



How do I talk to my children about growing up, relationships and sex?

Speakeasy – the award-winning FPA scheme that helps parents tackle the difficult questions

What is Speakeasy?

The FPA Speakeasy project has helped more than 15,000 adults across Britain to face those difficult conversations and awkward questions from children about sex with confidence, knowledge and new found skills.

The award-winning project started in 1995 and this year 80 local authorities across the country will be running courses for parents and carers, funded variously in England and Wales and by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland.

What does Speakeasy aim to achieve?

Speakeasy courses are designed to encourage parents to take on the role of an informed educator of their children, able to deliver positive sex and relationships education within a family environment. Creative methods are used within our groups including collage and artwork, role play and games as well as more traditional written work for those who wish to gain Open College Network (OCN) accreditation. The emphasis is on making the courses as accessible as possible for those who will benefit.

Where are Speakeasy courses held? Are they free?

Yes, Speakeasy courses are usually free for parents and carers. Courses are organised locally at schools, children's centres and health centres, and the focus is on parents learning together from their own experiences in a relaxed, fun atmosphere under the guidance of fully trained and experienced facilitators. Courses are designed for groups of eight to twelve parents, usually delivered over eight sessions, and are free for participants. Where possible crèche facilities are provided.

"I came here with the attitude that I know it all, there's nothing you can teach me, a woman of my age has nothing to learn. I learned a lot, it's worth it. It's brilliant."

Parent

"Knowing what I have learned, I feel I can talk easily to my grandchildren and could explain any questions they ask me, or even any of their friends. I feel quite confident of what I have learned."

Grandparent

"I learned to be confident about talking to my children about relationships, sex and sexually transmitted diseases."

Mike, a parent

As a parent, how will Speakeasy help me?

At the end of a typical eight-week course, you will have gained the confidence to talk positively about all aspects of sex and relationships with your children. Week by week you gain understanding of issues such as: changes children undergo at puberty, sex education in the context of family life and how to respect children's needs, different types of contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, strategies to keep children safe, sex and relationship education in schools. One key area covered is the increasing pressure on children from media and advertising, and how to help children deal with it. For more information about the work FPA does with parents and carers, see: www.fpa.org.uk/communityprojects/parentsandcarers.

How successful has Speakeasy been from the parents' perspective?

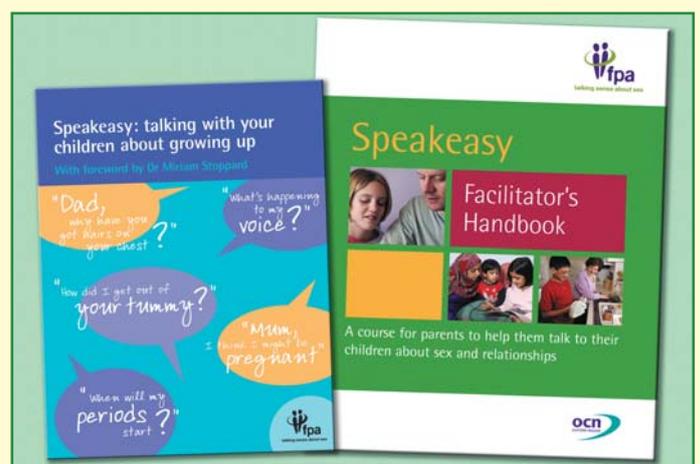
A recent survey of 250 people who participated in Speakeasy courses found that 97 per cent reported that they felt confident in their ability to communicate with children and young people about sexual health and relationships. Parents also mentioned the ripple effect of how they shared learning within the family and wider community – 83 per cent shared the course experience with friends.

See published evaluation reports on Speakeasy:
www.fpa.org.uk/communityprojects/parentsandcarers.

What Speakeasy publications are there?

Speakeasy: Talking with Your Children about Growing Up is the fastest selling book FPA has ever published, and contains clear, practical information on how to talk to your children about sex and relationships. Price £9.99 from the FPA website at: www.fpa.org.uk/professionals/publicationsandresources.

FPA also publishes the *Speakeasy Facilitator's Handbook* that supports the training and provides an in-depth resource including session plans, parent worksheets, handouts and suggestions for developing the work further.



What training courses are available for Speakeasy facilitators? Are they accredited?

Organisations that are considering offering Speakeasy courses in their area can take advantage of group training schemes for their staff. Parent support staff can participate in one-to-one or group training courses, with or without accreditation. A three-day facilitator training course leads to Open College Network level three accreditation. *Speakeasy – Ready to run* is a two-day course without accreditation, and FPA also runs *Training the trainers* and *Speakeasy Catch-up days*. There are also facilitator training schemes for front-line parent support staff, both accredited and non-accredited. Parents who have completed Speakeasy courses can also progress to train as facilitators.



