



# Importance of Sex Education for Children According to Abdullah Nasih Ulwan

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**Abstract.** The technological age has brought a side effect in the present era. Ideological exposure has poisoned the minds of today's people, especially teenagers. Indeed, they are the generation of the future. Many of the problems of sex misuse have been widely addressed through socialization with the opposite sex. Sex education that was perceived as a taboo in the past must be removed. Sex education is not about what the public expects but it is the integration of laws concerning reproductive organs. Abdullah Nasih Ulwan attaches great importance to sex education because it is a natural instinct that must be considered to children so as not to fall into sin. Library research methods were used in this study regarding to the thought of Abdullah Nasih Ulwan as the main source and other references as a secondary source. The conclusion shows that parents play a great role in delivering sex education to children in order to prevent them from deviating from the true path. It is suggested to have a program for parents with children at appropriate age level.

**Keywords:** Abdullah Nasih Ulwan · adab (ethic) · Sex education

## 1 Introduction

Free sex has become a rampant phenomenon in society. The technological advancement that grows rapidly undoubtedly has invited negative ideology from the West. A lot of information about sex, can be easily accessed in mass media, peers and even depictions screened on the street have poisoned one's thought. Hence, a hedonistic lifestyle was generated especially to the new generations and make it as a way of life. Sex is a natural occurrence that God gives to His servants and to use it in the right way as guided by Islam, but ignoring it in the wrong way indeed, will bear undesirable consequences.

Sex-related knowledge was delivered in Singapore's Government School; however, it was from the perspective of the Western. It emphasized the physical aspect and does not cover the aspect of spiritual. Every socialization activity is not guided by syaria, thus, children are not able to distinguish between the truth and the wrong. Anyway, sex education is still regarded as a taboo or parents do not know how to educate their children appropriately. School is merely helping the parents to groom the potential of the child for the future.

News from BABES (Babes Pregnant Crisis Support) shows 40% of out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases in Singapore are involving Malay teenagers aged between 13 to 15 years old. One of the main factors that contribute to this problem is the lack of more comprehensive and open sex education among some Malay/Muslim families. Sex education is still a taboo in parents because it was seen from the practical aspect. Thus, it is very important for the parents as the protector and guider of the child, to give the necessary knowledge in order to obey Allah's commands and stay away from His prohibition.

According to Darmadi, sex education in Islam is a combination of religious education, morality, and worship in order to devote themselves to God. Thus, sex education is no longer a taboo to hide from children but must be properly illuminated, based on relevant age. Sex education is not really what the public expects (practical aspect) but it is an education related to the anatomy of the body as well as Islamic laws related to it (hygiene, attire, social). The aim of this research is to understand the importance of sex education for children according to Abdullah Nasih Ulwan.

## 2 Method

The library research method was used in this research on the thinking of Abdullah Nasih Ulwan as the main source. Secondary data is also taken from various books as well the latest journals (less than five years), that correspond to the problems studied. All data is then reviewed, analyzed to serve as the basis of a new theory.

## 3 Result and Discussion

According to Nasih Ulwan, sex education in Islam is one of the educations that must be taught especially by parents. It is no longer a taboo but must be told openly. The goal of sex education is to give an introduction to the meaning of life when it comes to adulthood in accordance with syaria (halal and haram). Using a continuous approach in teaching, giving awareness, and being forthright in an appropriate way regarding sex and lust is a way to convey sex education. Through the approach carried out in an ongoing phase, will make the morality of Islam guidance and able to avoid the flow of sin. Abdullah Nasih Ulwan used the Quran and sunnah of Prophet (pbuh) to start the pre-puberty phase with the principles of asking permission, lowering their gaze, following syaria law, and knowing the signs of puberty. Children are also trained to stay away from looking at things that can increase sexual arousal. The goal is to prepare adolescence with good character.

Sex education, as well as prayers, can be introduced to children as young as 7 years old (tamyiz age) and begin to separate their bedding by 10 years old as mentioned in a hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As "Command your children to pray when they become seven years old and beat them for it (prayer) when they become ten years old, and; arrange their beds (to sleep) separately". Education in faith (tauhid) with consistent practice is food for the soul and educate them with proper socializing in Islam is important. Faith and socializing began with the family in order to cultivate good character in the future. Instilling self-awareness in circulating that God is always

watching every behavior openly or in secret, surely will lead the child to be more vigilant in every matter.

