



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Teaching Kids About Sex – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, thanking you so much for joining us today. As a parent, your child has probably already started their school year, and you know that what happens on the school yard and especially what happens with the interaction with your kids' friends can really have a huge impact on your child. It's important for parents to be leaders in guiding your children through the different stages of development and that certain conversations can be a little more nerve-wracking to have with them, depending on the topic. On today's broadcast and again tomorrow, we're going to hear a program that was recorded several years ago, but is still incredibly relevant today. We'll be diving into how and when parents should teach their children about, well, the birds and the bees, as we used to call it. Now, due to the nature of the content being discussed, today's program is not intended for younger listeners. Parental discretion definitely advised.

It's important to consider that today's children are literally bombarded with so many different pieces of information, and that bombarding starts at even younger ages for kids. So it's vitally important for parents to appropriately manage the information their child has been receiving and not to leave them seeking for answers on their own. Unfortunately, many moms and dads avoid the all-important conversation altogether, and they wind up leaving it to the school to educate their children about the facts of life. So if this is an area that you could use some encouragement in, then be sure to pay close attention to today's program.

Joining Dr. Dobson on today's broadcast are his guests, Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell. Both of these experts have many years of experience in advising parents in this area of sex and sexuality, and they've written a book together called *A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey With Your Kids About Sex*.

Dr. Kevin Leman is a very good friend of Dr. Dobson, and they've been in the studio together dozens of times in the past. They've known each other for

decades, when they first met to discuss one of Dr. Lehman's most popular books, *Sex Begins in the Kitchen*. Kevin Leman earned his doctorate in psychology from the University of Arizona. He's an international speaker and has written over 50 books. His most recent is called *Eight Seconds to Raising Successful Kids*, *Nurturing Respect*, and *a Winning Attitude*. Kevin is married to his wife Sande and together they have five grown children and four grandchildren. He is also the co-author of the book which will be discussed today with our other guest, Kathy Flores Bell.

She is the co-founder of Team Lizzie Bell, an organization dedicated to raising awareness about pediatric medical needs such as blood and marrow donations and research in pediatric hematology. She is also the co-founder of the Carondelet Health Network's Youth Sexuality Program, which focuses on abstinence. Kathy and her family make their home in Arizona. Now let's join Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell, for today's classic episode of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Why is it so difficult to talk to your kids about sex? Why do people get so uptight? Why do their hands sweat when this subject comes up or when they need to bring this subject up?

Kathy Flores Bell: I had a teen mom, teen mom and dad, and it was one of my mother's goals that we not enter the same situations that she lived. So talking about sex was something that was very easy in our family. When I started working with parents in teen pregnancy, they couldn't say six words. It was six words that held everybody up, and that was part A goes to part B, the definition of intercourse. In those six words, it stopped an entire sequence of conversations that needed to happen in order to get to those six words. So they never got started because of six words. And over the years, that's what we continued to find was that it was just such a challenge.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And I think what makes it interesting in terms of how Kathy and I approached this book was we don't want to start at home base, as we call it. We wanted to make it easy for parents. So we said, "Parents, a lot of sex education, talking turkey to your kids about sex, a lot of it has to do with hygiene. A lot of it has to do with when you have your first zit. What do you do as a parent? You take your kids down to Walgreens. You get something to deal with a zit, and guess what? You just made a great deposit in your kids' fidelity union bank account."

Dr. James Dobson: So you're including in this topic the introduction to puberty itself.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Absolutely.

Kathy Flores Bell: It's key.

Dr. Kevin Leman: The first period, all of the implications, body odor, many things come under that heading.

Kathy Flores Bell: What we found in the classes was that hygiene education was really the gateway to talking about any kind of sexuality development, little boys wanting to know about little boys stuff and little girls wanting to know about little girl stuff. And if the parent could stay connected in the hygiene education as that third-grader and fourth-grader and fifth-grader was developing, then they could stay on board when the information or the education got a lot tougher. And so yeah, we had to talk about body odor because it was normal, and anything that had to do with the body was a way to keep connected.