For information about any aspects of Speakeasy courses, availability in your area, training opportunities and costs, please contact:

David Kesterton, Parenting and Community Project Manager,
Tel: 020 7608 5271
Email: davidk@fpa.org.uk

Speakeasy in Scotland and Wales

Although FPA no longer has funding to deliver Speakeasy in Scotland and Wales, facilitators continue to offer the programme in a wide variety of settings. We are seeking partner agencies who would be interested in delivering Speakeasy courses in community venues.

Speakeasy in Northern Ireland

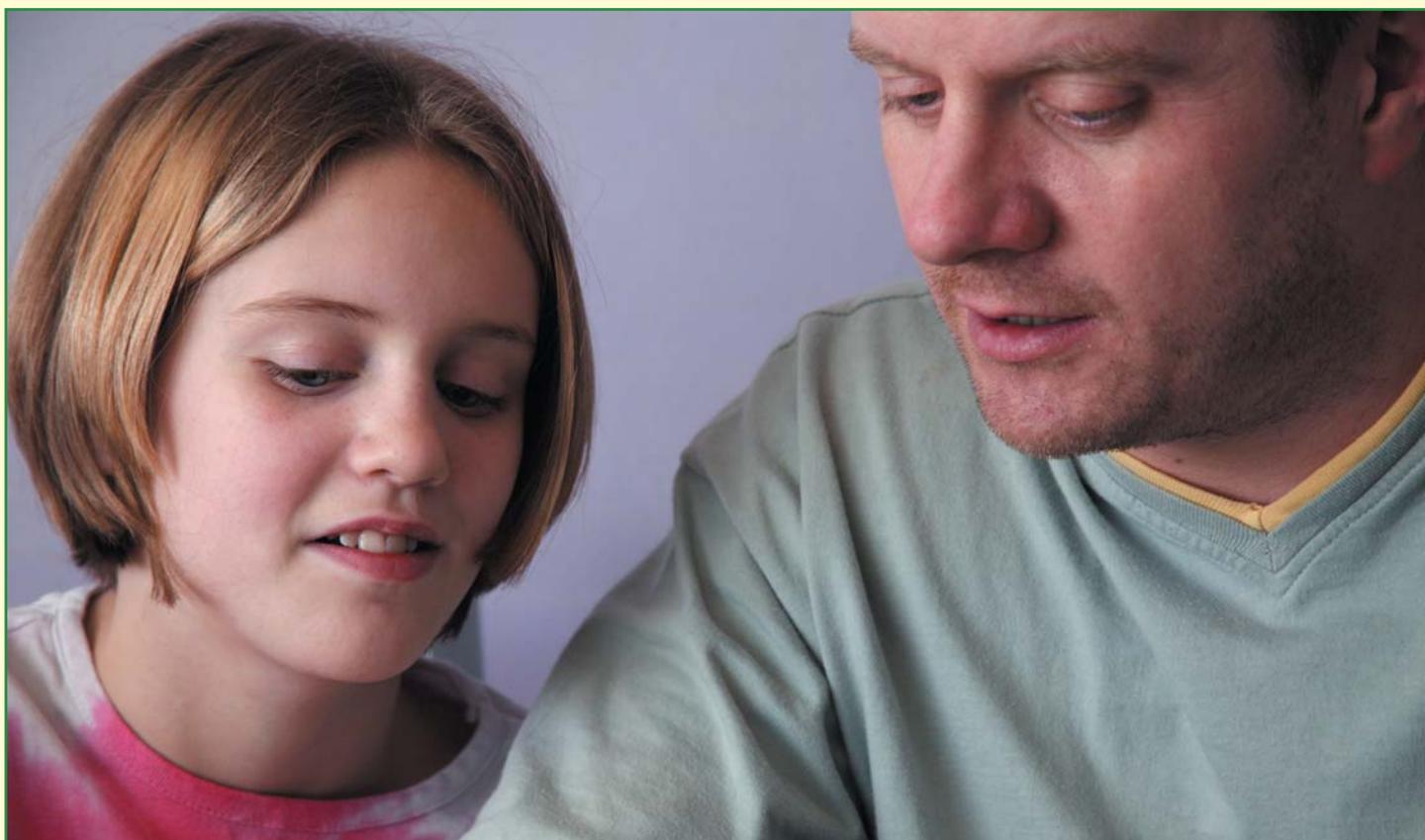
Speakeasy in Northern Ireland worked with more than 40 groups in 2010 running courses aimed at specialised audiences, including foster carers, parents of children with learning disability, and people from ethnic minorities, as well as providing 'Dads training' for fathers.

