As a parent, nothing can prepare you for this moment. My palms were sweating and my chest tightened as I came closer. The anxiety behind it all was overwhelming, but it was finally time. Time to sit down next to my son and tell him about the birds and the bees. To talk about where babies come from with your child is a daunting task. However, this is an important necessity we as parents seem to be neglecting in today’s society. Mothers and fathers are not arming the future generations with the necessary tools they need to protect themselves from the many sexual dangers that lurk behind every teen romance and under every dirty bed sheet. Its like we are afraid to get stung by the bee and have shoed all the birds away.

According to a study conducted by the University of Sydney, the rates of sexually transmitted diseases are sharply on the rise. Professor Warren Jones stated that ‘the number of teens engaging in precarious sexual encounters had doubled over a five-year period’. This underlines the continuous issue that today’s society faces when it comes to sex. Furthermore, Professor Jones believes that ‘teenagers are ill informed about sex and 90% of 15-17 year olds surveyed had not had an honest discussion about sex with their parents’. We all live in a sexually crazed world where half naked women are advertised at every second connection lines between a father and son discussion about sex with their parents’. Children of this generation can be in the adolescent wilderness where sexual dangers can attack within a blink of an eye. According to recent figures released by the Sydney morning herald, ‘STI’s like gonorrhoea and herpes are out of control’. People think aids were just a worry of the 80’s, but in recent years there has ‘been a worrying increase of the disease in our own back yard of Australia’. Not to mention adolescents are now more exposed to sex crimes and criminal rapes, which highlights an additional issue in teenage pregnancy.

Teens are now left wondering alone in the adolescent wilderness where sexual dangers can attack within a blink of an eye. According to recent figures released by the Sydney morning herald, ‘STI’s like gonorrhoea and herpes are out of control’. ‘People think aids were just a worry of the 80’s, but in recent years there has ‘been a worrying increase of the disease in our own back yard of Australia’. Not to mention adolescents are now more exposed to sex crimes and criminal rapes, which highlights an additional issue in teenage pregnancy.

About a month ago now, I attended a youth support group in Wagga Wagga to interview teen mums. Of the 15 little girls who were at the support group, the birds and the bees had never been mentioned to them by any of their parents. I even asked Gloria, a mother of 16 year Sophie, as to why she had not engaged in this extremely important conversation with her own daughter. She then looked at me with regret filling her eyes and said, “well I thought it was going to be too awkward.” This is the same excuse that crossed my mind when I found out that my own beautiful daughter had fallen pregnant. It was only six months ago, when I witnessed my 18-year-old daughter leaning over the bathroom toilet vomiting. My heart than began to sink into a sea of fear as I could only think of the worst situation and I was right. She was pregnant. The pure ignorance of thinking it was too awkward to discuss sex with my daughter and teach her a life lesson was my biggest mistake as parent.

A vast majority of parents in today’s society are just like Gloria and I. We should not be scared of something that is a fact of life. All parents have experienced many situations that are awkward with your child. Do you not remember the time when you were vomited on in public? Do you not remember hearing an enormous shriek as the look of disappointment crossed their face after not receiving what they wanted in a restaurant?

Everything about being a parent is awkward, so we as mothers and fathers should be able to rise to the challenge. Many people believe educating your offspring from a young age about sex encourages a loss of childhood innocence. But what we should really understand is that it opens up connections and builds bridges between generations. The birds and the bees builds trust so younger people feel comfortable about having sexually oriented discussions with their parents. In time, this will create a society where we can avoid issues such as young, confused teens not wanting to ‘come out’ as to whether they are homosexual. By ignoring the birds and the bees we are putting out our foot in front of the door and keeping the closet closed.

It was only three months ago, still reeling from the devastation of a newly pregnant daughter, I sat down with my 16-year-old son and explained to him the ins and outs of sexual development. That essential discussion from a couple months ago forged a trust between our father and son relationship that has strengthen over time. He now has a girlfriend and has come to me as a father for advice and informed me that he was sexually active. It is this juxtaposition of my two children that has made me realise how important the birds and the bees talk is. Do not make the same mistake I made as a parent in disregarding a fundamental part of parenting. It is your duty.
Lachlan Pye’s weekly spill