Dr. James Dobson: You make quite a big deal in the book about not waiting till that 15 minutes before puberty to have the big talk, a dry-mouthed, sweaty-palmed experience that makes everybody panic-stricken, and you think that it needs to start a lot earlier than that with things that aren't overtly sexual. Right?

Kathy Flores Bell: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: Explain that.

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, both of us had a wake-up call with our kids. I don't know too many parents today that didn't have some kind of a introduction into this subject matter where it was told that you're going to have a talk, that at some point in life there's going to be this presentation that you do with your kids, and you're going to make it very memorable. Both of us had these wake-up calls, where all of a sudden the subject was upon us, and we're shocked at the fact that we're looking at a five-year-old. My son was five years old looking at a cow, and he wants to know how this calf got in the mama cow.

And so I did all the normal, "Well, there's a daddy and a mommy, and this mommy's got a special place in the cow," and all these things. And my son just kept pushing it and pushing it and pushing it until finally I gave him an answer. And his first response was pretty typical. He said, "Yuck, that's gross." And not 30 seconds later did my son at five years old look at me and say, "Is that what you and daddy had to do to get me?" I was floored.

Dr. James Dobson: That's one of the reasons-

Kathy Flores Bell: Floored.

Dr. James Dobson: ... it's scary because the questions get highly personal, don't they?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Well, in today's world, where we're bombarded with everything we don't want our kids to see are here, our sweet little 7-year-old daughter brings home the most famous four-letter word of all and uses it at the dinner table. And my wife, she said, "Kevin, do something." And so I picked up anonymous daughter and marched her off to her room, and I said, "Honey, Daddy knows every word in the book, and so does Mommy, but she won't admit it." And you could tell by she was frightened and then crying. She knew she had said something very bad.

And I took the time to explain to her what that word meant. And it was just like Kathy's experience, that she turned, and after she calmed down and I assured her things were okay and life was going to go on, and she said, "You mean you and mommy did that?" I said, "Only three times." But you have to start someplace. And our message to parents is simply, "Listen, if your kids aren't asking questions, if you're not seeing the teachable moments, by the time a kid is nine years of age, we know the researchers in developmental psychology tell us that kids think a lot about sex at ages 9 and 10."

Dr. James Dobson: And especially today because they are introduced to it-

Kathy Flores Ben: Walking through the grocery store.

Dr. James Dobson: ... far, far too early.

Kathy Flores Bell: Walking through the checkout aisle.

Dr. James Dobson: I think that is so harmful to kids to hear the things that-

Kathy Flores Bell: The commercials.

Dr. James Dobson: ... in my generation, you didn't hear until you were at least seven or eight or nine, some kids in a preschool years start hearing about some of that. And it's very unfortunate. In fact, in California, they deliberately start teaching about homosexuality to kindergartners, which is about the stupidest thing I've ever heard. But that's what we are confronted with as parents.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And so because Christian parents have not been the kind of parents they need to be, we've got states who think they have to teach kids everything under the sun at age five, which is absolutely wrong. But the parent needs to be the teacher, and it's difficult. I'm convinced that Christian parents really don't want to talk to their kids about sex. I think that's as clear and accurate a statement as there is. But if you love your kids, you better.

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, working with the parents, one of the funniest questions is, "Why don't you talk about this subject with your children?" Well, everybody's got an excuse. And I asked the parents, "Do you want grandchildren?" Well, you have a unanimous 100% everybody wants grandchildren. Then you say, "Well, we've got to talk to our kids about sex then." And then they say, "You're right. How are we missing this?"

And that becomes the problem because there's that entire fear out there of everything that they know that's happening. The questions that the parents come in, fifth grade, it's weighing heavy on their mind, "Can my daughter wear thong underwear? Can my son, can we pull out and talk about the different machines that are now in the bathrooms?" What they see in the magazines. I take an array of *Young American Girl* magazine to *Discovery Girls* Magazine to

Girls Life magazine, and I have to show parents alone, not with the kids in the room, "Look at the difference. It's marketing to the same age group. Look at the difference in what's in these magazines. And they're marketed for young girls." So parents have this enormous fear. "What are we going to say, Kathy? Map it out. Make it very specific because we're overloaded. So when the moment hits us, we spew all this stuff out."