According to Darmadi, Islamic sex education should be a concern for parents to give a correct understanding to their children in order to generate a healthy generation. Teaching awareness and explanation related to sex, lust or marriage is a must because sex is important in life. It deals with child psychology from cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and behavioral aspects. He explained that sex education is integral to religious education, morality, and worship. Therefore, parents must provide knowledge of reproductive organs by educating morals, ethics, and religious commitments in order to avoid irregularities in sexual behavior.

Sex education can be done by teaching children to follow Islamic law correctly. His advice, firstly, children should be taught to take care of themselves and avoid slander by covering up the aurah following the syaria's regulations. Secondly, always guide the child about sex, its functions, and its consequences. Thirdly, parents should be role models and teach good behavior especially to children who are heading towards maturity. Next, they should be informed about the usefulness of sex in the right way in accordance with Islamic law (related to halal and haram) when they are ready to find a partner. Indeed, a clear exposure will help them to take responsibility for their sex in the future, socially and religiously.

Darmadi also quoted Sayyid Ridho and Uthman Ath-Thawil as saying that sex education aims to provide the right information, preparing the younger generation of Muslims or pre-puberty with theoretical knowledge of sexualities when physical changes occurred. It is very important to help the child to be responsible for the proper use of his sexual functions, and to be able to protect himself from social and religious transgression.

According to Moh. Roqib, sex education information is easy to find in this electronic age, so educating children with sex education within the framework of Islam is important. The goal is to prepare the child so that he can control his passions in the right way. Sex education is an effort to teach, raise awareness, and the illumination of sexual issues related to the knowledge and value of human anatomy and its functions. Every exposure and explanation that will be conveyed by parents from the aspects of physical, psychology, and spiritual health (Islamic religion) must be in accordance with the purpose, knowledge and level of maturity of the child. Sex education from parents can be started from an early age in order to provide a better understanding of sex behavior. It is an attempt to free the forbidden habits of Islam and to shut down all evil that leads to illicit relationships.

Achmad Anwar and Abidin, Muammar Luthfi said the delivery of appropriate sex education at an early age is necessary to prevent sexual deviant behavior before the age of mumayyiz or puberty. It is done through an understanding of the biological body, justified socialization, forms of deviation, and planting a courageous attitude when they are being abused. Ali Mukti argues that Islamic sex education for early childhood (2–6 years) is a necessity in order to avoid the threat of sexual abuse. The education that will be delivered by parents must be adjusted according to the cognitive development and sexual development of the child. The child must be informed of the anatomy of the body, adab, values, and related laws in order to be able to respect themselves as servants of God.

Isnatul Chasanah says that sex education to children is no longer a taboo but must be conveyed to children openly. Parents should be given awareness to deliver sex education to children aged 8–10 using clear and using simple language in order to lead children to proper sexual behavior. Wahyuni Nadar said parents need to have the knowledge to convey Islamic sex education to early childhood with appropriate methods in order to be understood easily. Sex education is an education that is not only about the anatomy of the body but about Islam (sharia law) that goes hand in hand with it. Wardatul Ilmiah, Nanah Sujannah, Rasnam Rasyidi said that parents should give education to children including sex education according to age. It is a precaution in applying good character and not immersed in the lifestyle of hedonism.

This research concludes that sex education should be exposed to children not at the age of 7 years old as mention by Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, but at an earlier age (early childhood). Varieties of information and pictures are easily available on social sites, sharing from peers, and even on the street. This will give a negative impact on the mind and able to threaten the child's faith if not being guided properly by parents with the right information in Islam. Right education that is being instilled continuously will be a guide in their daily social activities related to Islamic law.

Giving sex education about the function of sex organs, halal and haram, can be taught in an ongoing way so that there is no abuse of reproductive use later. It also ensures that the child's natural nature in every aspect of lust desires able to be controlled and maintained as well as possible. As the child increases in adolescence, parents can give explain of the sex organs endowed to the blessed path through marriage and teach them about the responsibility for the cleanliness of their reproductive anatomy.

#### Preventive measure

Prevention is the solution given in Islam to avoid sin from spreading. Abdullah Nasih Ulwan had the same opinion as Isma'il Raji al Faraqi (1921 – 1986), that parents should teach ethics (adab, morals) through prayers and separate bedding at the age of 10 (Hadith by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As, narrated by Abu Dawud: 495). Parents who train children to pray and separate children's bedding when they are able to think, have taught discipline and demonstrate responsibility to the child. Guidance on children through continuous laying by the parents can put the manner not only on themselves but also on society.

