers typically provide more information about sexuality education than do fathers (Baldwin & Baranoski, 1990; Elrod & Rubin, 1993; Goldman & Goldman, 1981), and there is some indication that the sexuality education practices of parents of males differs from parents of females (Dong, 1995; Fisher, 1987; Geasler, Dannison, & Edlund, 1995; Honig, 2000; Schuhrke, 2000; Smith, Chacko, & Bermudez, 1989). Girls seem to receive more information about sexuality topics than do boys (Fisher; Smith et al.), and
parents of male children seem to be more comfortable with their child’s active exploration than parents of girls (Dong; Geasler et al.).

Family composition may be a factor in the contradictory beliefs and practices with regard to sexuality education. It is well established that single-parent households have different needs than two-parent households (Disimoni & Mucha, 1983; Hilton & Desrochers, 2002; Kurdek, 1991; Lee, 2002; Reifman, Villa, Amans, Rethinam, & Telesca, 2001; Wadsworth, Burnell, Taylor, & Butler, 1985). Children living in single-parent families, when compared to their counterparts living in two-parent families, have been shown to lack academic achievement (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993; Rosenberg & Guttmann, 2001), suffer more from emotional issues (Dong, Wang, & Ollendick, 2002; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Taylor, 2001; Zhou, Bray, Kehle, & Xin, 2001), and seem to have more problems socially (Drapeau & Bouchard). Although Wurtele (1993) found no difference in family composition of parents who taught anatomically correct genital terminology and those who did not, other studies suggest that family composition is related to the rate of child sexual abuse (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith 1990; Gordon, Schroeder, & Abrams, 1990).

It has been shown that single-parent families have less economic stability than intact families (Angel & Worobey, 1988; Hilton, Desrochers, & Duvall, 2001). Amato (2001) suggested that the inequity of income between single-parent families and two-parent families may be an explanation for the differences in children from both types of families. Although Amato was unable to test this theory with direct data, Kesner and McKenry (2001) were able to draw conclusions about economic level and child
functioning in single-parent families and married-parent families. They found that when controlling for SES, no statistically significant differences emerged between children from single-parent households and two-parent households in the areas of social skills, self-concept, assertiveness, externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, or conflict management.

Research to date has not specifically examined the sexuality education practices of single-parent families. The purpose of this study is to compare the sexuality education practices of single and married mothers with preschool children. It is also the purpose of this study to examine differences in child gender with regard to their sexuality education.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Informal sexuality education begins in the home long before formal sexuality education is taught. Just by being around family members, children develop a sense of their family's underlying feelings and ideas about sexuality (Baldwin & Baranoski, 1990). The importance of sexuality education, sexuality education practices in the home, gender differences in sexuality education, and differences in single-parent families and two-parent families will be discussed in the following review.

Importance of Sexuality Education

There are many reasons for educating young children about sexuality. Early sexuality education may protect children from sexual abuse. Wurtele (1993) studied the knowledge of correct genital terminology among 65 Head Start preschoolers. She concluded that preschool-aged children are largely unaware of the anatomically correct terminology for their genitals and this lack of knowledge may make it difficult for children to disclose inappropriate sexual activity.

Children who are educated about sexuality in the home have more factual information about sexual terms and sexuality. In their study of 40 children, ages 5 through 12, Berends and Caron (1994) found that drawings and responses about birth and conception were more accurate for children whose parents talked to them about sexuality than children whose parents did not.
Conversely, lack of sufficient information about sexuality may produce negative feelings towards parents and about sexuality. A study examining the early sexuality education of Jamaican women suggests that 64% of the women expressed resentment (50% overt, 14% inferred) toward their mothers for failure to adequately educate them about sexuality or reproduction (Brody, Ottey, & Lagrandede, 1976). Two thirds of these women also reported strong negative feelings at the onset of menstruation. Lack of communication about sexuality was also associated with more pregnancies and more births among this sample.

There are advantages to sexuality education throughout a child’s life. Teaching children the names of their body parts (including genitals) enhances pride (Wurtele, 1993). In an article outlining the necessary requirements to educate professionals working with sexually abused individuals, Hacker and Rembor (1988) stated that talking to sexually abused children about sexuality in an easy, matter-of-fact way was shown to enhance appropriate decision making and self-esteem.

Self-esteem was also found to be highly correlated with sexuality education by a parent in a study conducted by Bates and Joubert (1993). They examined correlates of identity formation with regard to attitudes toward AIDS with 84 undergraduate respondents ranging in age from 18-44. The authors suggest that parents who “communicate directly and personally with them about sex education should develop more self-esteem than would those who did not have this type of experience” (p. 603). This correlation is further corroborated by the National PTA (2000), which states that a high self-esteem is a foundation for healthy sexuality. It seems as if early sexuality
education by parents will impact self-esteem and be the foundation for healthy sexuality development throughout the lifespan.

Another advantage associated with early sexuality education is the impact on sexual relationships. A retrospective study with adults about early sexuality education has been associated with later low reproductive performance and fewer sexual relationships. Brody and colleagues (1976) found that early sexuality education, regardless of source, was associated with fewer births and sexual relationships in 150 working-class Jamaican women. They also found that women who received sexual information from their mothers were older at first coitus.

Sexuality Education at Home

Children feel that sexuality education is important to be taught in the home. Croft and Asmussen (1992) found that children wanted to talk with their parents about sexuality. Furthermore, children in this study also indicated that it is important for parents to discuss sexuality with their children, although it does not happen often.

Parents also feel that they should be educating their children about sexuality (Reis & Seidl, 1989) and want to teach their children about sexuality (Davis et al., 1986; Wuertele, 1993). Yet, many parents do not follow through with this type of education or are inadequate when educating children about sexuality (Bundy & White, 1990). Reis and Seidl (1989) suggested reasons for this might possibly have been a lack of knowledge about sexuality education or lack of comfort in discussing sexuality. Katz (1998)
suggested that “it’s easier for parents to answer children’s questions about almost any subject other than about sexual matters” (p. 1).

Davis et al. (1986) found no significant differences in comfort levels between pre-and post-tests after the experimental group participated in a sexuality education course. In their study of 88 mothers, the researchers concluded that the participants overestimated their comfort levels on the pre-test. It can be inferred that comfort level was lower before the participation in the sexuality education course.

Comfort level is not the only factor affecting parents’ sexuality education with their children. A study conducted by Geasler and colleagues (1995) found five categories of parental concern with regard to sexuality education of their own young children aged birth through five: how much information is appropriate and what is the right time to provide it; teachable moments that may occur before the children or parents are ready for such topics; how to respond when other people’s children are present; gender role expectations; and the desire to be better than their parents. They go on to state that “many parents feel that societal phenomena (e.g., the AIDS epidemic, TV, cartoons, movies, riding together on the school bus) are forcing parents to take responsibility for sexuality education for their children before the children – or perhaps the parents – are ready” (p. 186). The data from this study demonstrates that there is a conflict for parents between what they learned (or not) about sexuality in their family of origin and their desire for better communication with their own children about sexuality.

When parents do discuss sexuality with their children, they often only discuss the less sensitive topics. In a telephone interview of 101 parents of children under age seven,
Elrod and Rubin (1993) found that parents planned to discuss, and were much more likely to discuss, the most innocuous or least threatening topics such as don’t talk to strangers and good and bad touch. However, most of these parents had not discussed and did not plan to discuss some of the more emotionally laden topics with their children such as who abusers are, why abuse happens, and the likelihood of abuse happening to the child.

In the same study, Elrod and Rubin (1993) also found that one third of parents expressed concerns about needing more information on how to teach their children about sexual abuse without scaring them. In an experimental study, parents given a sexuality education class planned to discuss sexuality topics at significantly earlier ages than parents in a control group (Davis et al., 1986). In essence, parents who are more educated about sexuality topics feel that sexuality education should start earlier than less educated parents.

Although sexuality is difficult for many parents to discuss with their children, it is important that parents take the courses they need to feel more informed and comfortable. Children need to hear this important information from their caregivers. Honig (2000) states that young children receive negative messages about sexuality when caregivers exhibit shame and confusion about sexuality.
Gender Differences in Sexuality Education

Studies have shown that mothers provide more information about sexuality education than do fathers (Baldwin & Baranoski, 1990; Elrod & Rubin, 1993; Goldman & Goldman, 1981). When identifying sources of sexuality information of children 12 to 15 years old, Smith et al. (1989) found that 53% of girls and 17% of boys listed their mothers as the primary source of information, as compared to one percent of girls and 11% of boys who listed their father. Pick and Palos (1995) found that both male and female children indicated that it was more difficult discussing sexuality with their fathers. Furthermore, fathers rated their level of communication about sexuality with their children higher than their children did.

Frequency of sexuality education discussions also seem to be higher among mothers than fathers. Sigelman, Derenowski, Mullaney, and Siders (1993) found that the frequency of parent-child discussions about AIDS was greater among responding mothers than among responding fathers. They surveyed 170 pairs of children and their parents regarding frequency of talks about AIDS, sexuality and drugs. Children ranged in age from 6 to 18 and lived in both single-parent and two-parent households.

Knowledge and comfort with various sexuality education topics is shown to be higher in mothers than in fathers. Verby and Herold (1992) surveyed 216 parents with children in elementary school and found that Canadian mothers had more knowledge of AIDS, perceived themselves as being very knowledgeable of AIDS, and thought AIDS education should begin earlier than did fathers. Similarly, a study of parent involvement
in sexual abuse prevention education found that the mother rated more sexuality topics acceptable to teach to preschoolers and children at any age than did fathers (Elrod & Rubin, 1993). Subjects consisted of 101 parents with children under the age of seven. This study also suggested that mothers reported planning to discuss more topics about sexuality with their children and were much more likely to respond positively to any outside information than were fathers.

