

The sex-wise parent: the parent's guide to protecting your child, strengthening your family, and talking to kids about sex, abuse, and bullying, by J. Rosenzweig, New York, Skyhorse Publishing, 2012, 300 pp., \$24.95, ISBN 978-1-61608-509-4

If ever there was a sex-positive, comprehensive, and easy-to-read guide for parents concerned about raising sexually healthy children, Dr Rosenzweig's *The Sex-Wise Parent* is certainly that volume. With over a decade of accomplishments in the field of child abuse prevention, further informed by her important work with parents, survivors, and even sex offenders, Rosenzweig has clearly and matter-of-factly elucidated the imperative for healthy, sex-positive sexuality (and life) education that begins in the home, embraces the values of the individual family, and respects the uniqueness and complexity of human sexuality.

Right from the start, Rosenzweig presents her *Rules for Parents to Raise Sexually Safe and Healthy Children*. If this author controlled the world, her list of 10 basic points would be taught to every individual and be required reading for anyone who has ever even thought about having a baby, raising a child, or even just being around a young person. Rule #3, for example, tells us to, "Remember that a parent's job is to provide the tools necessary to alleviate fear and obliterate ignorance, not add to them: Everyone has fears and questions about his or her sexuality at some point" (p. ix).

Divided into four parts, this guide covers almost every sexual health issue parents may need to understand and pass along. In Part I, *Wake Up and Smell the Pheromones*, Rosenzweig lays the foundation for the importance of education about our sexuality, including the mounting evidence for the connections between the lack of this education and a myriad of issues from less-than-ideal memories about sexuality to becoming victims of sexual abuse to struggling with shameful sexual self-concepts in adulthood. Dr Rosenzweig combats 10 excuses *Why Parents Don't Talk with Their Kids About Sex* (e.g. we are not sure we know what we are talking about, we think someone else does, we fear talking will be harmful) with *Ten Essential Reasons Why* they must in a way that is practical and respectful. In Part II, *Everything You Should've Learned in High School*, she provides succinct and expertly edited explanations of sexual anatomy and physiology, child and adolescent development, and even attachment theory. These essential topics aim to empower caretakers to take on the responsibility for sexuality education they themselves likely did not receive. Part III, *The Twenty-Four-Hour Information Channel for Kids*, tackles modern issues caretakers confront such as the Internet, media, and community influences that may not have even existed when current parents were children. Rosenzweig's simple advice such as parental media behavioral ABCs (access, observe, communicate) and being a POS (parent over the shoulder) again brings a complicated and often overwhelming job down to non-threatening, doable tasks. With each topic, Dr Rosenzweig offers specific support for single parents, non-cohabitating parents, co-parents whose values may differ, and parents who may themselves be survivors of sexual abuse. Though these differences may be obvious to professionals, parents reading this book will likely feel recognized by Rosenzweig's ability to see the forest as well as the trees.

[From the Journal of Sexual and Relationship Therapy, February 2014](#)