

***Soul Buddyz
Audience Research***

The nature of boy/girl relationships amongst 12 to 14 year olds, their knowledge and experience of sex and what they want to know about sexuality

**Glynis Clacherty
March 2006**



***SOUL
Buddyz***
tomorrow is ours

Research conducted for Soul Buddyz by



Clacherty & Associates
Education and Social Development (Pty) Ltd
PO Box 613,
Auckland Park,
2006, South Africa
Telephone: (+27) 011-482-4083
E-mail: glynis@clacherty.co.za

Photos: Suzy Bernstein

Contents	Page
<u>Summary, analysis and recommendations</u>	<i>ii</i>
<u>1. Introduction</u>	<i>1</i>
Introduction to <i>Soul Buddyz</i>	<i>1</i>
The Soul City research and development process	<i>1</i>
<u>2. Research approach</u>	<i>1</i>
Child participation	<i>1</i>
<i>Ethics</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Appropriate activities</i>	<i>5</i>
Research aims	<i>7</i>
Research groups and activities	<i>7</i>
Data analysis	<i>7</i>
<u>3. Findings from participatory groups</u>	<i>8</i>
<i>Theme 1: Gender perceptions</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Theme 2: The relationships children have at this age</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Theme 3: What they want to know about sex and where they think they will find this information</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Theme 4: Risky behaviour and protective behaviour</i>	<i>24</i>
<u>4. Analysis and recommendations</u>	<i>27</i>
<u>5. References</u>	<i>30</i>
<u>6. Appendix 1: Statement of Ethics</u>	<i>31</i>

Summary, analysis and recommendations

The findings of this research provide useful information about how young people see their gender and sexual identities, how they perceive relationships between boys and girls and how these are influenced by their sense of gender identity.

Universally, children described boys as tough, rough and macho. Boys and girls associated boys with violence, even mentioning rape and crime. Girls are seen as beautiful, soft and caring. There are some deviations from this stereotype but it is dominant.

Friendships, whether they are between young people of the same sex or of the opposite sex, are valued because they provide support and caring. This young adolescent age is clearly an age of ambivalence where young people are interested in the opposite sex but not quite sure how to enter into or sustain 'love relationships'. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend is a topic of conversation, a sign of being grown up, a badge of prestige and the source of much intrigue and gossip. Yet there are clearly some children who, while aware of relationships with the opposite sex and interested in them, are not involved in them at all. Young people described relationships that vary from holding hands to those that involve deep feeling for the other person.

Many children, rural in particular, described sex as part of these relationships. In this study penetrative sex is described more often than other forms of sexual contact (excluding kissing and hugging). In only one instance in the entire study did a child speak about (genital) sexual pleasure from contact other than penetration. This could be because this is a difficult topic to discuss with a researcher but the openness with which some children discussed sex suggests that it is possibly because this kind of sexual contact is not common.

Most of these encounters are secret and the way children talk about them (particularly in the rural context) suggests that they are part of a children's culture from which adults are excluded. Boys and girls talked openly about these sexual encounters, though for girls there was some sense of shame and criticism of girls who did this because they were involving themselves in risky or 'sluttish' behaviour.

Boys in some groups were adamant that girls actively want sex and the reasons they gave for this (apart from sexual desire itself) were that they wanted babies and the money or goods they sometimes got for it. Girls saw boys as experimenting and blamed watching of 'blue' movies on TV. Both of these explanations reveal gender stereotypes. Girls said girls had sex and even babies usually because they wanted someone to love.

Forced sex was commonly described by boys and girls with some boys even admitting to it. The way young people talked about it suggested an acceptance of it, again possibly because of the way young people perceive boys and girls.

Exploitative sex was commonly described, with girls having sex with boys for money. Sex with older men or boys for money was also a common survival strategy, often encouraged by parents. Sexual abuse by household members was described as a 'relationship' by children.

What is striking is the fact that as soon as researchers began to move the discussion from platonic friendship to sexual contact descriptions of caring and supportive relationships disappeared from the conversation, suggesting that young people see sex in a negative context rather than as an expression of love between people who care about each other.

When it comes to HIV/AIDS, children in this study have knowledge of protective strategies such as safe sex and abstinence though their protective strategies seldom extend beyond these. A worrying insight given by this work is the fact that children are muddling messages about prevention with messages about living healthily with HIV/AIDS, with many children suggesting that exercising, eating vegetables and even taking anti-retrovirals will protect them from HIV.

Children of this age have many, many questions about sex. They want to know about the mechanics of it as well as the biology. They also ask a number of questions related to sexual behaviour and their own growing sexuality. Most do not see family as a source of information saying that parents get angry and see questions about sex as a sign of them being sexually active. Television and radio are important sources of information for children this age. It is also clear that schools are beginning to talk with children about sexuality issues though children do not feel confident to ask teachers some of their questions.

Clearly, there is some simple knowledge that the *Soul Buddyz* series can deal with. There are also myths about boys and girls that need to be countered. But perhaps more importantly, the series should explore how young people see themselves and the different kinds of relationships they have and how they define their identities within these relationships. It would be important to acknowledge that children are sexual beings and that sex is part of their relationships. Alongside this there is a need to problematise forced sex and present alternative views of sexual expression.

