



[It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, Gender, and Families](#)

by Robie H. Harris, illustrated by Michael Emberley

ISBN: 9781536207231 (Hardcover); 9781536207248 (Paperback);

9781536222609 (E-Book)

Candlewick Press, 1999 (newest edition published 2024)

*Age Range: 7 and up (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: K–4 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

How does a baby begin, and how is it born? How did I begin? Why are some parts of kids' bodies different from some parts of other kids' bodies?

Most younger kids have questions about reproduction, babies, love, sex, and gender. Some also have concerns. For over twenty-five years, *It's So Amazing!* has provided children age seven and up with the honest answers they're looking for through age-appropriate, reassuring words and accurate, up-to-date, inclusive art. Throughout the book, two cartoon characters, Bird and Bee, are the voices of kids. They talk together to help children feel that they are not the only ones wondering how we all began. Rigorously vetted by experts and featuring updated and new facts on pregnancy, birth, adoption, bodies, sexuality, gender identity, OK touches, not-OK touches, straight and LGBTQ+ families and people, and many other topics, this comprehensive resource for kids, parents, librarians, teachers, booksellers, and healthcare providers is *the* book that can help younger kids and their families talk together and find answers to their many questions.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"The tone is patient and gentle. . . . It's hard to imagine a more sensitive treatment than in these pages. The text recognizes children's feelings and fears, and reassures, line by line, that they are always lovable and always loved, no matter what. Beyond biology, *It's So Amazing!* is finally about love, and that, we hope, is where babies come from." — [The New York Times Book Review](#)

"Even if your child hasn't reached puberty, talk with him or her about what lies ahead. If you'd like some help, check out the excellent picture book *It's So Amazing!* by Robie Harris and Michael Emberley. . . . It could help prepare your son or daughter — as well as reassure you." — *Time Magazine*

★ "Parents looking for a way to keep embarrassment to a minimum when discussing sexuality with their young children will appreciate this book." — *The Horn Book*, **starred review**

"Whether your family has two parents, one parent, two parents in separate homes, adoptive parents, or same-sex parents, you'll find a similar family in these pages. Your kids are also sure to spot children that look like them, since Emberley has depicted children of all races, body types, and ability. Best of all, their positive, informative, and age-appropriate tone will ensure that kids are confident that bodies, birth, and families really are amazing! Highly recommended for ages 7 to 10." — [A Mighty Girl](#)

Updated 3/28/2025

Candlewick Press

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◆ “Harris and Emberley fill the gap between their picture book *Happy Birth Day!* and the instant-classic *It’s Perfectly Normal* with this equally sensitive, good-humored take on love and sex, puberty, genetics, pregnancy, and related topics from sibling rivalry to HIV.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, **pointer review**

★ “The author and illustrator duo that broke new ground with their frank talk and depiction of puberty and changing bodies in *It’s Perfectly Normal* returns with an equally outstanding book. . . . The text is browser friendly. . . . Harris is also very good at recognizing children’s misconceptions and teams up with Emberley to address myths in humorous ways; one illustration clears up the confusion over where the pizza goes . . . and where the baby grows.” —*Booklist*, **starred review**

★ “Another barrier-breaking contribution by Harris and Emberley that seamlessly bridges *It’s Perfectly Normal* and *Happy Birth Day!* . . . An essential guide that will delight and inform and appeal to young readers as well as adults.” —*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

“Her books, which include *It’s So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*, for ages seven and up, are genuinely sweet, in a genre in which there’s a fairly despicable tendency to be edgy, brash, and cool, as if what kids can put out must be what they need from grownups. She’s got a section called ‘What’s Love?,’ and sensible, even existential, answers (‘Sometimes people just love each other’), along with a remarkably thoughtful discussion about love between men and men and between women and women.” —[The New Yorker](#)

“This thoughtful, innovative, and comprehensive book helps children with issues that are on their minds anyway—and gives all of us the language we need to share with them.” —T. Berry Brazelton, MD, founder of Brazelton Touchpoints Center, Boston Children’s Hospital, and Joshua Sparrow, MD, coauthors of *Touchpoints: Birth to Three and Touchpoints: Three to Six*