The lack of knowledge and comfort with sexuality topics for fathers is indicated in research. In a sample of 838 children ages 5 through 15 from Australia, North America, and Sweden, Goldman and Goldman (1981) found a widespread lack of confidence for children in asking fathers questions about sexuality. The reasons the children gave for this included fathers’ lack of knowledge and comfort in talking about sexual issues. Elrod and Rubin (1993) indicated that fathers had a greater reluctance to discuss sexual abuse with their children and expected their wives to be responsible for handling that aspect of parenting and child safety education. Fathers also expected their wives to bring back any pertinent information from parent education meetings that they did not attend. The early reliance on mothers to educate their children in the area of sexuality may influence children to be more comfortable in talking to their mothers about sexuality at a young age and as they mature.

Differences in the sexuality education of male and female children has also been studied. Girls seem to receive more information about sexuality topics than boys. Both Fisher (1987) and Smith et al. (1989) found that mothers had more discussions about sexuality with their female children than with their male children.
Girls have been found to be more curious about the opposite sex than boys. Schuhrze (2000) explored body discovery with 26 children. She found that “even by the time when boys are six years old, they have not caught up with girls’ other-sex interest” (p. 43). She concluded that “girls have a better body representation of the other sex than boys” (p. 43).

Parents of male children seem to be more comfortable with their child’s active exploration. Geasler et al., (1995) found that parents were more comfortable with their male children engaging in genital self-touching than with their female children. Dong (1995) also found that parents of sons in both America and Taiwan responded to their child’s typically occurring sexual behaviors with more comfort than parents of daughters.

Differences in Single-Parent Families Versus Two-Parent Families

Single-parent families seem to be plagued with a number of hardships. Single mothers have been shown to have significantly higher levels of daily stress (Olson & Banyard, 1993) and lower levels of education and less prestigious employment (Hilton et al., 2001) than mothers from two-parent families. Hilton and colleagues studied parents with children ages six to ten. They found that single mothers, compared to single fathers and married mothers, had a more difficult time coping with role demands and had no plan for taking care of themselves. Moreover, single mothers compared to married mothers reported less positive relationships with their children, felt less in control of their children’s behavior and reported their children having more internalizing and externalizing behaviors.
Academically, children of single-parent families also showed a number of deficiencies when compared to children from two-parent families (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993). Studies have suggested that children in single-parent families may score lower on developmental, behavioral and visuomotor tests (Wadsworth et al., 1985), language comprehension tests (Disimoni & Mucha, 1983), and have significantly poorer grades reported by their parents (Rosenberg & Guttmann, 2001).

The largest deficit for children of single-parent families seems to be in the area of social-emotional development. Children from two-parent families have been found to be better adjusted both socially and emotionally than children from single-parent families (Rosenberg & Guttmann, 2001). Behavior problems are more frequent in children from single-parent families (Dong et al., 2002; Hilton & Desrochers, 2002; Kurdek, 1991; Lee, 2002; Reifman et al., 2001; Zhou et al., 2001). Gringlas and Weinraub (1995) found that scores of preschool children on compliance, aggression, and at-risk scales were highly predictive of preadolescent developmental difficulties for single mothers. The original study of preschool children and their mothers consisted of 42 mother-child pairs in which half were from single-mother families and half were from intact families. The follow-up study seven years later consisted of 70% of the original sample. Goldberg, Greenberger, Hamil, and O’Neil (1992) found that recent single mothers perceived more problem behaviors in their own children than mothers who had experienced a longer time as a single parent.

Socially, children from single-parent families may face more challenges than children from two-parent families (Dong et al., 2002; Zhou et al., 2001). In a study of
191 six to 11 year olds, Drapeau and Bouchard (1993) found that children from disrupted families described support networks of lesser density, and reported seeing fewer members of their immediate family.

Emotionally, children from single parent families may have more problems than children from two parent families. Zhou and colleagues (2001) compared the deficits of Chinese children of divorce with American children of divorce. The authors found that Chinese children of divorce, like American children of divorce, scored higher on self-reported depression, loneliness, fear, anxiety and insecurity than children from intact families. Similarly, Dong and colleagues (2002) examined 1,294 children and parents and also found higher reports of depression and anxiety for children of divorced families. Taylor (2001) studied children’s responses to questions about their parent’s divorce. The children, ages five-and-a-half to over 20, thought that their parents were ignoring their emotional needs during the time of the divorce.

Family composition also has implications when considering sexual abuse. Finkelhor and colleagues (1990) found that men and women were more likely to be victimized if their predominant family situation had been one without one of their natural parents. In a study comparing sexually abused children with nonabused children, more than four times as many from the abused group were from single-parent homes (Gordon et al., 1990).

Economically, children from single-parent families fare worse than children from two-parent families. When compared to married mothers, single mothers suffered more economic strain (Angel & Worobey, 1988; Hilton et al., 2001), and income level had
been associated with child functioning. Amato (2001) in his meta-analysis of 67 articles regarding the welfare of children from divorced families, suggested that the inequity in family income might account for some of the differences between children living with single parents versus children living with married parents. Kesner and McKenry (2001) studied 68 mothers and their preschool children. When the authors controlled for SES, they found no statistically significant differences between children living with single mothers and children living with married mothers in the areas of social skills, self-concept, assertiveness, externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, or conflict management.

In summary, the literature clearly shows that early, appropriate sexuality education is important for many reasons. Studies have suggested that children receiving early sexuality education have fewer sexual relationships, demonstrate enhanced pride and self-esteem and use appropriate decision-making techniques. The literature also suggests that mothers talk to their children about sexuality more often than do fathers. Moreover, the literature indicates that children and parents in single-parent households have different needs than those in two-parent households.

However, no study to date has clearly compared the sexuality education practices of preschoolers from single-and two-parent families. Because of the lack of frequency of parental participation in sexuality education coupled with parents’ lack of comfort in discussing these issues, it is important to provide parents with ways to educate young children. It is also important to establish whether the needs of single- and two-parent families are different in educating young children about sexuality. Lastly, determining if
there are gender differences with regard to sexuality education of young children is also important. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the involvement of mothers in sexuality education of male and female preschoolers in single-and two-parent families. The following research questions will be investigated:

Question 1: Do child gender and maternal marital status impact the age at which preschool children first exhibit behavior or questions in the areas of male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play?

Question 2: Do child gender and maternal marital status impact the frequency of child behaviors observed by mothers in the areas of male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play?

Question 3: Do child gender and maternal marital status impact maternal comfort level when responding to their child’s behaviors or questions in the areas of male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play?
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A sample was obtained from a number of Head Start programs in Maricopa County, Arizona. This purposive sample was chosen so as to yield an ethnically diverse group. The sample consisted of 30 single mothers (either never married, divorced or separated, or divorced and living with a partner) and 43 married mothers. All mothers in the sample had at least one child between the ages of three and five years. Head Start parents were also used in order to eliminate any potential socioeconomic confound. Although this sample is not generalizable to the entire U.S. population, it was deemed important to target low-income families because of the potential detrimental effects of poverty and limited availability of parent education resources.

Measurement

Maternal involvement in sexuality education is operationalized by mothers' responses to a portion of the Sexuality Education Questionnaire, developed by Koblinsky and Atkinson (1982; Appendix A). Davis et al. (1986) have assessed the face validity of this questionnaire to be adequate. This means the questionnaire is actually measuring involvement in sexuality education. These authors also report test-retest reliabilities ranging from .82 to .92. This means that the questionnaire is consistent across testing samples. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was given in its entirety. Data
from only the first two sections of the questionnaire and the last section of the questionnaire were utilized in statistical analyses.

Section I dealt with general behaviors of children asking about male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, engaging in genital play, and sexual exploration with other children. For each topic, mothers were questioned about the age of their child at first occurrence, frequency of discussion, and comfort level in responding to their children.

Section II gave mothers ten different situations with preschoolers and asked how comfortable the parent felt should the situation arise today. Mothers responded on a six point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) totally comfortable to (6) totally uncomfortable. One example scenario is “Your preschool child asks you to explain how babies get inside a mother’s body.”

Section IV asked questions about demographics. Questions about age, education level, religious affiliation, occupation, and marital status were included.

The questionnaire was printed in both English and Spanish. A fluent Spanish and English speaker translated the original English version into Spanish. A second individual, also fluent in both languages, translated the Spanish version back to English in order to ensure accuracy. Mothers were asked to choose which version they would be most comfortable responding to. The Spanish version was used by 47% of single mothers and 72% of married mothers.
Procedure

Data were collected from mothers attending a health fair for Maricopa County (Arizona) Head Start Parents. The researchers set up a booth and upon exiting the health fair, mothers were invited to participate. A cover letter was given to mothers explaining that the purpose of the study was to assess mothers’ involvement in sexuality education practices. The letter also requested that mothers complete the questionnaire without the help of another person. After signing the informed consent letter, each mother was given a questionnaire. Cover letters and questionnaires were written in both English and Spanish. Both an English- and Spanish-speaking assistant was available to answer questions that participants had about the questions. The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete and was collected as soon as mothers were finished. As an incentive, a magician was performing for children while their mothers completed the questionnaire.