Showing young people drawing on a variety of protective strategies, not just abstention, is also important. Children need to see young people grappling with their sexuality and making decisions that will protect them. All this needs to take place within the context of pressure that says, for example boys need to have sex to prove themselves or girls because it gives them prestige. Continued exploration of gender stereotypes is also important.

1. Introduction

Introduction to *Soul Buddyz*

Soul Buddyz is a multi media edutainment vehicle created for 8 to 12 year olds by the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication. It consists of a television drama, radio drama and print materials. The first television drama series was aired on SABC 1 during 2001. Since then two further series have been screened and *Soul Buddyz* has become an important part of life for many South African children, particularly now many of them belong to the *Soul Buddyz* club programme which operates in schools all over the country. A new *Soul Buddyz* series is planned and this report forms part of the formative research for the television series.

The new series of *Soul Buddyz* will deal with the following issues:

- Road safety
- Psychological trauma related to crime and violence
- HIV/AIDS

This report covers the HIV/AIDS theme.

The Soul City research and development process

Over the years Soul City has developed a particular approach to the creation of a mass media vehicle such as *Soul Buddyz*. This includes an extensive consultation and research process that ensures that all stakeholders and target groups have input into the materials. The research reported on here is part of the target audience research for the new *Soul Buddyz* series.

This research, along with a literature review and input from stakeholders, will be discussed at a message design workshop. The messages will inform the script writing process for the TV drama. Once the scripts have been written they will be tested with the target audience and only then finalised.

2. Research approach

Child participation

Children participate throughout the creation of the *Soul Buddyz* series. This strong commitment to child participation is motivated by a number of factors.

Firstly, the right of children to participate in issues that will affect them is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which South Africa is a signatory.

States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child... (Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Clearly, within the context of the CRC children have a right to participate in the creation of media such as *Soul Buddyz*. It is not enough, however, to say that children have a right to participate. It is also important to understand why they should participate.



Children's participatory rights are legitimated in a number of different ways. The most common arguments are summed up in the following three points (adapted from Kj rholt and Qvortrup, 2000).

1) The first argument for children's participation suggests that participation is in the best interests of children. It contributes to a positive development of individual identity, competence and a sense of responsibility.



2) The second argument for children's participation emphasises the way in which children's social participation constitutes an important area for social democratisation insofar as it represents the extension of some democratic rights to a disenfranchised group.



3) The third argument is that children's participation in social processes gives us access to essential information that we could get from no other source, thereby making society a better place for all of us. The following quote sums up this argument:

Developing better methods of working with children and enabling their participation is beneficial not only to children. By including some previously invisible groups we are making our research, our programmes and our communities [and our media] more inclusive, more functional and effective. Omitting a large sector of society means that everyone loses and fails to see the bigger picture. If we are unaware of the problems and issues that concern children and young people we cannot hope to devise strategies or solutions [or media] that will address their concerns, and will constantly be struggling to make sense of the world without some of the vital information we need. (Ivan-Smith and Johnson, 1998, p299)

This last argument is perhaps the most important in the context of the creation of *Soul Buddyz*. If we want a media vehicle that educates while it entertains, it must take into account the real problems and issues that concern young people. We can only do this if we allow them to participate in the making of the media at an early stage in the process.



Boyden and Ennew (1997) point out that if children's participation is to be more than token it needs to be devised in such a way as to take particular ethical issues into account and to make sure the activities are suited to the ages and stages of development of the children and youth. Both these issues were taken into account in this work.

Ethics

An adapted form of the ethical guideline for research work with children reproduced in Boyden and Ennew's (1997) publication on research with children (see Appendix 1) was applied in this work.

In addition another key ethical principle was applied in this research.

It is not ethical to expose a child already vulnerable to any additional risk through an investigation that carries no benefit for the child. Interviews about painful subjects should be performed with the principle of 'least harm' (Boyden and Ennew, 1997, p43).



Researchers who ran the focus group discussions were aware that some of the topics we were exploring could touch on sensitive and difficult issues for many children. The principle of 'minimising harm' was applied throughout.

Practically this meant that researchers made it possible for children to withdraw at any stage, were sensitive about issues which might have caused shame or embarrassment, did not challenge the child about answers given, and did not ask questions which could have been upsetting. They also created an environment in which children could tell just as much of their story as they felt safe to tell. They did not probe about the details of a painful event, nor ask about a child's feelings. What the child offered was accepted, even if not all the details were present. Note that this applies only to information that was potentially painful. In other situations the researchers used secondary questions to probe for details.

In addition, ensuring complete confidentiality of data was another way in which we sought to minimise harm. Particular schools are not named in the research report and descriptors are used to identify quotes.

Appropriate activities

To make sure the research was truly participatory group activities were devised in such a way that

...children's ideas and perceptions could be expressed in their own terms without being blocked or misrepresented by the ways adults think and talk. (Boyden and Ennew, 1997, p45).

This meant that we used techniques that were less dependant on words, for example mapping and drawing.



We also attempted to reduce the power relationships between children and adults in the research process by playing games with children before we began the work and by working in a space where children felt comfortable.