The purpose of separating beds according to Sayyid Qutb (1906 -1966) in surah An-Nur (24): 30 -31 is to keep a view. The purpose of keeping a view is to abstain from means that may stimulate the temptation of lust and damage cleanliness and sanctity in the heart. According to him, education is started from home by asking permission to be followed which has to do with keeping a view. He also advised women to keep their jewelry and warn girls of prostitution, refrain from looking at the unlawful and encourage the marriage of single children.

The manner of asking for permission is among the social manners that can be applied anywhere. The Prophet PBUH taught the manners to give greetings and asked for permission as it is the best way to spread each other's love. The adab asked for permission is recorded in Surah An-Nur verses 58 to 59. These verses touch on the manner into the chamber of the parent at the time of the prescribed time before dawn prayer, at noon, and after ishaa. The adab must be emphasized as the child reaches adulthood.

According to Tafseer Ibn Kathir, the purpose is to avoid the unseen sight of parents (when they are not properly dressed). It can also avoid the adverse implications to the curious mind, the heart that wants to feel and will be the subject of conversation to peers about what they see. Adab that is applied from the pre-puberty age will become a habit in order to form the desired morality.

Al-Ghazali (1058 – 1111) an Islamic philosopher emphasized through the training of adab (morals) in life to form a good character when growing up. Adab applied in oneself, adab against God, adab against parents and others, has to do with physical and spiritual in order to keep away from sin. For example, keeping the eyes away from seeing something that is unclean and can stimulate lust. The message will be transmitted through the eyes, next to the heart, and then to the other parts of the body. Discipline in training children by keeping bad relationships away is considered as the basis for providing education by parents. This is because children learn a lot through impersonation.

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud points to the fact that Naquib Al Attas (1931), a philosopher, said that it is very important to provide education through adab. According to him, man consists of bodies and spirits, so the embedded adab will discipline the soul and mind in order to be a good person. The discipline obtained will make the individual aware of the right and wrong behavior. The correct knowledge conveyed by educators will eliminate doubts in running one activity a day. Thus, adab led by *istiqomah* is the process of forming good character in the future.

John W. Santrock, taking the views from Carlo & others (2017); Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Knafo (2015); Thompson (2014), “stress that parents’ communication with children, their discipline techniques, and many other aspects of parent-child relationships influence children’s moral development.” Grusec’s (2006) view on moral behavior in Life-Span Development - moral principles are the process of repetition, punishment, and impersonation for individuals from observing are likely to adopt the actions. In Ross Thompson’s view (2006, 2009, 2014), parents can assist the quest for children’s development is from quality relationships, proactive strategies, and communication.

This research concludes that parents must give awareness of the dangers of unlawful sexual stimulation, teaching illegal *halal* laws before and after puberty. Choosing a friend is one factor that can influence the child’s personality. The character of the child will reflect the circle of friends that he engaged with. Apart from that, organize their free time wisely, practice good health, and aware that Allah is All-Seeing and All-Knowing. Continuous monitoring by a parent is encouraged even though the child has increased adulthood, either locally or outdoors. It aims to ensure that the direction is chosen by the child always follows the view of Islam and does not contradict it.

Educating children with adab is necessary because it is not only good manners but determination in disciplining oneself to do something good through repetitive exercises. Adab in the ritual act and daily activities towards oneself and others will able to generate a harmony for the soul, mind, and body. Adab that is instilled together in the heart will foster a good character and gain happiness in this world and the hereafter. Thus, the implementation of adab to the body, mind, heart, and action will lead to obeying God’s (Allah’s) commands and avoid his prohibitions.

## 4 Conclusion

Sex education is a comprehensive education that is integrated with religious education, ethics, morals, and worship starting at an early age. So, it is important for parents, as a primary educators to educate children through teaching, awareness, and explanation of sexual issues and their associations with the Islamic laws through proper methods at appropriate age level. Teaching and implementing adab in daily activities (towards oneself, Allah, and social with the community) and lowering the gaze is a way to avoid sexual encounters, followed by parental monitoring. Suggestion to conduct or implement a program for parents on sex education within the context of Islamic ideology based on the relevant age group.

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