Ethical Considerations

A cover letter (Appendix B) delineated the procedure of the study and solicited informed consent for participation. Although the threat to human subjects was minimal, some mothers may have felt uncomfortable answering some questions. The mothers were informed that participation was completely voluntary and that they could discontinue at any time. Because data were collected on site, no names, phone numbers, or addresses
were obtained. This ensured complete anonymity. Approval from the institutional review board was obtained before data collection commenced.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The following section will first address analyses of demographic data. Then, the results pertaining to each of the research questions will be presented. The original intent of this study was to compare four groups of participants: married mothers of boys ($n = 20$), married mothers of girls ($n = 21$), single mothers of boys ($n = 17$), and single mothers of girls ($n = 12$). However, as analyses progressed, it became apparent that, for many comparisons, the sizes of the sub-samples were not acceptable for the planned analyses. The number of cell sizes with a count of less than five occurrences was above the acceptable level for many comparisons. Therefore, for all questions, two two-way comparisons are also made: single mothers versus married mothers; and mothers of boys versus mothers of girls. In all cases, level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Demographic Comparisons

Initial analyses were conducted to determine if any significant demographic differences existed between single mothers and married mothers; between mothers of boys and mothers of girls; or between married mothers of boys, married mothers of girls, single mothers of boys and single mothers of girls. Table 1 illustrates the demographic composition of the sample.
### Table 1

**Maternal Demographics by Percentage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Age</td>
<td>18 – 24 Years Old</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 – 29 Years Old</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 – 34 Years Old</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35+ Years Old</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Education</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College Degree or More</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Ethnicity</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Religion</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s Age</td>
<td>Three Years Old</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four Years Old</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five Years Old</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four or More</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square analyses showed no statistically significant differences between married mothers and single mothers for age, $\chi^2 (3, N = 73) = 6.577, p = .087$; education $\chi^2 (3, N = 73) = 3.720, p = .293$; child’s age $\chi^2 (5, N = 73) = 2.382, p = .794$; child’s gender $\chi^2 (1, N = 73) = .885, p = .347$; number of children $\chi^2 (5, N = 73) = 2.031, p = .566$; ethnicity $\chi^2 (1, N = 73) = 2.877, p = .09$; or religious affiliation $\chi^2 (3, N = 64) = 4.145, p = .246$. There were also no statistically significant differences found between mothers of boys and mothers of girls for maternal age $\chi^2 (3, N = 73) = 4.501, p = .212$; education $\chi^2 (3, N = 73) = 3.177, p = .548$; child’s age $\chi^2 (6, N = 73) = 3.653, p = .723$; number of children $\chi^2 (3, N = 73) = 4.439, p = .216$; ethnicity $\chi^2 (1, N = 73) = .230, p = .610$; or religious affiliation $\chi^2 (1, N = 64) = .223, p = .637$. Similarly, no statistically significant differences emerged between married mothers of boys, married mothers of girls, single mothers of boys, and single mothers of girls for these variables.

The overall sample was generally Hispanic/Latino (77%) and Catholic (79%). Seventy-five percent of the women had a high school diploma or above. Eighty-four percent of the mothers were under 35 years of age, and 66% had one or two children.
Fifty-three percent were mothers of a target child who was male, and in 64% of the cases, this target child was 4 years old.

Research Question 1

Question 1: Do child gender and marital status impact the age at which preschool children first exhibit behavior or questions in the areas of male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play?

The age at which children exhibited behaviors or asked questions about sexuality topics was examined. Chi-square analyses were used to determine if there were differences between single mothers and married mothers, or differences between mothers of boys and mother of girls for six sexuality education topics: male-female differences; reproduction and birth; privacy or modesty; taboo or obscene words; genital play; and sexual exploration play. On the questionnaire, mothers could check one of the six responses ranging from one to one and one half years old to four and a half to 5 years old. Because of small cell sizes, these responses were collapsed to form three categories: one to two-and-a-half years old, two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half years old, and three-and-a-half to 5 years old. Mothers’ responses to each question about the age their child first exhibited sexuality behaviors or asked sexuality questions are indicated in Table 2.
Table 2

*Age at Which Sexuality Behaviors Were First Displayed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>( N )</th>
<th>1 - 2.5 Years Old</th>
<th>2.5 - 3.5 Years Old</th>
<th>3.5 - 5 Years Old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About what age did your child first bring up the subject of genital differences between males and females?</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About what age were questions asked about reproduction and birth?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At what age did privacy behavior first appear?</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At about what age did your child first begin to use this type of words (taboo or obscene)?</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At about what age did your child first engage in this behavior (genital play)?</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At about what age did your child begin engaging in &quot;sex play&quot;?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Male-Female Differences**

Responses to the question “At what age did your child first bring up the subject of genital differences between males and females?” were analyzed to determine differences between married mothers and single mothers. No significant differences were found, \( \chi^2 (2, N = 70) = .90, p = .366 \). Mothers of male children were compared to mothers of female children with regard to the age at which children first brought up the subject of
genital differences between males and females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 70) = .71, p = .702$. No statistically significant differences emerged. Finally, comparison of married mother of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females also yielded no statistically significant differences, $\chi^2 (6, N = 70) = 2.90, p = .821$.

Reproduction and Birth

Chi-square analyses of the question “About what age were questions asked about where babies come from?” were conducted to examine differences between the groups discussed above. No statistically significant differences were found between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 59) = .90, p = .638$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 59) = 2.74, p = .254$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 59) = 3.95, p = .684$.

Privacy or Modesty

Examination of the question “At what age did this privacy behavior first appear?” was conducted using chi-square analyses. Results did not show statistically significant differences between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 50) = .10, p = .951$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 50) = 1.07, p = .586$; or between married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 50) = 2.81, p = .832$. 
Taboo or Obscene Words

Chi-square analyses of the question “At about what age did your child first begin to use this type of words?” were also conducted to compare the responses of married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 37) = .65, p = .721$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 37) = 3.40, p = .182$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 37) = 5.11, p = .530$. Again, none of the comparisons were statistically significant.

Genital Play

The question “At about what age did your child first engage in this behavior?” was examined using chi-square analyses. No statistically significant differences were found between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 41) = .05, p = .975$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 41) = .35, p = .840$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 41) = 1.14, p = .980$.

Sexual Exploration Play

Responses to the question “At about what age did your child begin engaging in ‘sex play?’” were analyzed to determine if differences existed for the three comparisons. Chi-square analyses showed no statistically significant differences between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 7) = 1.22, p = .270$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 7) = .06, p = .809$; and married mothers of males, married mothers...
of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, \( \chi^2 (6, N = 7) = 1.90, p = .388 \).

Although analysis indicated no statistically significant results for the age at which children first exhibited behaviors or asked questions regarding male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play, it is interesting to note which behaviors had actually been observed. As shown in Table 2, mothers observed the topics of male-female differences, questions about reproduction and birth, and privacy or modesty behaviors more than the use of taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play. In fact, only seven mothers reported their child engaging in sexual exploration play with other children. In this sample, questions about reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty behaviors, and sexual exploration play were typically reported as being observed at ages above three and a half years old. Genital play, however, was reported as being observed throughout the age spans.

Research Question 2

Question 2: Do child gender and maternal marital status impact the frequency of child behaviors observed by mothers in the areas of male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play?

Chi-square analyses were used to determine whether there were differences in frequency of sexual behaviors or sexual questions of young children which were related
to mothers’ marital status or child’s gender. On the questionnaire, mothers could check one of six categories: daily; 2 to 6 times a week; once a week; 2 to 3 times a month; once a month or less; and not at all. Because so many cells for the chi-square contingency tables had less than 5 occurrences, data categories were collapsed to three categories; daily to 2 to 6 times a week; once a week to 2 to 3 times per month; and once a month or less (including not at all). Table 3 shows the percentage of mothers reporting how often sexuality behaviors occurred.

Male-Female Differences

Responses to the question “In the last 6 months or so, can you estimate how often you have discussed male-female differences with your child?” were analyzed to determine differences between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 73) = 2.26, p = .324$. No significant differences were found. Mothers of male children were then compared to mother of female children with regard to the age at which children first brought up the subject of genital differences between males and females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 73) = 1.45, p = .486$. Again, no statistically significant differences emerged. A third comparison of married mother of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females also yielded no statistically significant differences, $\chi^2 (6, N = 73) = 5.47, p = .485$. 
Table 3

Frequency of Sexuality Behaviors Reported by Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Daily to 2-6 times a week</th>
<th>Once a week to 1-3 times a month</th>
<th>Once a month or mess or not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often you have discussed male-female differences with your child?</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often you have discussed or answered your child’s questions about reproduction or birth?</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often your child has used taboo or obscene words?</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often your child has engaged in genital play?</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often your child has engaged in “sex play”?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduction and Birth

Chi-square analyses of the question “In the last 6 months or so, can you estimate how often you have discussed or answered your child’s questions about reproduction or birth?” were conducted to determine if differences existed. No statistically significant differences were found for any of the comparisons: married mothers versus single
mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 60) = 1.48, p = .477$; mothers of males versus mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 60) = .11, p = .946$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 60) = 4.26, p = .642$.

Privacy or Modesty

There were no questions asked regarding frequency of privacy or modesty behaviors exhibited in children. There is no data in this area with regard to child gender and maternal marital status.

Taboo or Obscene Words

To determine if differences existed between the three groups of mothers, chi-square analyses were conducted from the responses to the question “In the last 6 months or so, can you estimate how often your child has used taboo or obscene words?” No statistically significant differences were found between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 38) = 1.59, p = .452$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 38) = 1.26, p = .533$; or between married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 38) = 3.97, p = .681$.

Genital Play

Participants responded to the question “In the last 6 months or so, can you estimate how often your child has engaged in genital play?” Chi-square analyses compared responses of each group of mothers. Statistically significant results were not
found for any of the comparisons: married mothers vs. single mothers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 41) = .408, p = .816$; mothers of males vs. mothers of females, $\chi^2 (2, N = 41) = 2.58, p = .275$; or for married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (6, N = 41) = 4.66, p = .588$.

**Sexual Exploration Play**

Analysis could not be completed for the question “In the last 6 months or so, can you estimate how often your child had engaged in ‘sex play?’” Only 9 mothers responded and all responded in the same manner, once a month or less or not at all.

Although no statistically significant differences were found in terms of the frequency with which mothers observed behaviors involving male-female differences, reproduction and birth, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play, there are some interesting trends to note about the data. As shown in Table 3, the behaviors observed most infrequently were questions asked about reproduction and birth, use of taboo or obscene words, and sexual exploration play. In fact, sexual exploration play was observed least by mothers with all respondents answering in the same manner, once a month or less or not at all. Male-female differences was the topic that mothers reported they discussed most frequently. The number of mothers responding to each question varies. It appears as if the more sensitive the topic, the less responses were received.
Research Question 3

Question 3: Do child gender and maternal marital status impact maternal comfort level when responding to their child’s behaviors or questions in the areas of male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play?

