

Outrage Over WHO Guidance on “Sexuality for Infants”

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Theme: [History](#)

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) is under pressure to withdraw guidance for schools recommending that toddlers “ask questions about sexuality”, “explore gender identities” and learn about “enjoyment” of “early childhood masturbation”. The Telegraph [has the story](#).

The guidance says that “sexuality education starts from birth” and is described as a “framework for policy makers, educational and health authorities and specialists”.

Its advice on how to “talk about sexual matters” with young children was aimed at policymakers across Europe, and was translated into several European languages and promoted at national and international events, according to the WHO.

The document was also cited in a report consulted by Welsh ministers who last year rolled out a [mandatory sexual education syllabus to schools in Wales](#), and has led to a [backlash from the Government, MPs and activists](#).

The advice proposes that four-to-six year-olds should be taught to “talk about sexual matters” and “consolidate their gender identity”.

It recommends that children under the age of four should be told they have “the right to ask questions about sexuality” and “the right to explore gender identities”.

The WHO guidance also says that children aged four and under should be taught about “enjoyment and pleasure when touching one’s own body, early childhood masturbation”.

These topics are described as the “minimal standards that need to be covered by sexuality education”.

A Government spokesperson said: “The U.K. Government does not recognise this WHO guidance and we don’t agree with its recommendations. We have not distributed or promoted it to schools. We offer our own guidance to help schools to teach children and young people about relationships and health.”

However, the WHO guidance, first published in 2010, was cited in a 2017 report commissioned by Welsh ministers entitled ‘[Informing the Future of the Sex and Relationships Curriculum in Wales](#)’.

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| Sexuality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ enjoyment and pleasure when touching one’s own body, early childhood masturbation ■ discovery of own body and own genitals ■ the fact that enjoyment of physical closeness is a normal part of everyone’s life ■ tenderness and physical closeness as an expression of love and affection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ gain an awareness of gender identity ■ talk about (un)pleasurable feelings in one’s own body ■ express own needs, wishes and boundaries, for example in the context of “playing doctor” |
| Emotions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ different types of love ■ “yes” and “no” feelings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ feel and show empathy ■ say yes/no |

| 0-4 | Information Give information about | Skills Enable children to | Attitudes Help children to develop |
|--|--|---|---|
| Relationships and lifestyles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different kinds of relationship different family relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about own relationships and family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a feeling of closeness and trust based on the experience of bonding a positive attitude towards different lifestyles the awareness that relationships are diverse |
| Sexuality, health and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good and bad experiences of your body/what feels good? (listen to your body) if the experience/feeling is not good, you do not always have to comply | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trust their instincts apply the three-step model (say no, go away, talk to somebody you trust) achieve feelings of well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an appreciation of their body the awareness that it is ok to ask for help |
| Sexuality and rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the right to be safe and protected the responsibility of adults for the safety of children the right to ask questions about sexuality the right to explore gender identities <i>the right to explore nakedness and the body, to be curious</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> say "yes" and "no" develop communication skills express needs and wishes <i>differentiate between "good" and "bad" secrets</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an awareness of their rights which leads to self-confidence the attitude "My body belongs to me" the feeling that they can make their own decisions |
| Social and cultural determinants of sexuality (values/norms) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> social rules and cultural norms/values gender roles social distance to be maintained with various people <i>the influence of age on sexuality and age-appropriate behaviour</i> <i>norms about nakedness</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> differentiate between private and public behaviour respect social rules and cultural norms behave appropriately according to context <i>know where you can touch</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect for their own and others' bodies acceptance of social rules about privacy and intimacy respect for "no" or "yes" from others |

■ main topic (new)
■ main topic (consolidation)
• additional topic (new)
• additional topic (consolidation)

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