Research aims

The audience research on HIV/AIDS safety aimed to understand:

- The kind of relationships young people have at this age and in particular how gender perceptions influence these relationships
- What they know about sex and what they want to know
- The nature of their sexual behaviour at this age
- What they define as risky behaviour
- What strategies they use to protect themselves

Research groups and activities

The research consisted of a series of participatory discussion groups held with randomly selected children aged between 8 and 12 from a diverse range of environments in 6 provinces around South Africa. The following table outlines the range of groups who participated in the research around road safety.

Province	Age	Gender	Area	Language
Gauteng	12 –14	Boys	Suburban Johannesburg	English
Gauteng	12 –14	Girls	informal settlement Katlehong	isiZulu
W Cape	12 –14	Girls	Suburban Cape Town	Afrikaans
W Cape	12 –14	Boys	Township (coloured) Cape Town	Afrikaans
Limpopo	12 –14	Boys	Rural	sePedi
Limpopo	12-14	Girls	Rural	sePedi
KwaZulu/Natal	12 -14	Boys	Informal settlement Durban south	isiZulu
KwaZulu/Natal	12 -14	Girls	Rural	isiZulu

Total children: 80

Data analysis

Group discussion took place in the children's home language. All the discussion during the participatory workshops was taped, translated and transcribed. These transcripts formed the data that were then analysed. The transcripts were analysed using a standard qualitative data analysis tool, thematic analysis.

3. Findings from participatory groups

The findings are presented under four themes:

- Gender perceptions
- The relationships children have at this age
- What they want to know about sex and where they think they will find this information
- Risky behaviour and protective behaviour

Theme 1: Gender perceptions

In all the girls' groups boys were seen by girls as rougher and harder than girls. In all of the girls' groups boys were also seen as violent. The following transcripts are typical.

Girls are good people. They do not like to tease others. Boys are naughty, they can rape a person and give that person diseases.
Girls are good than boys. They do not walk about at night. They stay at home.
Girls are full of petty jealousies and they like to fight.
R: lets talk about boys now. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you see the picture of a boy?
Boys are very, very bad criminals. They always steal for their families.
Boys are troublesome at their homes. They are not respectful and they do not respect each other.
Boys like teasing girls. They hit them and they force girls to do things that they do not want to do.
R: things like what?
Like calling them at night.
Boys are not as good as girls. Girls have many chores at home and boys do not have any chores. Their chore is to smoke cigarettes.
Boys smoke, walk around at night and they kill people's children. They do not respect their parents.
Boys like beating/fighting their parents more than girls. They end up killing them. Boys force girls to love (to go out) with them and if girls do not agree they hit them.
Boys like to rape. When a girl no longer wants to go out with a boy the boy rapes the girl. They do not want to respect their parents.
Boys drink and they give girls trouble. You hardly see them giving other boys problems. (Girls, Limpopo, rural)

I said girls are loving, sweet, kind, caring, respectful, loud and also soft. Boys are rude, sometimes funny, and honest, they smooth, they act like they cool, most are bossy and they act like leaders.
I feel...what I feel about girls...okay most of them, some of them have too much opinion, they always want to be right, most are honest with you, like they tell you what's wrong with you, they work on your nerves, they bossy, rude, mostly responsible and Boys are annoying, immature, sometimes kind, loud, playful, forward, rude, irritating, sometimes can be responsible.

I think girls are shy, loud, responsible, emotional, soft, caring, relaxed, mature and less active. I think boys are straightforward, irresponsible, very sexually active, impatient, playful, fast, active and childish.

I think girls, they boring, shy, emotional, responsible, reserved and they lady like. Boys are, uhm, nonchalant, they idiots, cheaters, obnoxious, attention seekers, they love sex, they masculine, players, funny, arrogant, they get us pregnant, they rude, irresponsible and energetic. (Girls, W.Cape, suburban)

Boys present a very similar picture of boys and girls.

Boys are rude, smokers, they beat others and jealous. Girls are Extroverted, they have love affairs and are beautiful.

Boys are jealous, they bully each other, they clap each other. Girls talk too much and are beautiful.

Boys are strong/tough, they flirt with girls, they stink (said with a chuckle), they are carefree and they steal. Girls are extroverted, smart & neat and they are beautiful.