Data were analyzed to determine if there were any differences between married and single mothers, mothers of males and mothers of females, and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males and single mothers of females, with regard to their comfort level in responding to their young children’s behavior or questions about male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual exploration play. Two sets of data were used to explore these questions. In section one of the questionnaire, mothers were asked to respond to a general question about the comfort they felt when responding to their children’s sexual behaviors. For these questions, mothers were asked to mark a six-point scale ranging from totally comfortable to totally uncomfortable. To reduce the number of cells with less than five occurrences for the chi-square analyses, these six choices were condensed to form two categories: comfortable (replacing totally comfortable, mostly comfortable, and tend to be comfortable) and uncomfortable (replacing tend to be uncomfortable, mostly uncomfortable, and totally uncomfortable). Table 4 summarizes mothers’ levels of comfort in responding to children’s sexuality behaviors. The results of these analyses will be presented first.
In section two of the questionnaire, mothers were asked specifically about their expected comfort level if one of 10 situations arose “today” with their preschooler.

Again, the original six-point scale was collapsed to a two-point scale of comfortable and uncomfortable for analyses. Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 show mother’s expected comfort level with hypothetical situations.

Table 4

**Percentage of Mothers’ Responses to Questions about Comfort Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Uncomfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable did you feel in discussing these differences between males and females with your child?</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable have you felt in discussing reproduction and birth with your child?</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable did you feel in talking with your child about privacy?</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when taboo or obscene words are used?</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when he/she engages in genital play?</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when he/she is engaging in “sex play” with another child?</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Male-Female Differences

When comparing married mothers’ and single mothers’ responses to the question “How comfortable did you feel in discussing the differences between males and females with your child?” married mothers felt statistically significantly more comfortable than single mothers, $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 4.88, p = .027$. In the comparison between mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = .03, p = .873$, and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males and single mothers of females, $\chi^2(3, N = 70) = 5.23, p = .155$, no statistically significant differences were found.

Reproduction and Birth

Analysis of the question “How comfortable have you felt in discussing reproduction and birth with your child?” was conducted to determine differences between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2(1, N = 63) = .30, p = .582$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2(1, N = 63) = 1.56, p = .212$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2(3, N = 63) = 2.23, p = .526$. No statistically significant differences were found for any of the comparisons.

Privacy or Modesty

Comparisons using chi-square analyses were conducted using responses to the question “How comfortable did you feel in talking with your child about privacy?” No
statistically significant differences were between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (1, N = 67) = .64, p = .422$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (1, N = 67) = .82, p = .364$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (3, N = 67) = 2.39, p = .496$.

Taboo or Obscene Words

When responding to the question “How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when taboo or obscene words are used?,” chi-square analyses indicated that married mothers were more statistically significantly comfortable than single mothers, $\chi^2 (1, N = 63) = 4.80, p = .029$. However, no statistically significant differences were found when comparing mothers of males and mother of females, $\chi^2 (1, N = 63) = .01, p = .906$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (3, N = 63) = 5.23, p = .156$.

Genital Play

To identify differences between groups in the area of genital play, responses to the question “How comfortable do you feel responding to your child when he/she engages in genital play?” were analyzed using chi-square analyses. No statistically significant differences were found between married mothers and single mothers, $\chi^2 (1, N = 44) = .210, p = .647$; mothers of males and mothers of females, $\chi^2 (1, N = 44) = 2.45 p = .118$; and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females, $\chi^2 (3, N = 44) = 2.87, p = .413$. 
No statistically significant differences were found for the question addressing sexual exploration play, “How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when he/she engages in ‘sex play’ with another child?” Chi-square analyses yielded the following results: married mothers versus single mothers, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 16) = 1.57, p = .210 \); mothers of males versus mothers of females, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 16) = .29, p = .590 \); and married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, versus single mothers of females, \( \chi^2 (3, N = 16) = 6.30, p = .098 \).

The comparisons examining Question 3 indicate that married mothers were more comfortable than single mothers in discussing male-female differences with their young child and in responding to their child’s use of taboo or obscene words. Although no other statistically significant differences were found, further review of the data indicate some interesting points (see Table 4).

Mothers tended to be uncomfortable when discussing all of the topics with their children. Moreover, mothers were most uncomfortable in discussing privacy or modesty and male-female differences. A large percentage of mothers also reported that discussing reproduction and birth with their children was an uncomfortable topic.

In section two of the questionnaire, comfort levels of mothers responding to specific experiences with their children were analyzed. For each question, chi-square analyses were used to determine differences between married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males, and single mothers of females. As indicated in Tables 6, 7, and 8 (Appendix C), no statistically significant differences were found.
Despite the lack of statistically significant findings, some interesting trends did emerge. For instance, married mothers reported expecting to feel more comfort in discussing where babies come from and how babies get inside a mother’s body with their male children than with their female children. These mothers also reported they would feel more uncomfortable if they were to discover their female children and a friend playing doctor in the bedroom without any clothes on than if they discovered their male children doing so. Married mothers also said they would feel more comfortable discussing why they close the door when they go to bed with their female children than with their male children.

Single mothers responded that they would feel more comfortable with their female children playing in the sprinklers with no clothes on than with their male children. But, just like married mothers, single mothers said they would be more uncomfortable if they were to discover their female children and a friend playing doctor with no clothes on than if they were to discover their male children doing so.

Table 5 summarizes all mothers’ expected comfort levels in dealing with 10 hypothetical situations. It is interesting to note that mothers reported being most comfortable with the question about male-female differences, and both questions about reproduction and birth. The least comfortable topics reported by mothers were a question about sexual exploration play, a question about walking in on “you and your partner” making love, and a question about using taboo language.
Table 5

*Summary of Mothers' Comfort Levels for Hypothetical Situations (Percentage)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Uncomfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you why boys have a penis and girls don't.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks where babies come from.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you to explain how babies get inside a mother's body.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child’s playing in the sprinkler with no clothes on.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you the meaning of a four-letter word he/she heard at school.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschooler uses a four-letter word at the dinner table.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschooler on the couch playing with his/her genitals.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child walks into your bedroom when you and your partner are making love.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Single mothers and married mothers with preschool children were compared to examine differences in their responses on a sexuality education questionnaire. Mothers were recruited from a health fair for families participating in a Head Start Program. Chi-square analyses were used to determine differences in responses to questions about male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play. Comparisons between mothers of males and mothers of females, between married mothers and single mothers, as well as between married mothers of males, married mothers of females, single mothers of males and single mothers of females were made for the six areas from the sexuality questionnaire: male-female differences, reproduction and birth, privacy or modesty, taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play.

Two statistically significant differences were found in the process of analyzing data. Married mothers were more comfortable in discussing male-female differences with their preschool children than single mothers. Married mothers were also more comfortable in responding to their preschool child when a taboo or obscene word was used by their child than were single mothers. Because of the number of statistical tests run, it would be expected that some would be statistically significant. This may be an explanation for these findings, which, therefore, need to be interpreted with caution.

Single mothers have been found to experience higher level of stress when compared to
married mothers (Olson & Banyard, 1993). A topic such as sexuality education may add to the stress of single mothers because of the sensitive nature of the topic. This could serve as another explanation for the two statistically significant differences found between single and married mothers. Hilton and colleagues (2001) found that single mothers reported less positive relationships with their 6- to 10-year-old children and felt less in control of their children's behavior than married mothers. This finding could also be a potential explanation for the statistically significant differences evident in the current study: if single mothers in this study had less positive relationships with their children, then responding to topics of a sexual nature might be more difficult. A positive relationship is the foundation for open communication. Likewise, if single mothers in this study felt less in control of their children's behavior, then they might feel that a discussion with their children regarding sexuality may be fruitless.

Although no other statistically significant differences were found between single and married mothers, mothers of boys and mothers of girls, and married mothers of boys, married mothers of girls, single mothers of boys, and single mothers of girls, it is important to discuss the trends that emerged: sensitive topics and comfort level, and behavior versus communication.

Comparisons were not made to determine the sensitivity between topics. Elrod and Rubin (1993) found that parents who planned to discuss topics with their children were more likely to discuss those that were least threatening. Based on the frequency of maternal response, it appears that the most sensitive topics in this study were use of taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play. Mothers tended to respond
less frequently to questions involving these topics. These particular topics seem to be
more taboo in our society than the other topics (reproduction and birth, male-female
differences, and privacy or modesty). The latter topics are a part of our everyday society.
Pregnancy is a topic associated primarily with excitement for the mother, father, and
family, and pregnant women are not typically shunned in public. Male-female differences
are also readily seen and experienced in our daily lives. Products are marketed toward
males or females, clothing is marketed toward males or females, restrooms are designated
for males and females. Similarly, privacy or modesty is readily apparent in our society.
Changing rooms have doors or curtains, restrooms have doors that lock, and clothing is
made to cover the personal parts of our bodies.

It is interesting to see that the response rates for the questions about taboo or
obscene words, genital play, and sexual exploration play were lower than the response
rates for the questions about male-female differences, reproduction and birth, and privacy
behavior. This trend was evident in the sections of the questionnaire involving the age
that child behaviors first appeared, frequency of a child’s behavior, and mother’s comfort
level in discussing these topics. There are two possible explanations for this. It may be
that parents are uncomfortable with taboo or obscene words, genital play, and sexual
exploration play because they do not frequently see these behaviors and may not know
how to respond or have practice in responding to these behaviors. It could also be that
parents do not “see” these behaviors by not acknowledging them, simply because they are
uncomfortable about responding to taboo or obscene words, genital play, or sexual
exploration play. For the section of the questionnaire involving hypothetical situations,
there appeared to be no differences in maternal response rate according to topic. It may be more threatening to parents to respond to questions dealing with real events versus responding to questions about hypothetical situations.