- Roger Marsh: Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Just jumping in for a brief moment at the midpoint of today's edition of Family Talk. We're listening to Dr. James Dobson's conversation with his guests, Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell. I hope you found the first part of this program to be very encouraging and informative, especially for those of us parents or grandparents who've had a little trouble talking with our kids about the proverbial birds and the bees. Now here on the second part of today's conversation, we're going to hear from a group of college students. These are Christian kids in their late teens and early twenties, and they will share about what their Christian parents taught them about sex. So let's join them now for the remainder of today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.
- Speaker 5: I went and asked my mom, and she did give me a book, a kid book with little drawings of little people in there.
- Speaker 6: Through high school and talking to peers, I got a little bit more information, but it was something I always sought to know, but just was never told.
- Speaker 7: I had the view that it was ugly, and I didn't see it from how God sees sex as a gift that He's given us.
- Speaker 8: I don't remember them ever sitting down and having that awkward sex talk.
- Speaker 9: One time I remember my mom sat me down on my bed and talked to me about masturbation, and that embarrassed me. It was really, really, really awkward.
- Speaker 10: And a lot of times it encompassed everything about sex, lust, and pornography. And so we hit on those issues as well.
- Speaker 11: The kids in Africa and the little kids that run around naked because they don't have clothes, why aren't they having babies? Because I just thought that it was just two naked people against each other, and I was so confused. I still did not get it.
- Dr. James Dobson: That gives us a pretty good perspective on it. Now, these are young people, most of whom grew up in Christian homes, and yet their parents never quite got around to talking about this subject. Is that typical?
- Kathy Flores Bell: Yes. It grieves me.

Dr. James Dobson: If you took 100 students like this, well-educated kids, how many of them had parents that did the job right?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Very few.

Kathy Flores Bell: Very few.

Dr. Kevin Leman: I'd put it in percentages of probably 10 to 15% would be a good guess that really took the time to talk to their kids about this marvelous gift of sex. And I think what we miss so many times is I recall the morning driving my daughter to school, and I simply said to her, I said, "Hannah, I got to tell you that your dad, as old as I am," I said, "I'm looking at your life right now, and I've just got to salute you because you've really made some great choices in your life already." And I enumerated them. And one of them was the kids you hang out with at school. I said, "I noticed you don't hang out with those little sleaze balls down at school." And she looked at me. Sleaze balls? She didn't say it. She just gave me the look like, how did Daddy know that word?

And I said, "Honey, you've already made the good choices, and my prayer for you is that you'll always remember." And I shared with her that Sande and I, when we were married, we were virgins. Our kids know that. There's a lot of parents listening to us right now. They said, "Hey, great for you, Leman, but that wasn't my story." And that's another inhibiting factor because parents today are afraid of their kids. They're afraid of the questions they're going to ask. Hey, parent, it's time to grow up and be the parent. You don't have to tell kids everything about your life, but you still have to give them the kind of parental guidance and information that they only can get from you.

Dr. James Dobson: And if they don't get it from you, they're going to get it someplace else.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Someplace else.

Dr. James Dobson: And it probably won't be the way you'd want it done, and it probably will have a lot of misinformation in it. So you better just determine to decide what the best way and the best time is to approach it and get it done.

Dr. Kevin Leman: So getting in a car, getting on the interstate. Now, if your company ever sent you to a communication seminar, they told you a bunch of lies, like to have honest communication, you got to be eyeball to eyeball. There's something wonderful about talking to your 9-year-old or 10-year-old about sex when you're driving your car down and looking out at the highway.

Dr. James Dobson: That's why I recorded tapes called *Preparing for Adolescence*.

Kathy Flores Bell: Used those tapes.

Dr. James Dobson: So you can ride along in the car tape and listen tape to the tape. You can stop it. You can talk. You don't have to intimidate each other.