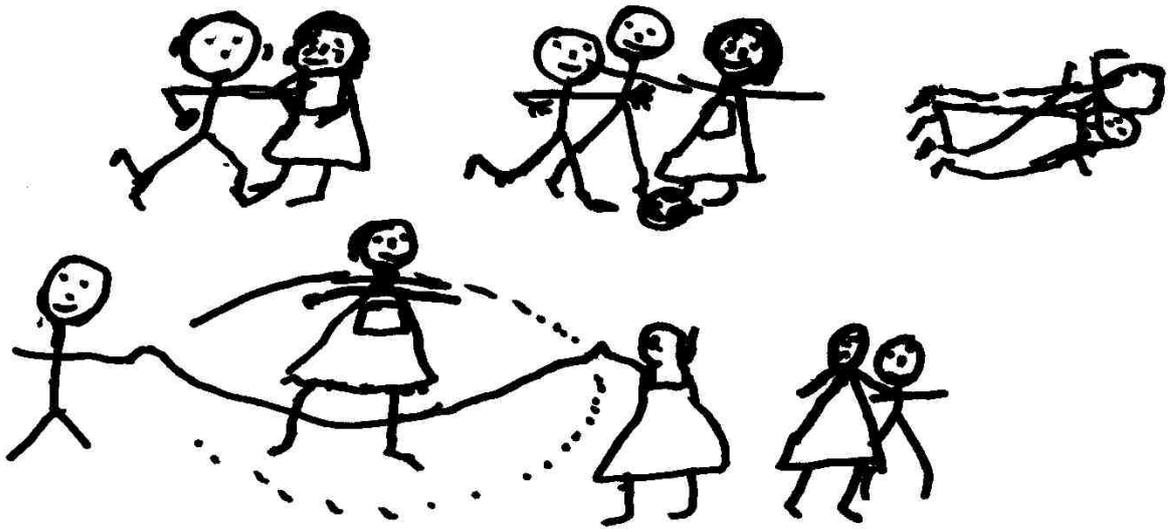
Girls are fly, beautiful and they like to play, and they like boys and some of them don't wash themselves. Boys are jealous, they like sex and girls, they are criminals and they just like to make a nuisance of themselves.

Girls are talkative while boys like to beat them up. (Boys, KZN, informal settlement)

What stands out from this research is the similarity of perceptions across all groups. These gender perceptions are useful in understanding why forced sex for example, (see below) is presented as a part of many relationships by boys and girls.

Theme 2: The relationships children have at this age

The core activity asked children to describe all the different relationships that they had and sexuality was explored within the context of these relationships. This approach was chosen because recent thinking emphasises the need “to focus not on HIV/AIDS education or sex and sexual relations but rather on young people’s identities and relations with each other in general, recognising sexuality as a key component.” (see Hewlett 2006, p8). In addition the research looked at how gender perceptions influenced the creation of children’s sexual identities and practices.



Children described a range of different relationships. All groups talked about friendships. Same sex friendships between girls and girls and boys and boys,

A girl can be friends with another girl and they'll be able to help each other. They can meet maybe at school or they might be living in the same neighbourhood and therefore they can meet even after school or over weekends. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

You may find two girls who are friends and are there for each other. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

A relationship between two girls - they are friends because they help each other and they play together and they visit each other. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Okay this one is between two boys and they are friends they play together, they eat together and when one needs help he knows he can always count on the other.

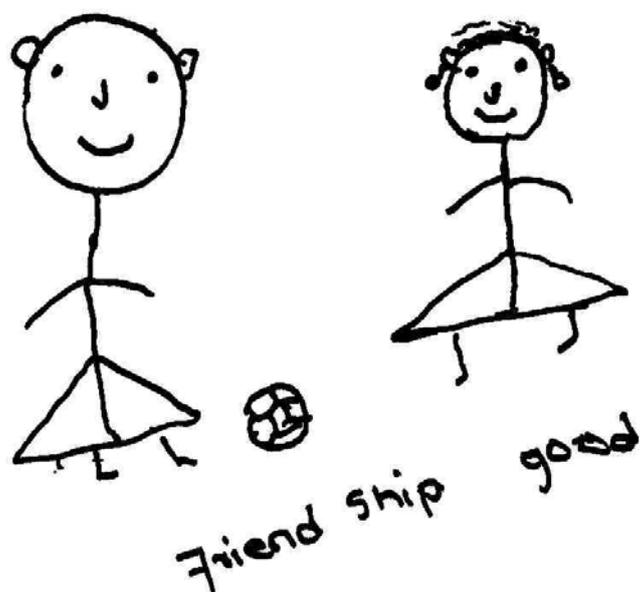
Why do they like this kind of a relationship?

Because they're both boys and it won't put you into any risk whatsoever.

(Boy, KZN, rural)

A relationship between a boy and a boy... and they can spend lots of hours together, and they help each other when one is in need, for instance if one of them don't have money for lunch the other will freely lend the other the money needed for lunch. And yes it is a long-term relationship. (Boy, KZN, rural)

Okay, what I have here is a boy-to-boy relationship; they play together they walk to school together and what they like about their relationship is that, like my friend has just said, it won't put them into any risk or danger. (Boy, KZN, rural)



The descriptions of these relationships are characterised by the mention of caring and kind behaviour. Children often say that these friendships carry no risk, implying that boy-girl relationships do carry risk.

Children also describe friendships between girls and boys. These too are seen as caring friendships and children often mention that these friendships do not involve sex. What is interesting about these descriptions is the mutual respect and enjoyment in each other's company that is described.