From the responses to the hypothetical situation section of the questionnaire, it was apparent that mothers tended to be more comfortable responding to their child’s sexual behavior than actually having to answer their child’s questions about sexuality. A passive role in the sexuality education of their children would be much easier to take when compared to an active role. A passive role might entail ignoring the sexual behavior or telling your child that the sexual behavior he or she is exhibiting is not appropriate. This would be far easier than an active role. An active role might entail wondering what the “right” response was before answering, feeling inhibitions about exposing their child to more information than they are ready to handle, applying your particular family values to the question before answering, and then actually saying words that may be uncomfortable (penis, vagina, etc.). An active role would take more time than a passive role because of the thought it takes to answer a child’s question. Another possible explanation for this trend may be that it is more difficult to ignore sexuality behaviors of children than it is to ignore a child’s questions about sexuality.

The lack of statistically significant findings is also interesting. Research comparing single-parent families with two-parent families frequently indicates a difference in income level (Angel & Woroby, 1988; Hilton et al., 2001). Single-parent families typically have lower income levels than intact families. Amato (2001) suggested that income level may be a determinant in the differences between children rather than
marital status. When SES was controlled, Kesner and McKenry (2001) found no differences in child functioning with regard to social skills, self-concept, assertiveness, externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, or conflict management in their comparisons of single-parent and two-parent families. This may serve as a potential explanation for the current research findings because there were no statistically significant differences in economic level of the families in this study.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the sample was small and not randomly selected. Comparisons were made using 30 single-mothers and 43 married mothers. Such a small sample may impact the results of the study. Secondly, the participants represented a homogeneous group. A large portion of the participants were Catholic and Hispanic. Thus, generalizing the results to the larger public is not possible because of the lack of a representative sample. Moreover, the response rate for each question varied and the sample size for some questions were analyzed using less than 10 responses. The limited responses to particular questions could have impacted the significance of the results. The number of statistical tests may also be a limitation of this study. Based on the number of comparisons, we would expect by chance that a few of the comparisons would be statistically significant. Therefore, the statistically significant results need to be interpreted with caution.

Honesty of parental response is also a potential limitation of this study. Because this is such a personal topic, parents may have underestimated the frequency of their
child’s sexual behaviors or overestimated their comfort levels as with the study by Davis et al. (1986). Although parents were assured that all responses were confidential, the potential for making your parenting skills look adequate or compensating for lack of a parenting partner in the home is always a possibility. Mothers’ accuracy in remembering what ages behaviors occurred could have also impacted the results of the study.

The data collection site was another limitation of the study. The researcher was located at the exit of the Health Fair. By the time parents were exiting, children had endured a number of health exams, including immunizations. Parents and children were ready to leave. Because of their readiness to leave, questionnaires may not have been filled out with care. Another location may have yielded different results.

The topic itself is also a limitation of the study. The data collection process was extended because of a lack of willingness to participate. Head Start programs were interested in the study, but would not commit to allowing a sensitive topic such as this to be examined in their program. The difficulties in completing this study are important to discuss. The number of Head Start Programs wanting to have information on this topic was inconsistent with the number of Head Start Programs willing to allow data to be collected. This may be related to the active versus passive role in sexuality education. Programs want the information for their parents, but are not willing to actively allow their parents to participate in determining the information they need.
Implications

A trend in the data, as shown in Table 4, indicates that mothers were generally uncomfortable in answering sexuality related questions of their preschool-aged children. Helping parents take an active role in the sexuality education of their children is an important implication of these trends. Discussing hypothetical situations with parents during a workshop to help parents come up with a script for various questions may make parents more comfortable when the question does arise. Allowing parents time to formulate answers that consider their personal beliefs, the age of their child, and the tone that they want to convey about the particular topic may prevent parents from sending a negative message about sexuality. Parents' negative reactions to sexual questions and behaviors may send a confusing message to children (Honig, 2000).

The lack of responses to questions involving highly sensitive sexual topics was another trend of the study which impacts parent training. Spending additional time with topics that are considered "most sensitive" may help parents feel more comfortable with them. If parents are able to respond to the range of children's questions about sexuality, mixed messages from parents could be minimized.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research needs to look at this important topic by utilizing a more representative, randomly selected sample. A representative sample including mothers, fathers, single parents, married parents and various ethnic and socio-economic groups
should be examined. Moreover, studying parents with varying ages of children is important because there are different questions and answers which are most appropriately dealt with at different ages in childhood.

Looking further at the trends that emerged with this data would add to the literature. Topic sensitivity is important in determining parents’ comfort levels when tailoring sexuality education courses for parents. Knowing certain sexuality topics may be more sensitive could impact training. Topics that are more sensitive could be discussed for a longer time or in ways that actively engage parents, giving them the words to use with their children as well as encouragement.

Studying the passive versus active role in parenting is also something that future research could examine. Parenting children in sexuality education as well should be examined to determine if parents have a more difficult time answering questions of children rather than responding to existing behaviors. Taking this one step further and determining active versus passive roles for programs working with parents would be an interesting research topic.

Because more and more children are in child care arrangements other than with their immediate parent, future research should consider school teachers, kin and neighbor care when looking at sexuality education. These people in the lives of children should also have the knowledge and comfort to answer sexuality questions of children and respond to sexuality behaviors of children.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Appendix A. Preschool Parent Questionnaire
PRESchool Parent Questionnaire

Thank you for your help with this study on parental sex education practices. Remember, we would like you to fill out this questionnaire without consultation from any one.

1. Now, we would like you to answer some questions based upon your experiences with your preschool child. Please answer all questions as best as your memory will allow.

Children differ somewhat in the age at which they begin to notice differences between males and females.

| 1. Is your child able to distinguish between males and females? | ___yes ___no ___not sure |
| 2. If so, on what basis does your child make the distinction? | ___hair length ___clothing ___genitalia ___others (list): |
| (check all that apply) | |
| 3. About what age did your child first bring up the subject of genital differences between males and females? | ___1 to 1 ½ years ___1 ½ to 2 years ___2 to 2 ½ years ___2 ½ to 3 years ___3 to 3 ½ years ___3 ½ to 4 years ___4 to 4 ½ years ___4 ½ to 5 years |
| 4. In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often you have discussed male-female differences with your child? | ___daily ___2 - 6 times a week ___once a week ___2-3 times a month ___once a month or less ___not at all |
5. How comfortable did you feel in discussing the differences between males and females with your child?

- totally comfortable
- mostly comfortable
- tend to be comfortable
- tend to be uncomfortable
- mostly uncomfortable
- totally uncomfortable

As with body differences, children also vary in the age at which they start asking where babies come from.

6. Has your child ever asked you about where babies come from?

- yes
- no (if no, skip to 10)
- not sure

7. About what age were the questions asked?

- 1 to 1 ½ years
- 1 ½ to 2 years
- 2 to 2 ½ years
- 2 ½ to 3 years
- 3 to 3 ½ years
- 3 ½ to 4 years
- 4 to 4 ½ years
- 4 ½ to 5 years

8. In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often you have discussed or answered your child’s questions about reproduction and birth?

- daily
- 2 – 6 times a week
- once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- once a month or less
- not at all

9. How comfortable have you felt in discussing reproduction and birth with your child?

- totally comfortable
- mostly comfortable
- tend to be comfortable
- tend to be uncomfortable
- mostly uncomfortable
- totally uncomfortable
Some children like to run around the house without their clothes on.

10. Does or has your child ever done this?  
   ___yes  
   ___no

11. Some children prefer to toilet and undress in private.  
   Does your child ever do this?  
   ___yes  
   ___no (if no, skip to 13)  
   ___not sure

12. At what age did this privacy behavior first appear?  
   ___1 to 1 ½ years  
   ___1 ½ to 2 years  
   ___2 to 2 ½ years  
   ___2 ½ to 3 years  
   ___3 to 3 ½ years  
   ___3 ½ to 4 years  
   ___4 to 4 ½ years  
   ___4 ½ to 5 years

13. Have you attempted to teach your child about privacy?  
   ___yes  
   ___no (if no, skip to 21)

14. How comfortable did you feel in talking with your child about privacy?  
   ___totally comfortable  
   ___mostly comfortable  
   ___tend to be comfortable  
   ___tend to be uncomfortable  
   ___mostly uncomfortable  
   ___totally uncomfortable

15–20. Do you allow your child to:

   take a bath with siblings?  
   ___yes  
   ___no  
   ___doesn’t apply

   use the toilet with siblings present?  
   ___yes  
   ___no  
   ___doesn’t apply

   use the toilet with friends present?  
   ___yes  
   ___no

   see you undressed?  
   ___yes  
   ___no

   take baths/showers with you?  
   ___yes  
   ___no

   see you use the toilet?  
   ___yes  
   ___no
Children sometimes use “taboo” or “obscene” words and expressions they have heard from other children or adults.

21. Has your child ever use so-called taboo or obscene words?  
   ___yes  
   ___no (if no, skip to 25)  
   ___not sure

22. At about what age did your child first begin to use this type of words?  
   ___1 to 1 ½ years  
   ___1 ½ to 2 years  
   ___2 to 2 ½ years  
   ___2 ½ to 3 years  
   ___3 to 3 ½ years  
   ___3 ½ to 4 years  
   ___4 to 4 ½ years  
   ___4 ½ to 5 years

23. Under what circumstances is your child most likely to use these words (i.e., out of anger, with friends, to get attention, etc.)?

