

The most important thing to consider when buying children's gifts is that you should try and find something that suits their interests. That way the child knows you are listening!

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Sex Education for [Children](#): Better Late Than Never - Think Again!

When I was in the fifth grade, the school nurse set aside a special time when she pulled all the girls out of the class. Sequestered in a room without any males (apparently their presence would be detrimental to us females for the next 45 minutes), the school nurse proceeded to show us a video that explained the basics of the female reproductive system. The next week, the boys were given their own video session.

Too bad half the girls already had started their periods and half the guys were able to demonstrate via jokes a working understanding of what guys were supposed to "do" with girls.

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Schools have been teaching sex education in late elementary school for years. The problem is, that just doesn't cut it anymore-kids are reaching sexual maturity at an earlier and earlier age, and as parents, we need to have a concept of what is affecting the development of our children so that we can be prepared.

First, genetics has some influence over when a child matures. If you're a woman who was a late bloomer, odds are you'll have daughters who are, too. The same goes for men-if your voice didn't drop fully until you were 17, don't be too anxious if your son is still able to sing alto in choir his freshman year in high school.

Secondly, nutrition plays a role in development in that a child's body cannot mature sexually if it doesn't have enough vitamins, minerals, or caloric intake. Girls who don't eat enough for one reason or another, for example, have been shown to start menses later than girls whose diets are nutritionally sound.



"Online shopping is a diamond in the rough. The longer someone has been online is one of the best predictors of whether they'll shop online or not."

Still, online retail sales figures add up to only a fraction of figures for offline sales. This year, analysts expect online figures to reach just 3 percent of the \$217.4 billion seen in offline sales, according to the National Retail Federation. Online figures are up about 1 percentage point from last year, compared with an expected increase of about 5.7 percent in offline sales, according to the NRF.

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The third factor that affects sexual maturation is weight. Sexual maturation is tied to the body fat ratio (the ratio of body fat to lean muscle tissue)-the body needs fat to carry out the sexual maturation process because energy is used by the body to make reproductive tissues and organs grow. Once a person's body fat ratio is high enough, their body is able to develop the reproductive organs, regardless of whether or not the person is of "reproductive" age. For this reason, children who are overweight are more likely to develop faster than their thinner counterparts. Thus, it is little wonder that, in a generation experiencing what has been called an "obesity epidemic," earlier sexual maturity is on the rise.

All this being said, it's important to point out that every child is different. There is no surefire way to pinpoint when your child will need "the talk." Even so, it's best to play it safe and be early instead of late with information. If your 8 year old can figure out how to reach the highest cabinet in the house when you have your back turned, chances are they'll be able to grasp the puzzle pieces concept with men and women and how that all works, too. Sure, they might be a bit grossed out at first, but I, for one, would much rather have my kid grossed out than freaked out.