I have added a relationship of kindness to my drawing. This means that because these children are too young to be in love, they play together, chase each other and take out their toys to play. They do not do sex (thobalano). They are too young for that. It is a relationship of tolerance, acceptance and kindness. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

You are supposed to play with a boy, so that when you are older you have a future. I play with boys. They show me what they do. Some of the things that they do are not good. But you do not have to agree with that. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

A cool relationship is when maybe two, a girl and a boy are together maybe they go out study together and sit around, maybe the boy teaches the girl to feed the dogs if the girl is afraid of the dogs, and if maybe, or if a girl tells the boy about, did you watch that programme yesterday, or what happened yesterday and all that. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

A cool relationship, the two, the girl and the boy they always want the best for their future. That is what most happens in a cool relationship. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

Sometimes they go to the same school, they do school projects together and they are not having sex, they are just friends. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Here they are just friends, they play together. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Here they play together

Here they talk over the fence

Here they play with other children (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Okay and this is a girl and her friend that she met in the neighbourhood and they usually accompany each other to the shops and maybe from the shops and they play football together, because this girl enjoys/likes soccer and she's taught by this other friend.

How much time do they spend together?

About 4 hours and mostly they spend time over the weekends.

How does this girl behave when with this boy?

Well this boy treats her like a sister. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

Girls in one group talked about how these friendships were the best relationships for girls to have.

The best relationship to have is that as children we must take care of ourselves and stay at home and just have that good friend that you can share things with and share your school work and give each other good advices. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

A good relationship to have is one between friends because friends do their school work together and play together. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

I think the best relationship to is to have a church-going friend and not be friends with older girls because they might influence you to start dating. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Children describe how sometimes over time some boy-girl friendships become more than friendships.

Okay, here is this boy who likes to walk with this girl; like when she's going to school this guy will ask to accompany her and he tells her he loves her and all such stuff. And then this girl considers if this boy is really sincere... and then this boy does the things that he promised until the girl falls for this guy and then she starts to skip school so that she can go and spend some time with this boy. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

Yes there are, like... eh there are girls who like boys, they'd start out as friends and then end-up being lovers. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

*I became friends with this girl a long time ago until I decided that I must tell her I have feelings for her and I want to tell her that I love her; and she might say I love you too or not but I don't have any expectations. And ...eh a friendship like that you'll find that they like hanging around taking walks together; but most importantly what they like to do together is their homework
R: How much time do they spend together?*

They spend a lot of time together because they do their schoolwork together, so they spend a lot of time together like in the library or during the lunch break, even when they are walking home after school.

R: Do they get physically involved?

No, they don't get physically involved.

R: What about in the future, will they get physically involved?

Well it's a matter of maybe (chance) because a boy might tell a girl that he loves her and a girl might fall for that; so it's really a matter of chance.

R: What do they get in that relationship, why do they like it? They learn more about the likes and behaviour of the opposite sex. (Boy, KZN, rural)

There are boys that are different...all of them tell you, "I love you", but it's not the way they say it, it's how they show it, it's how you see it, it's what they do for you...the little gestures...the things that they do. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

An interesting pattern that emerged was the way girls described serious boy-girl relationships in a negative way. It seems that this attitude was not merely parroting parents or telling the researcher what was a socially acceptable thing but that many girls used this strong attitude as a protective strategy.

Boys and girls do become friends and when the boy gets to a stage he now wants to sleep with the girl who was his friend. Then when the girl realizes this she also begins to behave stupidly and she also wants to sleep with the boy. They end up sleeping. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

Ja, like say if your boyfriend makes you pregnant and then he wouldn't want anything to do with your child and he leaves you and you must like suffer on your own if your parents also don't want you because you brought it on yourself. You have a mind and you should be knowing not to do these things and stuff like that. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

They also describe how at this age there is an ambivalence about relationships with the opposite sex. It seems particularly as if boys experience this and mostly boys in the suburban groups. They are torn between their friendships with the boys and their growing attraction to girls.

They only talk and watch movies, like go out but when it comes to his friends, when he sees his friends he just leaves her alone and goes and plays with them. It is because he thinks that the friends will just say "Hey he is too cool. He thinks he is on top of the world, he has a girlfriend" and things like that. So you see, he is too shy and even though those things are lies he is afraid to tell them, so he says she is not my girlfriend we are just friends. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

I think she might be afraid to say yes if I ask her because her friends might complain that she doesn't spend much time with them since she's got a new boyfriend. And some girls don't like that because some of their friends might go to their parents and tell them that there is a girl which is disrespectful. (Boy, KZN, rural)

Girls also talked about not wanting relationships with boys because the boys could get jealous.

I don't want to have a boyfriend because if you have a boyfriend you not gonna be able to enjoy yourself. Say you fancy your boyfriend you kiss him...you French kiss him...whatever...we call it "getting bymekaar" and you go to Grand West with your boyfriend and this one cute guy walks past you. And he see you eyeing that guy the whole time, he's gonna slap against you. He's gonna say I'm your boyfriend you suppose to look at me now. You won't like have a chance to go to other boys. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Generally at this age there is a fair amount of gossip, intrigue and swapping of one girl or boy for another, almost as if young people of this age are experimenting with the idea of having a girlfriend or a boyfriend.