24. In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often your child has used taboo or obscene words?  
   ___daily  
   ___2 – 6 times a week  
   ___once a week  
   ___2-3 times a month  
   ___once a month or less  
   ___not at all

25. How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when taboo or obscene words are used?  
   ___totally comfortable  
   ___mostly comfortable  
   ___tend to be comfortable  
   ___tend to be uncomfortable  
   ___mostly uncomfortable  
   ___totally uncomfortable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Have you ever noticed your child playing with his or her genitals?</td>
<td><em>yes</em> _no (if no, skip to 30) _not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. At about what age did your child first engage in this behavior?</td>
<td><em>1 to 1 ½ years</em> <em>1 ½ to 2 years</em> <em>2 to 2 ½ years</em> <em>2 ½ to 3 years</em> <em>3 to 3 ½ years</em> <em>3 ½ to 4 years</em> <em>4 to 4 ½ years</em> <em>4 ½ to 5 years</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often your child has engaged in genital play?</td>
<td><em>daily</em> <em>2 – 6 times a week</em> <em>once a week</em> <em>2-3 times a month</em> <em>once a month or less</em> <em>not at all</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when he/she engage is genital play?</td>
<td><em>totally comfortable</em> <em>mostly comfortable</em> <em>tend to be comfortable</em> <em>tend to be uncomfortable</em> <em>mostly uncomfortable</em> <em>totally uncomfortable</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Has your child ever engaged in “sex play” with another child?</td>
<td><em>yes</em> _no (if no, skip to 35) _not sure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children sometimes engage in “sex play” with other children, such as exploring each other’s bodies, playing doctor, etc.
31. At about what age did your child begin engaging in “sex play”? 

- 1 to 1½ years
- 1½ to 2 years
- 2 to 2½ years
- 2½ to 3 years
- 3 to 3½ years
- 3½ to 4 years
- 4 to 4½ years
- 4½ to 5 years

32. Under what circumstances is this behavior most likely to occur?

33. In the last six months or so, can you estimate how often your child has engaged in “sex play”? 

- daily
- 2 – 6 times a week
- once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- once a month or less
- not at all

34. How comfortable do you feel in responding to your child when he/she is engaging in “sex play” with another child? 

- totally comfortable
- mostly comfortable
- tend to be comfortable
- tend to be uncomfortable
- mostly uncomfortable
- totally uncomfortable
II. In this section, please indicate how comfortable you would feel today if you were to experience each of the following situations with your preschool child. Indicate how comfortable you would feel with each behavior by circling one of the six possible responses on the scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel:</th>
<th>Totally Comfortable</th>
<th>Mostly comfortable</th>
<th>Tend to be comfortable</th>
<th>Tend to be uncomfortable</th>
<th>Mostly uncomfortable</th>
<th>Totally uncomfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Your preschool child asks you why boys have a penis and girls don't.</td>
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<td>36. Your preschool child asks where babies come from.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Your preschool child asks you to explain how babies get inside a mother's body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Your preschool child's playing in the sprinklers with no clothes on.</td>
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<td>39. Your preschool child asks you the meaning of a four-letter word at the dinner table.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Your preschooler uses a four-letter word at the dinner table.</td>
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<td>41. You discover your preschooler on the couch playing with his/her genitals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>42. You discover your preschool child and a friend playing “doctor” in the bedroom without any clothes on.</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. Your preschool child asks you why you close the door when you and your spouse go to bed.</td>
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<td>44. Your preschool child walks into your bedroom when you and your spouse are making love.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
III. Parents very greatly in the number and nature of topics which they anticipate discussing with their children. Below is a list of topics which parent may or may not choose to discuss with their children as they grow up.

Please think of your preschool child as she/he is growing up and indicate:
1) whether you expect to initiate discussion about this topic
2) the age at which you expect to initiate discussion
3) how comfortable you feel discussing this topic

If you don’t expect to initiate discussion of a topic, or expect your spouse to assume this responsibility, then ignore sections (2) and (3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Expect to discuss</th>
<th>Age of child when you expect to discuss this topic</th>
<th>Totally comfortable</th>
<th>Mostly comfortable</th>
<th>Tend to be uncomfortable</th>
<th>Mostly uncomfortable</th>
<th>Totally uncomfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45. Bodily differences between sexes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>46. Birth</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>47. Reproduction</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>48. Obscene words</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>49. Menstruation</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>50. Nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51. Masturbation</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52. Petting</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>53. Sexual intercourse</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>54. Contraception</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>55. Venereal disease</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>56. Rape / sexual offenses</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>57. Abortion</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>58. Homosexuality</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>59. Morals in sexual behavior</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. AIDS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. Other sexually transmitted diseases</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IV. You have finished the major part of this questionnaire. However, we need to know something about your background. Please respond to each of the following items:

62. Age
   _18-21
   _22-24
   _25-29
   _30-34
   _35-39
   _40 and over

63. Education (last level completed)
   _elementary school (1-6)
   _junior high (7-9)
   _some high school
   _high school (10-12)
   _some college
   _4-year college graduate
   _advanced degree

64. What is your racial or ethnic identity?
   _African American
   _Caucasian (white)
   _Native American
   _Hispanic
   _Asian
   _Other: please describe:

65. What is your current religious affiliation?
   _Catholic
   _Jewish
   _Protestant
   _LDS
   _Other: please describe

66. How often do you attend church?
   _once a week
   _once or twice a month
   _several times a year
   _never
67. What is your occupation?

68. How many hours per week are you currently employed outside the home?  
   - 0
   - 1-9
   - 10-20
   - 21-30
   - 31-40
   - over 40

69. What is your current marital status?  
   - married and living with spouse
   - separated or divorced
   - not married, but living with partner
   - never married

70. Please fill in the ages and genders of your children. Then circle the child in preschool and fill in that child’s birth date.  

   Age  Gender

   month  date  year

Thank you for your cooperation. A summary of responses will be sent if you filled out your address on the consent form.
CUESTIONARIO PARA PADRES DE NIÑOS PRE-ESCOLARES

Gracias por su participación en este estudio sobre la educación sexual que le brindan los padres a sus hijos e hijas. Al completar este cuestionario, por favor recuerde que preferimos que lo haga sin consultar con nadie.

I. Ahora, deseamos que conteste algunas preguntas, basándose en sus experiencias con su niño(a) de edad pre-escolar. Por favor conteste según su memoria se lo permita.

Los niños difieren entre sí en la edad en que comienzan a notar los diferencias entre barones y hembras.

1. ¿Tiene su niño(a) la habilidad de distinguir entre varones y hembras?
   _si
   _no (vaya a la pregunta 4)
   _no estoy seguro(a)

2. ¿Si su niño(a) tiene esta habilidad, en qué se basa para hacer la distinción?
   _largo del cabello
   _ropa
   _genitales
   _otros (indique):
   (marque todas las opciones que apliquen)

3. ¿Más o menos a qué edad fue que su hijo(a) mencionó por primera vez el tema de las diferencias genitales entre barones y hembras?
   _1 to 1 ½ años
   _1 ½ to 2 años
   _2 to 2 ½ años
   _2 ½ to 3 años
   _3 to 3 ½ años
   _3 ½ to 4 años
   _4 to 4 ½ años
   _4 ½ to 5 años

4. Por favor indique su mayor estimado de cuántas veces ha discutido las diferencias entre varones y hembras con su hijo(a) en los últimos seis meses.
   _a diario
   _2 – 6 veces or semana
   _una vez pr semana
   _2-3 veces al mes
   _una vez al mes o menos
   _nunca
5. ¿Cuán cómodo se sintió usted al discutir con su hijo(a) las diferencias entre varones y hembras? 

- totalmente cómodo
- bastante cómodo
- un poco cómodo
- un poco incómodo
- bastante incómodo
- totalmente incómodo

Al igual que con las diferencias físicas, los niños difieren en la edad en que empiezan a preguntar de dónde vienen los bebés.

6. ¿Le ha preguntado su hijo(a) alguna vez dónde vienen los bebés? 

- sí
- no (vaya a la pregunta 10)
- no estoy seguro(a)

7. ¿Más o menos a qué edad le preguntó? 

- 1 a 1 ½ años
- 1 ½ a 2 años
- 2 a 2 ½ años
- 2 ½ a 3 años
- 3 a 3 ½ años
- 3 ½ a 4 años
- 4 a 4 ½ años
- 4 ½ a 5 años

8. Por favor indique su mayor estimado do cuán a menudo contestado preguntas de su hijo(a) o discutido el tema de la reproducción o el nacimiento. 

- a diario
- 2 - 6 veces or semana
- una vez pr semana
- 2-3 veces al mes
- una vez al mes o menos
- nunca

9. ¿Cuán cómodo se ha sentido al discutir los temas de la reproducción y el nacimiento co su hijo(a)?

- totalmente cómodo
- bastante cómodo
- un poco cómodo
- un poco incómodo
- bastante incómodo
- totalmente incómodo
Algunos niños disfrutan de correr por la casa sin ropa.

10. ¿Ha hecho esto su hijo(a) alguna vez? __sí  __no

11. Algunos niños prefieren ir al baño o desvestirse en privado. ¿Hace esto su hijo(a)? __sí  __no (vaya a la pregunta 13)  __no estoy seguro(a)

12. ¿A qué edad fue que por primera vez su hijo(a) requirió privacidad? __1 to 1 ½ años __1 ½ to 2 años __2 to 2 ½ años __2 ½ to 3 años __3 to 3 ½ años __3 ½ to 4 años __4 to 4 ½ años __4 ½ to 5 años

13. ¿Ha tratado usted de enseñarle a su hijo(a) sobre la privacidad? __sí  __no (vaya a la pregunta 21)

14. ¿Cuán cómodo se sintió al hablar con su hijo(a) sobre la privacidad? __totalmente cómodo __bastante cómodo __un poco cómodo __un poco incómodo __bastante incómodo __totalmente incómodo

15 – 20. ¿Le permite usted a su hijo(a) que:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¿Le permite usted a su hijo(a) que:</th>
<th>__sí</th>
<th>__no</th>
<th>__no aplica</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>se bañe con sus hermanito(a)s?</td>
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<tr>
<td>use el retrete en presencia de sus hermano(a)s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>use el retrete en presencia de sus amigos?</td>
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<tr>
<td>la vea a usted sin ropa?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>se bañe con usted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>La vea a usted usar el retrete?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Los niños a veces usan palabras o expresiones obscenas e indeseables que han escuchado de otros niños o adultos.