Contact for Speakeasy parent courses and training in Northern Ireland

Georgia Wilder or Heather Low

Tel: 028 90 316100

FPA, Ascot House, 24-31 Shaftsbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DB



Speakeasy – what they said about us

The expert ...

“The Speakeasy programme appears to be highly successful in achieving its key aims ... self-reported knowledge and confidence in talking about sexual issues show impressively large increases from pre- to post- programme, and a study that involved young people being interviewed alongside their parents reported equally impressive outcomes. When taken together they provide a very positive overall picture of the impact of Speakeasy on those attending and, possibly, others in their social milieu.”

Professor Roger Ingham
Centre for Sexual Health Research
University of Southampton
March 2011

The parents ...

“I came here with the attitude that I know it all, there’s nothing you can teach me, a woman of my age has nothing to learn. I learnt a lot, it’s worth it. It’s brilliant.”

“I enjoyed all of the learning across the different areas, especially the development of children. I also learnt about the myths which I had in the back of my mind and those myths have been cleared now that I have learnt the facts.”

“How important it is to tell children things because I really didn’t get told much when I was young, you know just given two tampons and told I’ll be needing these one day and that was that.”

“It gave me the confidence to talk to my daughter about things and not wait until they are too old, because by not talking to them I thought I was protecting them but I wasn’t really.”

“I think my attitudes changed whereby I’m more open with them now whereas before I was trying to protect them and if anything came up on TV I’d change the subject, and think they are too young, but now it doesn’t embarrass me.”

“I’ve taught parenting courses for years now and this is the best parenting course I’ve ever come across so far because the subject is so vital because children are bombarded by negative media images and it’s so relevant in society today, and at the same time it’s encouraging this honesty between parent and child which I think is great.”

“I went as a parent but thought it might be something I’d like to do and as I run a lot of parenting courses but I have to say it’s the best parenting course I’ve been on!”

Guidelines for publicising Speakeasy courses

How can FPA help?

- We **can** provide quotes from FPA staff involved with the Speakeasy project.
- We **can** help with media enquiries about the national work of Speakeasy.
- We **cannot** write individually tailored press releases.
- We **cannot** provide details of local media.
- We **cannot** sign-off press releases.

A template press release is included on the following page that can be used to generate media coverage and interest locally about upcoming Speakeasy courses. Either use the whole text or just the sections that are appropriate.

Please note that we may be able to provide an FPA logo for use in press material, but it must be agreed in advance with the FPA press office (contact details below).

If you receive requests from TV and radio to film or record participants at Speakeasy courses, please contact the FPA press office before agreeing to allow media access.

There are full details about the Speakeasy project on our website at www.fpa.org.uk/communityprojects/parentsandcarers.

For further information please contact the FPA press office on 020 7608 5264/5265. Mobile 07958 921060.

Press Release template

Your Logo (if appropriate)

Date of the press release and the year (in bold type)

Headline (in the centre, in bold type and at least 2 points larger than the main text)

Many parents find talking to their children about sex and relationships an overwhelming task, but an FPA Speakeasy course run by xxxxxxxx (the name of your organisation) starting on xxxxxxxx (date) and held at xxxxxxxxxxxxxx (venue) will give parents the skills and information they need to tackle the subject with new found confidence.

Speakeasy is an award-winning course produced by sexual health charity FPA. It gives parents and carers the opportunity to develop their knowledge about subjects affecting their children, ranging from puberty to peer pressure. Xxxxxx parents are expected to take part in courses that will be available to xxxxxx (insert any specific groups you may want to work with, if appropriate). Parents can also use the course to gain accreditation through the Open College Network.

The focus of FPA Speakeasy courses is on parents learning together from their own experiences in a relaxed, fun atmosphere under the guidance of fully-trained facilitators.

Topics covered during the xxxxx sessions over xxxxx weeks include practical information about contraception, sexually transmitted infections and puberty changes. Important issues such as strategies to keep children safe are also covered. There will also be time to look at local school policy on sex and relationships education.

Xxxx from xxx (your organisation) said: “remember to open and close quotation marks”.

ENDS

For more details please contact xxxxx (Your details and include mobile number if possible)

Notes to editor:

Speakeasy was launched by FPA in 1995 and has since helped more than 15,000 adults across the country talk to children about sex with knowledge and confidence.

The sexual health charity FPA champions the importance of good sexual health for all. We educate, inform, support and campaign for people across the UK. The Family Planning Association is a registered charity, number 250187

For further information please contact the FPA press office on 020 7608 5264/5265. Mobile 07958 921060.



talking sense about sex

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The Family Planning Association is a registered charity, number 250187,
and a limited liability company registered in England, number 887632.

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