“With their deep appreciation for the perspectives and feelings of young children, the author and illustrator have discovered a powerful way to teach the complicated facts of life. Weaving together information about healthy sexuality—including how babies are made and develop, what makes us female or male, growing bodies, all kinds of families, and keeping safe—this wonderful book promotes learning and knowledge while helping to ensure our children’s physical and emotional health. It’s so amazing that there is now a book for children and families that addresses so many of the questions that are so difficult to ask and discuss!” —Steven Marans, MSW, PhD, professor of child psychiatry and psychiatry, director of Childhood Violent Trauma Center, Yale University School of Medicine Child Study Center

“As a pediatrician, I know that children have many questions about reproduction, birth, bodies, babies, and families. Finding the answers, in a comfortable, appropriate, and interesting way, is an essential part of growing up healthy in body and mind. This book provides an opportunity for children to find answers to their questions with clarity of explanation, fabulous illustrations, and humor, together with an all-important sense of wonder.” —Perri Klass, MD, professor of journalism and pediatrics, New York University

“What’s so amazing about *It’s So Amazing!* is that it’s jam-packed with positive, age-appropriate, and accurate information that answers kids’ endless questions about sex and bodies in an honest, positive, clear, and affirming manner. The inclusion of all kinds of kids, people, and families with bodies of all sizes, shapes, and skin tones, along with the many topics about sexuality that most school-age kids want to know about, serves to foster

discussions between children and parents about the importance of sexual health and values, and respect for others.” —Melaney Linton, president and chief executive officer, Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- An American Library Association Notable Children’s Book
- A Cooperative Children’s Book Center Choices List Selection
- A *Children’s Literature* Choice List Title
- A *Horn Book* Fanfare Selection

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [TeachingBooks Blog Post by Robie H. Harris](#)
- [Tips for Parents Using *It’s Perfectly Normal* and *It’s So Amazing! with Their Kids*](#)
- Challengers may present quotes from the book out of context to try to convince others that this book is not appropriate for young readers. Here are some quotes from *It’s So Amazing!* to help make the opposing case:

“Talking with someone you trust—a parent, a doctor, a nurse, or a teacher—is a good way to find out answers to your questions. And if you are thinking of using a computer, tablet, mobile phone, or other device to go online, ask any of these grown-ups to help you find a safe site for kids where you can get information about questions you may have or topics you may be interested in, such as how our bodies work and grow or how babies begin.” (page 7)

“If you don’t want someone—even someone who loves you or you love or is a best friend—to hold hands, or cuddle, hug, or give you a kiss, tell that person that you don’t want them to do that and to stop doing that.

“Or if someone says something not nice or mean or not true about you or about a friend, tell that person to stop doing that. When a person or a group of people does that, it is called bullying.

“If bullying happens to you or a friend, tell a grown-up you trust right away. That grown-up can then talk with and tell that person that bullying can make a person feel very sad or very mad—and tell them to stop the bullying right away.” (page 39)

“If sexual abuse ever happens to you—it is NEVER your fault. And do NOT keep it a secret even if someone tells you to keep it a secret. There are some secrets that are okay to keep, but sexual abuse is not one of them. You must make sure that you tell another person right away—someone in your family, or your teacher, or doctor, or nurse, or school nurse, or clergy member, or someone you know very well and trust.” (page 76)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

Statement of Support from the Children’s Book Committee of PEN American Center:

“We know that educators and librarians such as you put much thought, care and time into the selection and purchase of books for your schools. You conscientiously read reviews and deliberate over which books best serve the young people who are your readers. We applaud your efforts to support young readers’ right to choose and to have access to the many different voices and images that are part of our world.

“As writers we have a deep respect for children’s minds and imaginations—their need to understand themselves and the world around them. Yet we know that books for young people are the ones most often taken

off shelves because of a single complaint or, more harmfully, simply never put on schools' library shelves for fear of controversy. Books must be accessible for any readers. Young readers come to our libraries in our schools looking for honesty in fiction and nonfiction. Sometimes they come upon books that are important to them without even realizing what they are looking for.