Sometimes you'll find two boys fighting over a girl. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

*They don't last because a boy might see another girl and the two girls fight and then they break up.
Then what happens?
Then the boy can get lonely while the girls are fighting. (Boy, KZN, rural)*

Sometimes a boy has two girlfriends, and sometimes he makes an appointment with both of them for the same time. They then meet and fight over him. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

At some point, I told my girlfriend that I was going to come and see her, so I took my bicycle and rode to her place. Then my other school (girl) friend saw me with her, I didn't know they lived in the same area, and when we met at school the other day, she told me not see my girlfriend anymore and that I should see her from now on, but we were just friends. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Some boys are sly, they like scheme, they just know how to push your buttons, they just know what to say and when to say it...and to make you feel all tingly and then you still think there is something on but then he says it to every person and to all the girls that he like them mos so and all that. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

You really think you in love with somebody but than actually you not. The persons maybe just using you for something and also you like madly in love and the person, he just takes everything leniently and you take everything to heart and emotional and ja. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

In one group girls describe how having a boyfriend gives girls status amongst peers.

I think a lot of people get boyfriends and then have sex for popularity, oh its almost like you walking down the corridor and then, and its mostly in higher grades also, and then its like oh there she's walking she has a grade 12 boyfriend. And it's like everybody's like more respect for her. Okay she has a grade 12 boy okay, if we gonna mess with her she's gonna go fetch, you

know what I mean. Like that. Maybe he's like the hottest guy in school or something. And he makes her popular. And most of the girls also think they more mature for the next level. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Just to be... just to have a boyfriend is enough for us, you know what I mean. You go to your friends and say oh I have a boyfriend and its like (gesture) ... Group laughs ... it's like that. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

And it feels like okay, you have a boyfriend and most of the people is going to come to you and ask you, oh is it true...you know. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Many of these boy-girl relationships involve consensual sex. Consensual sex of the sort described here seemed to be more common amongst the rural groups who spoke about it quite matter-of-factly.

They sleep together at their homes when there are no adults. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

So what do they do together?

They just hang around each other and they don't do their homework and they think about sex.

Do they have sex?

Yes, they do.

Do you know of a relationship like that?

Yes, but I haven't seen children having sex.

Do boys your age have relationships like that?

Yes, according to my knowledge there are boys my age with relationships like that. (Boy, KZN, rural)

I do have sex, when we do, she takes off her clothes, I take off mine. I don't know what goes into our minds when we are having sex, sometimes I feel happy and she feels happy and we have sex. There shouldn't be funny actions because she might be hurt.

What happens when she gets hurt?

You must take it easy and not do it too fast, ride her slow. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

I had sex last of last year, we did it at the back of her house, her elder sister nearly caught us. I left my shoes in her lawn. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

I have this girl next door, we stand and talk over the fence and when it gets dark I put it through the fence. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Uhm personally, uhm, I think that I am ready to have sex but the problem is to convince my mother that I should use contraception and stuff because I don't think my mother thinks I am old enough yet. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

They have sex.

Would they have sex at school?

No.

And kiss at school?

*Yes in the toilet or in the corner sometimes.
Okay so that happens in a school like this, you have seen it?
Yes. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)*

*Does it happen that girls ask for sex?
All - yes! (Boy, Limpopo, rural)*

With this one (referring to his drawing), the girl says to the boy, "here is the condom, let's go have sex" On this one the boy brings the condom and tells the girl that he wants to have sex. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

They do these things at night in the street when it is quiet. People do not see much they just see people kissing. For example a girl can have a bath and go outside to pretend to empty the washing basin only to find that she is going to her boyfriend. They talk and they quickly kiss. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

Some groups described how sex is often part of a relationship at this age because young people want to say they have had sex.

Others really do love that girl and others just want to be able to claim that they do have a girlfriend and also do want sex. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Others just want to have sex with you then dump you and others really do love their girlfriends and those that just want to have sex with you they simply want to tell their friends that: hey I have slept with that girl. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

There was also some discussion about why girls want to have sex with boys. The most common reason that the girls' groups gave was because girls wanted to be loved, although some agreed that girls also did it for money and even for babies. Boys thought girls wanted sex because they wanted babies or that they did it for money.

The reason I think people have boyfriends is because they just looking for someone to like them and to love them and for some girls it's because of sex. That's the reason why. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

*Why do girls and boys get together?
I think for...to experiment. Or just to feel how it is... like to be loved. Maybe they don't have that much love in their own houses now they come to expect it from the boy or the man. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)*

*R: What kind of relationships do girls want from boys?
They want respect from boys.
They want love.
Most of the time some girls want children from the boys.
Some girls just want the boys' money.
Some girls boast about their boyfriend's beautiful homes. They say they have done well for themselves. (Girls, Limpopo, rural)*

Then she says I want to have a baby and then she will try to influence her small boy to have sex with her so that she can get a baby because now she is

older than the boy. So the boy maybe if now he has a baby, the boy is small, maybe at his house will have troubles (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

Some of the girls they want babies because they think babies are – it's fun to have a baby but it's a problem. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

Some want to have a relationships with you because you have money, she will ask for 'five bob' (50c) and if you do, you think she likes you and yet all she wants is money, she doesn't want to be close to you. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Researchers explored with children why boys wanted to have sex. Wanting to show peers that they were not 'virgins' was one of the reasons.

