

Books featured in "Ask Amy"

"Ask Amy": Daughter, 15, wants to date junior boys, 17

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Dear Amy: My granddaughter is 15 years old and a freshman in high school. She wants to date two guys who are juniors and more experienced than she. Her dad, my son, is having a lot of problems with this -- as I would. She has sneaked around and he worries about so many things that could happen -- you know, drugs, alcohol, sex or date rape. The list goes on. They can't talk about it because he gets upset. Being a guy he knows what the older guys are all about. I don't know what advice to give him. I only had boys. Could you please help with some advice as to what to do? -- A Concerned Mom and Grandma

Dear Concerned: As far as I can tell, your son has two choices: He can swallow his fury enough to influence his daughter about issues that will have a direct impact on her life, or he can let her learn these lessons from 17-year-old boys. No one has greater affection than I do for 17-year-old boys, but I don't want them dispensing life lessons to 15-year-old girls, thank you very much. Your son is just going to have to get it together and control himself here. As much as girls need their moms during various life stages, their need for their dads is paramount as girls enter the stage of life where they are contemplating being sexually active.

According to Jeanne Blake, author of the helpful "Words Can Work" book series (available at www.wordscanwork.com), it is so important for your son to talk -- and listen -- to his daughter now, because now is the time when he will demonstrate what his values are as a dad and as a man.

"Girls who know that their fathers view them as competent and worthy of respect may be less likely to seek approval through sexual experiences with boys," Blake says.

Your son should take the opportunity -- in the car perhaps, when the two aren't necessarily face-to-face -- to ask his daughter questions, listen to her answers and not overreact. This should not be a father-daughter lecture series, mind you, but the beginning of a long and fruitful conversation between them. You have an important role to play too. Your granddaughter is so lucky to have a grandmother who loves and understands her dad the way you do. I hope you'll be as active and involved in her life as possible.

The Words Can Work series of books recommended in "Ask Amy."

Words Can Work: When Talking About Alcohol – Book

Families tell how they discuss the consequences of underage drinking. Dr. Paula Rauch, Massachusetts General Hospital and Dr. Brian Johnson, Harvard Medical School offer strategies - and the words - parents can use in similar situations.

(44pp.)

“...a whole world of valuable information in a deceptively small package.”

Karen Friedman, FNP, Middlesex School

Middlesex School and Buckingham Brown and Nichols mailed copies to every student's home.

Words Can Work: When Talking With Kids About Sexual Health – Book

Families tell true stories about discussing puberty, values, relationships, postponing sex, birth control and more. Teens, in first-person accounts, take readers into their world. Dr. David Satcher, Former Surgeon General and Dr. Paula Rauch, Massachusetts General Hospital offer strategies - and the words - parents can use in similar situations. (140pp.)

“I've read this Words Can Work book cover to cover and it rocks! I'm delighted that it will be easy to promote the book to colleagues and recommend to parents.” - Jan Lunquist, Planned Parenthood

Planned Parenthood of Northern Michigan sells copies to generate income for affiliates.