"We feel a bond with the librarians, teachers, parents and journalists willing to engage in the sometimes trying process of absorbing a book into the school library collection which is difficult for some members or even a single member of the community to accept. Particularly when books stimulate a difference of opinion, it is essential that these differing views be faced within our democratic traditions. This is especially important for the young people still learning to practice these traditions. If young people come upon something in a book they disagree with, they have the right to close the book, or to speak up or write about their opinion. But they have to learn that they don't have the right to keep someone else from reading a book with a different point of view.

"No matter the intimidation and pressure from those who rush to ban what they disapprove of or fear, we would support and insist on young people's right to free access to books and ideas. We must insist again and again. If we fail to do this we put ourselves in danger of losing these rights."

[National Coalition Against Censorship letter of support:](#)

"The task of selecting books for inclusion in school libraries properly belongs to professional educators. Parents may be equipped to make reading choices for their own children, but, no matter how well-intentioned, they simply are not equipped to make decisions that address the needs of the entire district's student body. The views of Ms. Taylor and others who sought removal of *It's So Amazing*, *It's Perfectly Normal*, and *The Teenage Guy's Survival Guide*, and who are now seeking a district-wide audit, are not shared by all. They have no right to impose their views on others or demand that the district's libraries reflect their personal preferences. . . . *It's So Amazing*, *It's Perfectly Normal*, and *The Teenage Guy's Survival Guide* provide valuable informational resources for children, teenagers and their parents on matters of human sexuality. These books address questions that concern many young people, on topics such as reproduction, masturbation, homosexuality, safe sex, teen pregnancy, and abortion. Limiting young people's access to legitimate and accurate information will not necessarily quell their curiosity. If anything, it will foster misinformation or ignorance, and leave many woefully unprepared for puberty and beyond."

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

In an interview with KJ Dell'Antonia for the [Motherlode blog](#) fifteen years after *It's So Amazing!* was published
The major change I've seen has to do with how kids get their information. Kids understand both the benefits of finding really great information on the Internet and the fact that you can have misinformation. We encourage them to check with a trusted adult—someone in your life who can give you accurate information or steer you to it When you're talking about sexuality, the things that are healthy and normal or the things we know are not healthy and normal, like H.I.V. or early pregnancy, it's a wonderful time to talk about your own values. Someone may disagree with what I wrote. They can say, "This is what our family believes. This is what this author wrote. This is what your friends may believe." They can start the conversation.

A note to kids from Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley in the 2024 edition

One of the most amazing science stories is how an egg and sperm get together to make a baby. While creating this book, both of us were fascinated by this story of how we all began. And we bet that you would be fascinated too.

Ever since this book was first published twenty-five years ago, we have continued to talk with kids and adults about the information in it. And we've found out that today's kids, parents, teachers, librarians, and health professionals continue to think that the information in this book is so amazing! We are so pleased to share this newest and most up-to-date edition with you, which is jam-packed with more new information and art than ever before. It is exciting to know that this book is used in more and more countries around the world.

Kids everywhere have lots of questions about how our bodies are the same and how they are different, about how babies are made, and about how kids' bodies grow and change. However, information about these topics often can and does change. That's why we asked kids, parents, teachers, librarians, doctors, nurses, psychologists, psychoanalysts, scientists, and clergy what needed to be changed or added to this edition of *It's So Amazing!* And that's why we spent a lot of time talking to and checking with these experts to make sure that all the information in this edition is as scientifically accurate and as up-to-date as possible. When we learned that new information or a new topic or new art needed to be included, we added it. That's why we have included information about gender, being online, and using the Internet to this edition of our book.

We hope that you will find the information in our newest edition as amazing and fascinating as both of us still do today. We also hope that *It's So Amazing!* will continue to answer most of the questions you may have about eggs, sperm, pregnancy, birth, babies, bodies, love, gender, adoption, and families. But if you have more questions about any information in our book, it can also be very helpful to talk with someone you know and trust—a parent, doctor, nurse, teacher, librarian, therapist, school counselor, or clergy member—and even share *It's So Amazing!* with that person.

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.