Sir it happens when peer pressure from friends, Sir, and the friends they try to make you do bad things Sir. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

If you are not having sex with her, other girls will label you as "Kgope" (virgin) and this hurts. You won't like being called "Kgope", so you start looking at the girls you are friends with and want to have sex with her to prove that you are not "Kgope". (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Some boys would want to have sex so that you are not labelled "Kgope", that is why most boys would want to have sex so that they are not called names. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Another reason was that boys see sex on television and they want to try it.

Why do boys and girls go into those kinds of relationships?

- Because, because some, because they watch late night movies.*
- They are watching late night movies.*
- Some boys they look at the older people doing something wrong and then they try doing it, you see. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)*

Why do boys and girls want those relationships?

Because they see their parents. (Boy, KZN, rural)

Boys love sex. It's because there's always so much sex (pornography) shown on TV. They hear about it and even on the radios they talk about sex. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

A common perception amongst girls was that boys want a relationship because they want sex.

The relationship between a boy and a girl could be just friends or lovers...

How does it happen that they become lovers?

He might come to you and tell you he loves you only to find that he's playing you and is only interested in sleeping with you. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Sometimes the boy just wants to ruin your life and break your virginity and then when you fall pregnant then he runs away. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

After that (6 months in a relationship), say they are doing grade 11 or 12 the boy might ask the girl to have sex, and the girl might say no, let's finish school first and the boy might accept that. But I must point out that girls don't usually agree to have sex.

When a girl doesn't agree, what happens?

The boy might want to end the relationship as he might feel that the relationship isn't going anywhere further; and eventually they break-up and the girl is left heart broken. (Boy, KZN, rural)

In a few cases boys actually articulate this idea.

The boy would want to have sex, there are no boys who want to have just a friendship without sex. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Descriptions of forced sex were common, with some boys even bragging that they did this.



Here this boy forces this girl to love him. He hits the girl. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

Boys normally force girls to go and sleep with them at their homes because they do not respect their parents. Sometimes even when parents see them they do go to the boy's house. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

I think they both want the relationship.

R: And the sex? Do both want it?

No it's usually the boys who want it and the girls say no, sometimes the boys force the girls to have sex.

R: Where do they have sex?

Maybe by the bushes, sometimes in their homes when their parents are not in. (Boy, KZN, rural)

If they know each other, the boy starts buying things for the girl and then forces her to have sex with him and she eventually agrees to have sex. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Here they play together and when it gets dark, the girl wants to go home and the boy drags her to a dark place and forces her to have sex with him. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

You can tell her that you wish to show her something in the fields, you take her there when it gets dark then when you get there you push her down and have sex with her. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

When I'm with my girl friend I force her to have sex with me, when she gets to her parents, she tells them that I raped her and this got me into trouble because she did want to have sex with me. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

But once you in that position that you can't say no. If you say no he might accept it but sometimes he might rape you. It's almost like you have no choice. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

...And if you're just walking along the road and a boy tells you he loves you must just say: hhawu, I didn't know that previously you hated me. He might get angry and leave you. Other boys get angry and force you to be his girlfriend. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

In all cases apart from the two below it was boys who forced girls to have sex.

But it's not always the guy who's pushing the girl to have sex. Sometimes the girl, you know. Because you not sure if the guy doesn't want to but the girl wants to. But at the end of the day if people hear that somebody was doing this with somebody else...they'll be like the guy forced the girl to it. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

If you resist her, she will go around telling her friends that you are stupid, sometimes she wants sex and should you refuse, she will tell people that you a stupid boy. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Girls talked about the kinds of relationships they want with boys. They want romance and friendship. No boys articulated these ideas but they did describe non-sexual friendships with girls in a positive way (see above).

A cool relationship is the type of relationship where you can communicate with your partner. Someone you can always speak to and someone that doesn't just want you for sex. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

It's honest relationship, not because I flash this you gonna like me. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

I would like a relationship where if I am crying then he shouldn't be like ooh you acting all girlish on me now. He should be able to understand that okay girls cry and things happen. He should be able to ask me what's wrong and I

should be able to say okay this and this is happening then he must understand. He mustn't ask me questions and make me cry more, should comfort me...you know...things like that. If I'm hurt then he should understand. If I am pulling my face like this then he should know okay this he should know okay this has gone wrong or I just said something... (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Thinking that you are ready for something and realizing that...you sitting there taking off your top and you like, no man this is not what I wanted, I want it to be romantic, I want music I want...and its just...and I want it to be in the dark, and ja I want candle light dinner and a table there. It's just sunlight there and a window and a bed that looks comfortable...and just like, he said, "there's a blanket take off your clothes...No...It's not enough for me thank you. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Sex was often linked to giving gifts and buying girls things.

Things to put on her mouth, earrings, roll-ons for the girl to agree to have sex. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

The boy starts buying things for the girl and then forces her to have sex with him and she eventually agrees to have sex. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Here the boy buys her things and they have sex. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

And also older guys...they sometimes and they like buy the girl all the stuff and when he like ask come we have sex...she will go like I'm not ready...then he's going to say but I bought you all this stuff how are you now going to repay me and you must repay me by doing it with me. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

The above examples are of boys and girls of similar age but children also drew many pictures and talked about girls who had sex with older men because they bought them things.