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, along those lines too, the interesting thing working with young kids so that parents realize that the sexuality information isn't the same thing as sex education. So sexuality information, we're working with the 9-year olds and the 10-year-olds and the 11-year-olds, and they're asking questions like, "How many times do I swipe the deodorant, Mrs. Bell? Do I do down two, up one?" They want to know.

Dr. James Dobson: They really are asking that kind of highly specific question?

Kathy Flores Bell: Absolutely. This was the funniest thing working with young kids because their questions never had anything to do with sex. They ask you questions, "Is it the same thing as a chicken egg? So if I fall down, will my eggs break?"

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, goodness. Your kids thought of it literally as like being a chicken.

Kathy Flores Bell: They're very literal, and that's why we had the different items because they were such concrete thinkers. They ask questions like, "If your blood is moving up and down in your body, why do you have to have a period? Why doesn't it just go back up? So if you don't need it, why doesn't it just go back up?" So they ask questions. And so one day we were doing the STD presentation, and the girls kept looking up at the slide and going, "Mrs. Bell, I just don't get it. Why do these sexually transmitted diseases, why are they so deadly? What's the problem here?" They said, "It just looks so big." And it occurred to me that the big slide up there, they couldn't relate the fact that this disease could eat out parts of the body, and you'd never know.

Dr. James Dobson: It was microscopic.

Kathy Flores Bell: So I'm looking on the table everywhere and I find a pen, and I said, "You don't understand, sweetie." And I held up a pen. I said, "That fallopian tube is only four inches, and it's no bigger than this." The look on their faces in a moment's notice, I'm back in my own kitchen in my home where my mother's washing the dishes. And my mother's washing the dishes, and she's telling us all about sex and babies, and she's washing out a Ziploc baggy. And she said, "Well, that uterus is kind of like this." And she held up that Ziploc baggy, and she filled it with water. So I'm crying at the memory, but she held up that baggy, because this is my teen mom, my mom, my teen mom got it.

And she held up that baggy and she said, "The uterus is like this. You swim around in water and you live, and the uterus is like this baggy." And she went on and on about this baggy in the water, and we had a little doll, and she showed us how babies lived in this uterus. In that split second in that classroom, I'm back in my kitchen with my teen mom, and I'm realizing, if I ever want these kids

to connect and to own the preciousness of their body, then I have to find ways that they connect.

Dr. James Dobson: Kathy, how'd she know that?

Kathy Flores Bell: How did she know that? Because she was young, and she understood the concreteness of teaching, instructing had to be hands-on. Her words had to be something that we would...

Dr. Kevin Leman: She had a healthy appreciation for life.

Kathy Flores Bell: She did.

Dr. Kevin Leman: She didn't abort you.

Kathy Flores Bell: No, no. Oh, her story is incredible.

Dr. James Dobson: And those tears tell us that you appreciate the fact that she put some effort into it.

Kathy Flores Bell: Because a lot of our life was so rough, having that kind of a family, uneducated parents essentially, and very self-made people. So I started thinking that I had to bring tangible things in.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that a fallopian tube?

Kathy Flores Be...: Yeah, nobody had a budget. So I just asked the Lord, "What should I do?" And I would start seeing things. And I knew that that fallopian tube had a little bit. So we cut off the straws. And so we get the girls, the teenagers, and they do nine months of pregnancy. So we show, and we even show twins. And it's nice because then you get the girls and say, "Now, put that up. Where would that go? Is your body ready for this? Look at how much your body has to do for this precious life." And the girls get it without ever saying anything about abstinence at that point. They get it. Their bodies aren't ready for this, and that they've got to do different things to protect.

Well, the little girl was so funny when we had the uterus all blown up, the balloon all blown up. And she said, "Well, what happens when that baby's born? What happens to that uterus?" So we told her, "Well, let air out of your balloon." And we showed her the difference. And she said, "Oh." She said, "Well, I thought my mommy's tummy was that uterus was flopping around still in there." So she thought that that little roll of fat that moms get after they have their babies was still that. And then she got it. She got what this muscle is all about. The eggs, this was the most profound piece, was taking this packet of sugar. We raided cafeterias for the longest time before we learned how to ... But we put that out. And when I have them pull one egg apart, and we take the broccoli.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And guess what this is, guys? This little tiny piece of broccoli is, guess what?