21. ¿Ha usado su hijo(a) dichas palabras alguna vez?  
   _si_  
   _no (vaya a la pregunta 25)  
   _no estoy seguro(a)_

22. ¿Más o menos a qué edad comenzó su hijo(a) a usar esa clase de palabras?  
   _1 to 1 ½ años_  
   _1 ½ to 2 años_  
   _2 to 2 ½ años_  
   _2 ½ to 3 años_  
   _3 to 3 ½ años_  
   _3 ½ to 4 años_  
   _4 to 4 ½ años_  
   _4 ½ to 5 años_

23. ¿Bajo cuáles circunstancias es posible que su hijo(a) use esas palabras (por ejemplo, en un momento de coraje, con sus amigos, para llamar la atención, etc.)?

24. Por favor indique su mejor estimado de la frecuencia con que su hijo(a) ha usado palabras obscenas en los últimos seis meses.  
   _a diario_  
   _2 – 6 veces or semana_  
   _una vez pr semana_  
   _2-3 veces al mes_  
   _una vez al mes o menos_  
   _nunca_

25. ¿Cuán cómodo se siente usted en responder a su hijo(a) cuando ha empleado palabras obscenas?  
   _totalmente cómodo_  
   _bastante cómodo_  
   _un poco cómodo_  
   _un poco incómodo_  
   _bastante incómodo_  
   _totalmente incómodo_
Los niños a veces juegan con sus genitales (partes íntimas).

| 26. ¿Ha notado alguna vez si su hijo(a) juega con sus genitales? | __si  
| | __no (vaya a la pregunta 30)  
| | __no estoy seguro(a)  

| 27. ¿Más o menos a qué edad hizo esto su hijo(a) por primera vez? | __1 to 1 ½ años  
| | __1 ½ to 2 años  
| | __2 to 2 ½ años  
| | __2 ½ to 3 años  
| | __3 to 3 ½ años  
| | __3 ½ to 4 años  
| | __4 to 4 ½ años  
| | __4 ½ to 5 años  

| 28. Por favor indique su mayor estimado de la frecuencia con que su hijo(a) juega con sus genitales. | __a diario  
| | __2 - 6 veces or semana  
| | __una vez pr semana  
| | __2-3 veces al mes  
| | __una vez al mes o menos  
| | __nunca  

| 29. ¿Cuán cómodo se siente usted al responder a su hijo(a) cuando él/ella juega con sus genitales? | __totalmente cómodo  
| | __bastante cómodo  
| | __un poco cómodo  
| | __un poco incómodo  
| | __bastante incómodo  
| | __totalmente incómodo  

Los niños a veces tienen “juegos sexuales” con otros niños, tales como explorar sus cuerpos, jugar al doctor, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pregunta</th>
<th>Opciones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. ¿Ha tenido su hijo(a) “juegos sexuales” con otro(a) niño(a) alguna vez?</td>
<td><em>sí</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. ¿Más o menos a qué edad comenzó su hijo(a) a tener “juegos sexuales”?</td>
<td><em>1 to 1 ½ años</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. ¿Bajo qué circunstancias es más probable que su hijo(a) haga esto?</td>
<td><em>a diario</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Por favor indique su mayor destino de la frecuencia con que su hijo(a) ha tenido “juegos sexuales” en los últimos seis meses.</td>
<td><em>totalmente cómodo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. ¿Cuán cómodo se siente usted al responder a su hijo(a) cuando él/ella tiene “juegos sexuales” con otro(a) niño(a)?</td>
<td><em>totalmente cómodo</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. En esta sección, por favor indique cuán cómodo se sentiría hoy si se encontrara en cada una de estas situaciones con su hijo(a) pre-escolar, circulando un número en las escala del uno al seis.

Me sentiría:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totalmente cómodo</th>
<th>Bastante cómodo</th>
<th>Un poco cómodo</th>
<th>Un poco incómodo</th>
<th>Bastante incómodo</th>
<th>Totalmente incómodo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Su hijo(a) pre-escolar le pregunta por qué los niños tienen penes y las niñas no.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Su hijo(a) le pregunta de dónde vienen los bebés.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Su hijo(a) le pide que le explique cómo es que los bebés llegan adentro de la mamá.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Su hijo(a) corre sin ropa entre los rociadores del jardín.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. Su hijo(a) le pregunta el significado de una palabra que escuchó en la escuela.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Su niño(a) pre-escolar utiliza una palabra obscena en la mesa.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>41. Descubre a su hijo(a) jugando con sus genitales en el sofá.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>42. Descubre a su hijo(a) pre-escolar y un amigo(a) mientras juegan “al doctor” desnudos en el cuarto.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. Su hijo(a) le pregunta por qué usted cierra la puerta cuando se va a la cama con su pareja.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Su hijo(a) pre-escolar entra a su cuarto mientras usted y su cónyuge hacen el amor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
III. Los padres difieren bastante en el número y tipo de temas que planean discutir con sus hijos. La siguiente es una lista de temas que los padres pueden escoger discutir con sus hijos según estos crecen.

Por favor indique sus planes para su hijo(a) pre-escolar según vaya madurando y déjenos saber si:

1) planea iniciar un a discusión sobre este tema
2) la edad a la cual espera tener dicha conversación
3) cuán cómodo se siente al hablar de ese tema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Planea discutir</th>
<th>(2) Edad de su hijo(a) en la que usted espera discutir el tema</th>
<th>(3) Totalmente cómodo</th>
<th>Bastante cómodo</th>
<th>Un poco cómodo</th>
<th>Un poco incómodo</th>
<th>Bastante incómodo</th>
<th>Totalmente incómodo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45. Diferencias físicas entre los sexos</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>46. Nacimiento</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>47. Reproducción</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>48. Palabras obscenas</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>49. Menstruación</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>50. Emisiones nocturnas (sueños mojados)</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>51. Masturbación</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>52. Caricias</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>53. Coito (relaciones sexuales)</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. Control de la natalidad</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>55. Enfermedades venéreas</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>56. Violación u otras ofensas sexuales</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>57. Aborts</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>58. Homosexualidad</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. La moral en la conducta sexual</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>60. SIDA</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. Otras enfermedades de trasmision sexual</td>
<td>si no</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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</table>
IV. Usted ha completado la mayor parte de este cuestionario. Ahora necesitamos saber un poco sobre usted. Por favor indique lo siguiente:

### 62. Edad

- 18-21
- 22-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40 o mayor

### 63. Educación (grado más reciente)

- escuela primaria (1-6)
- escuela intermedia (7-9)
- algunos estudios secundarios
- escuela secundaria (10-12)
- algunos estudios universitarios
- graduado de bachiller (4 años de universidad)
- grado avanzado (escuela graduada)

### 64. ¿Cuál es su clasificación racial o cultural?

- Afro-Americano (negro)
- Anglo-Sajón (blanco)
- Indio Norteamericano
- Hispano
- Asiático
- Otra: por favor indique:

### 65. ¿Cuál es su afiliación religiosa actual?

- Católico
- Judío
- Protestante
- Santo de los últimos días (Mormón)
- Otra: por favor indique:

### 66. ¿Con cuánta frecuencia asiste a la iglesia?

- una vez por semana
- una o dos veces al mes
- varias veces al año
- nunca
67. ¿Cuál es su oficio?

68. ¿Cuántas horas a la semana trabaja usted fuera de la casa?

69. ¿Cuál es su estado civil al presente?

70. Por favor indique las edades y sexos de sus niños. Luego circule las de su hijo(a) pre-escolar y indique la fecha de nacimiento de este(a).

Gracias por su cooperación. Un resumen de las respuestas le será enviado si incluyó su dirección en la hoja de consentimiento.
Appendix B. Consent Letter
Dear Parents,

Preschool parents hold a wide range of ideas about the sex education of their children. Recently, we have had parents ask a number of questions about how to respond to the sexual questions, which their children ask. Therefore, we are conducting a study to learn something about parents’ attitudes and experiences in dealing with preschool children’s sexual questions and behaviors. We feel this information is extremely important, and will enable us to design and provide more appropriate parent programs addressing this topic of young children’s sex education.

We are asking you to participate in this study by filling out the attached questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take about 15 minutes of your time. Your participation is completely voluntary, and all of your responses will remain strictly anonymous. Because you will be returning the questionnaire directly to us, there is no way that any information can be traced back to you personally. All data will be reported as group results, not as individual responses. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so without penalty. This project has been approved by the Utah State University Institutional Review Board.

In completing this questionnaire, please answer every question honestly and to the best of your recollection. Some of the questions may address sensitive issues for you, and may be difficult to answer. However, there are no right or wrong responses to any question, and your opinions and experiences are very important for us to know about. You can contribute to this study if you take care to report your own experiences and feelings accurately. Please feel free to make comments on the questionnaire whenever you feel they’re needed to clarify your response.
In order to study mothers’ roles in the sex education of young children, it is crucial to obtain independent information from the mother only. For this reason, we request that you complete the questionnaire without input from others. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us. We thank you in advance for your participation in this important study.

Sincerely,

Ginger S. Sandweg
Graduate Student
Family and Human Development

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Director,
Adele and Dale Young Child Development Laboratory
(435) 797-1544, (435) 797-1532

I, _____________________________ (mother), agree to fill out a questionnaire about maternal sex education practices which will take about 15 minutes. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, and all of the data will be kept strictly confidential.

Signature _____________________________

Please send the results of this study to me:

Name: __________________________________

Address: __________________________________
Queridos Padres,

Padres de niños preescolares sostienen una gran variedad de ideas sobre la educación sexual de sus hijo/a(s). Recientemente hemos pedido que padres preguntaran algunas preguntas de cómo responder a las preguntas sexuales que les preguntan sus hijo/a(s). Por lo tanto, estamos conduciendo un estudio para aprender algo de las actitudes y experiencias de los padres en tratando con las preguntas y comportamiento sobre la sexualidad de sus hijo/a(s) preescolares. Sentimos que esta información es sumamente importante, y nos permitirá a diseñar y proporcionar más programas adecuados para los padres dirigiéndose al tema de la educación sexual de niños pequeños.