Kathy Flores Bell: Well, the kids want to know. They're very concrete. So we take one egg and one little sperm there, broccoli, and we put it together. And I look at the kids and I said, "Your body had all those opportunities to make a human being, but one egg and one sperm made you. Did anybody ever tell you that you were a winner?"

Dr. James Dobson: Let me go back to something you said earlier, Kevin, when you were talking about the questions that your kids ask about your sexuality. I think that is one of the reasons that parents are petrified because they don't know just how personal those questions are going to get. Not only about whether you do this now, mommy and daddy, but what did you do when you were in the teen years. And if you are determined not to lie to your kids, and I don't believe in lying to kids, what do you say?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Well, I'll tell you what I would say. I'd say, "Honey, I'll tell you, I not only made mistakes in this area of life, but I made mistakes in several areas." And I'd go off and enumerate some of those. "Some of those mistakes I've made I've really chosen to keep personal, and I think that that's best. That's a judgment call that I'm going to make. But I'm sharing this information with you because I've walked down that road and I've been there."

Dr. James Dobson: That's excellent.

Dr. Kevin Leman: And you just tell them that, "Honey, there's times in life that you might ask me something, and I'm not going to have a foggiest idea with the right answers, but I'll find out, and we'll go through this thing together. But I want you to know that I not only believe in you, but I expect the very best of you." And so many parents fail to see that it's the positive expectation you give to your kid that makes that kid work toward that end.

Dr. James Dobson: The title of the book is *A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey With Your Kids About Sex*. Every parent needs to know more than they probably already do about this subject because it is not easy. It is sometimes scary. And yet it is so very, very important in this day in particular, where kids are getting bad information or an absence of information that leads them down a wrong path. So we're going to do another program on this subject, right?

Dr. Kevin Leman: Yeah, that'll be great. Looking forward to it.

Kathy Flores Bell: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you for being with us today, and we will pick it up right where we left off next time with the next chapter of your book.

Kathy Flores Bell: Thank you so much. It's been an honor to be here.

Dr. Kevin Leman: Thank you so much.

Roger Marsh: If today's program has been helpful to you, then be sure to tune in again tomorrow for part two of Dr. James Dobson's conversation with Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell here on Family Talk. And by the way, if you'd like to share today's program with another parent who may need this information or if you'd like to review this material again for your own benefit, you can do so easily utilizing the Family Talk app or by visiting drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And by the way, if you are a parent who is interested in getting the book, *A Chicken's Guide to Talking Turkey With Your Kids About Sex*, simply click the link at the bottom of today's broadcast page when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, as election day is on the horizon, be sure to stay informed about all the latest voter and policy-related issues that affect you and your family. And you can do so by checking out the Dobson Culture Center. Visit drjamesdobson.org and then click on the Culture Center tab at the top of the page. So many of us want to see positive changes in our communities and all across the country, and Election Day is the perfect time to put that change into action. I pray that all of us will have the courage as believers to get out and vote during this election season, and most importantly, to pray.

Now, you can start receiving our weekly culture update called "Lighting Up Culture" when you go to drjamesdobson.org, click on the Culture Center tab and then follow the prompts. And also be on the lookout for our Decision 2024 Podcast that will be launching next week, featuring some familiar voices that will be informing you on all things election-related, brought to you by the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. As we conclude today's broadcast today, thank you for remembering that Family Talk is a listener-supported program. It's only because of your prayers and faithful financial support that Family Talk can continue producing the encouraging and insightful programs that you enjoy each and every day on the radio and online. Please prayerfully consider partnering with us financially, especially during these lean summer months. To make a donation, simply visit us online at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Remember, you can securely give right there on our homepage or over the phone when you call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

And keep in mind, you can also send your gift securely through the U.S. Mail. Our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love. Be sure to join us again tomorrow when Dr. Dobson continues this conversation with Dr. Kevin Leman and Kathy Flores Bell discussing teaching your kids about sex right here on Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.