Le estamos pidiendo que participe en esta estudio llenando el cuestionario adjunto. Se llevará como 15 minutos de su tiempo para completar el cuestionario. Su participación es completamente voluntaria, y todas sus respuestas permanecerán anónimas. Como usted estará regresando el cuestionario directamente a nosotros, no habrá forma ni ninguna huella de que ninguna información se le regrese a usted personalmente. Toda la información será reportada como un resultado de grupo, y no de respuestas individuales. Si en cualquier momento usted desea retirarse de este estudio, podrá hacerlo libremente sin ninguna penalidad. Este proyecto ha sido aprobado por el Comité de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad del Estado de Utah.

En completar este cuestionario, por favor responda cada pregunta honestamente y al mejor de su recolección. Algunas de las preguntas pueden tratar aspectos delicados para usted, y pueden ser difíciles para contestar. Por lo tanto no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas para ninguna pregunta, y sus opiniones y experiencias son muy importantes y él dejarnos saber respecto a ellas. Usted puede contribuir a este estudio si toma su tiempo y reporta sus propias experiencias y sentimientos correctamente.
De manera para estudiar el papel de las madres en la educación sexual de niño/a(s) jóvenes, es crucial obtener información independiente de solamente las madres. Por esta razón, le pedimos que complete el cuestionario sin ayuda de alguien más. Si usted tiene preguntas respecto a este cuestionario, por favor no deje de comunicarse con nosotros. Le damos las gracias ante mano pr su participación en este estudio importante.

Sinceramente,

Ginger S. Sandweg
Licenciada
Desarrollo Humano y Familia

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph.D.
Profesora Socia y Directora
Adlel Y Dale Young Laboratorio de Desarrollo de Ninos Pwquenos
(435) 797-1544, (435) 797-1532

Yo, ____________________________ (madre), estoy de acuerdo a llenar un cuestionario sobre practica de educación sexual maternal que tomará como 15 minutos para llenar. Y comprendo que soy libre para retirarme de este estudio en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad, y que toda la información se mantendrá sumamente confidencial.

Firma______________________________

Por favor mandarmelo despues de leerlo para esta dirección:

Nombre:__________________________________________

Dirección:________________________________________
Appendix C. Tables
Table 6

Percent (Frequency) of Mothers’ Responses to Hypothetical Situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you why boys have a penis and girls don’t.</td>
<td>Comfortable 16.7% (7)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 83.3% (35)</td>
<td>Comfortable 22.2% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks where babies come from.</td>
<td>Comfortable 19.5% (8)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 80.5% (33)</td>
<td>Comfortable 20.0% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you to explain how babies get inside a mother’s body.</td>
<td>Comfortable 17.1% (7)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 82.9% (34)</td>
<td>Comfortable 18.5% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child’s playing in the sprinklers with no clothes on.</td>
<td>Comfortable 50.0% (18)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 50.0% (18)</td>
<td>Comfortable 44.0% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you the meaning of a four-letter word he/she heard at school.</td>
<td>Comfortable 26.3% (10)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 73.7% (28)</td>
<td>Comfortable 14.8% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued)

**Percent (Frequency) of Mothers’ Responses to Hypothetical Situations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your preschooler uses a four-letter word at the dinner table.</td>
<td>Comfortable 71.1% Uncomfortable 28.9%</td>
<td>Comfortable 53.8% Uncomfortable 46.2%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 64) = 1.99, p = .159$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschooler on the couch playing with his/her genitals.</td>
<td>Comfortable 58.3% Uncomfortable 41.7%</td>
<td>Comfortable 63% Uncomfortable 37%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 63) = .14, p = .710$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschool child and a friend playing “doctor” in the bedroom without any clothes on.</td>
<td>Comfortable 82.4% Uncomfortable 17.6%</td>
<td>Comfortable 72.0% Uncomfortable 28.0%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 59) = .90, p = .343$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(28)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you why you close the door when you and your spouse go to bed.</td>
<td>Comfortable 35.1% Uncomfortable 64.9%</td>
<td>Comfortable 23.1% Uncomfortable 76.9%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 63) = 1.05, p = .305$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child walks into your bedroom when you and your spouse are making love.</td>
<td>Comfortable 83.8% Uncomfortable 16.2%</td>
<td>Comfortable 66.7% Uncomfortable 33.3%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 61) = 2.41, p = .120$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square values are calculated with degrees of freedom (1) and sample sizes ranging from 61 to 64.
### Table 7

**Percent (Frequency) of Mothers’ Responses to Hypothetical Situations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mothers of Males</th>
<th>Mothers of Females</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your preschool child asks you why boys have a penis and girls don’t.</strong></td>
<td>Comfortable 10.5%</td>
<td>Comfortable 15.6%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 70) = .403, p = .526$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 89.5%</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 84.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(4) (34)</em></td>
<td><em>(5) (27)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your preschool child asks where babies come from.</strong></td>
<td>Comfortable 17.9%</td>
<td>Comfortable 9.7%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 70) = .965, p = .326$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 82.1%</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 90.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(7) (32)</em></td>
<td><em>(3) (28)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your preschool child asks you to explain how babies get inside a mother’s body.</strong></td>
<td>Comfortable 21.6%</td>
<td>Comfortable 12.9%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 68) = .88, p = .348$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 74.8%</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 87.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(8) (29)</em></td>
<td><em>(4) (27)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your preschool child’s playing in the sprinklers with no clothes on.</strong></td>
<td>Comfortable 44.1%</td>
<td>Comfortable 51.9%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 61) = .36, p = .548$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 55.9%</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 48.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(15) (19)</em></td>
<td><em>(14) (13)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your preschool child asks you the meaning of a four-letter word he/she heard at school.</strong></td>
<td>Comfortable 19.4%</td>
<td>Comfortable 24.1%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 65) = .21, p = .647$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 80.6%</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 75.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(7) (29)</em></td>
<td><em>(7) (22)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your preschooler uses a four-letter word at the dinner table.</strong></td>
<td>Comfortable 68.6%</td>
<td>Comfortable 58.6%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 64) = .68, p = .409$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 31.4%</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 41.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(24) (11)</em></td>
<td><em>(17) (12)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Mothers of Males</td>
<td>Mothers of Females</td>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschooler on the couch playing with his/her genitals.</td>
<td>Comfortable 64.7% Uncomfortable 35.3%</td>
<td>Comfortable 55.2% Uncomfortable 44.8%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 63) = .59, p = .441$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschool child and a friend playing “doctor” in the</td>
<td>Comfortable 87.1% Uncomfortable 12.9%</td>
<td>Comfortable 67.9% Uncomfortable 32.18%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 59) = 3.17, p = .075$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedroom without any clothes on.</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you why you close the door when you and your</td>
<td>Comfortable 21.3% Uncomfortable 72.7%</td>
<td>Comfortable 33.3% Uncomfortable 66.7%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 63) = .27, p = .601$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spouse go to bed.</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child walks into your bedroom when you and your spouse</td>
<td>Comfortable 81.3% Uncomfortable 18.8%</td>
<td>Comfortable 72.4% Uncomfortable 27.6%</td>
<td>$\chi^2 (1, N = 61) = .67, p = .412$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are making love.</td>
<td>(261)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

Percent (Frequency) of Mothers' Responses to Hypothetical Situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you why boys have a penis and girls don’t.</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 (3, N = 70) =$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.63, $p = .652$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks where babies come from.</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 (3, N = 70) =$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.16, $p = .160$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you to explain how babies get inside a mother's body.</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 (3, N = 68) =$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.74, $p = .629$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued)

**Percent (Frequency) of Mothers’ Responses to Hypothetical Situations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child’s playing in the sprinklers with no clothes on.</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.6% (10)</td>
<td>44.4% (8)</td>
<td>31.3% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.4% (8)</td>
<td>55.6% (10)</td>
<td>68.8% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you the meaning of a four-letter word he/she heard at school.</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.2% (4)</td>
<td>30.0% (6)</td>
<td>16.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77.8% (14)</td>
<td>70.0% (14)</td>
<td>83.3% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschooler uses a four-letter word at the dinner table.</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.9% (15)</td>
<td>63.2% (12)</td>
<td>56.3% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.1% (4)</td>
<td>38.6% (7)</td>
<td>43.8% (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued)

**Percent (Frequency) of Mothers' Responses to Hypothetical Situations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschooler on the couch playing with his/her genitals.</td>
<td>Comfortable 64.7% (11)</td>
<td>Comfortable 52.6% (9)</td>
<td>( \chi^2 (3, N = 63) = .74, p = .863 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncomfortable 35.3% (6)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 47.4% (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You discover your preschool child and a friend playing “doctor” in the</td>
<td>Comfortable 93.8% (15)</td>
<td>Comfortable 72.2% (13)</td>
<td>( \chi^2 (3, N = 59) = 4.58, p = 2.09 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedroom without any clothes on.</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 6.3% (1)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 27.8% (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child asks you why you close the door when you and your</td>
<td>Comfortable 29.4% (5)</td>
<td>Comfortable 40.0% (8)</td>
<td>( \chi^2 (3, N = 63) = 1.62, p = .656 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spouse go to bed.</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 70.6% (12)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable 60.0% (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square for Married Mothers: \( \chi^2 (3, N = 63) = .74, p = .863 \)
Chi-Square for Single Mothers: \( \chi^2 (3, N = 59) = 4.58, p = 2.09 \)
Chi-Square for Married Mothers: \( \chi^2 (3, N = 63) = 1.62, p = .656 \)
Chi-Square for Single Mothers: \( \chi^2 (3, N = 63) = 1.62, p = .656 \)
### Table 8 (continued)

**Percent (Frequency) of Mothers’ Responses to Hypothetical Situations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your preschool child walks into your bedroom when you and your spouse are making love.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>83.3% (15)</td>
<td>84.2% (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>16.7% (3)</td>
<td>15.4% (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 (3, N = 61) = 5.11, p = .164$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>