And here this girl is with an old man who gives her monies and she is still too young to go out with him. She is too young and she does not show respect. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

There are many taverns around here and older women go to these taverns. So sometimes the younger girls follow their sisters to the taverns and they end up going out with their sister's boyfriend's friends. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

Sometime your male friend may coerce you and threaten to end your friendship and maybe the girl is slightly struggling financially. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Children shouldn't have relationships with older people because older people are just fooling with them. The older partner may promise the younger partner that s/he'd take him/her to school, promise him/her money.... plus s/he might have a car and then they sleep with these children and can end-up infecting

them with a disease and then you (the child) don't know who'll look after you and it ends-up being your parents' problem. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Here the boy gives the girl money. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

The girl dumps the boy because the boy doesn't give her money. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

The girls in our (primary) school don't want boys of their same size. The other one told this boy that he has a small private part. She said she wanted a bigger size.

Are there other reasons why girls date bigger boys?

Girls date bigger boys for money. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

Some girls, who have some problems, end up going out with older men or taxi drivers... And then these old men or taxi drivers end-up having to lie to their wives and maybe say he didn't get paid. (Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)

Some say they don't want these young boys, instead they prefer the older men because they are the ones with money. (Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)

In the area where we live a lot of girls go out with merchants, because the merchants can buy them clothes and tekkies and they give you money. They walk around with rings and stuff. But at the end of the day then the merchant like leaves her and she's pregnant. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Then the uncle starts to touch the girl indecently.

Why does the uncle touch her?

It is because he buys her clothes. ((Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)

Children also talked about how family members often encourage these relationships.

Some children find themselves having to have these kind of relationships because maybe their families told them to have them so that that guy can buy food for the whole family. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

Some girls like those things and some girls don't like those things, but then the boys coerce them anyway. And then the boy might promise her to buy her some stuff... and then the girl might agree... if she is not drunk. She might agree maybe to go with him to his place. Some of their (the girls') mothers also drink, and then the boy might convince the mother that he is going to marry the girl and the mother, because she's drunk, will agree; and then the mother will compel the girl to go with the boy to maybe his place. And then now this girl will, even if she doesn't want to, have to go out with this boy; simply because the mother says so. (Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)

Some older sisters force their young siblings to sleep with boys and say: go with him he'll give you money; and then when the young girl returns they share the money. (Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)

Sexual abuse in the home was another 'relationship' children identified.

I have drawn this relationship where this girl has a relationship with an adult in her home. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

*Then the uncle starts to touch the girl indecently.
Why does the uncle touch her?*

It is because he buys her clothes. ((Girl, Gauteng, informal)

... Or you find this family where the mother is working and the father comes back from work earlier than the mother; and then when the kids come back from school the father asks the daughter to lie down and he'll give her 2 rands, and then the kid might threaten to tell her mother, he simply throws her onto the bed and do to her some silly things. And when the mother returns from work and wonder why is my daughter so quiet.... Maybe that time it's around 5 o'clock in the evening and the father had been around since about 2 o'clock in the afternoon; and then this father becomes a bully and says: Hey! don't ask why she's so quiet, and yet he knows he's done ... and this father will threaten to kill the girl if she ever told her mother. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

*How do you view these things.... eh these things that our elders do to us?
They are bad (in unison).*

It really hurts. It really hurts and to think that I'm also a girl... You find this girl that she now can't socialise well with other people and is always ever so quiet. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

Theme 3: What children want to know and where they think they will find the information

Children were asked to identify questions they had about sex and where they would find the answers to these questions. The most common questions can be categorised under the following themes. Though there were many questions about many different issues.

Questions about what sex is like and how it feels

Does the girl likes it when it happen?

How does it feel to have sex? Scared or not.

How is sex like?

How does erection feel? (girl)

What are you thinking when you are doing it/having sex?

What does it feel like to have something inside?

Is it fun/Lekker?

The details of sex

Do sex have styles? People say when you having sex you must know sex styles, what are those sex styles?

I want to know what they do before having sex?

What they do when busy having sex, what happens?

What do you do when you have sex?

How does it feel after few days of sex, would you want to do it again.

How can I tell a girl that can we have sex.
Is masturbation wrong, and how do you do it if you were to prevent having sex.
How do you know when you are done having sex?
What is oral sex

The biology of sex

What do sperms do in a body of a woman?
Can you have sex before you had your menstruation?

If sex is necessary (asked by boys)

Will I survive without having sex?
Does your body need sex?

Sex for young people?

Is sex for young or old people?
Is sex for adults or for everyone?
Do children have a right to have sex?

Questions about HIV

Can a child with 13 years go and have an HIV test?
What will happen if a condom burst while you having sex and you don't notice that it is burst?
Where can you buy female condoms?

When asked where they would get information from, only a few groups identified parents as a possible source of information.

But most parents also say that no that was a mistake (i.e. what the parents did when they were young) and I just wanna let you have better and more. Maybe she didn't go anywhere in life, she didn't get to see the things she want to see or go places she want to go and she will like tell you like you got a lot of opportunity take it and she just want the better for you. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

My mother told me that when she was young she use to go to club. The reason why she doesn't allow me to go is she says there is no future in there you won't get a job from going to club, you won't be a better person from going to club ... So most parents don't give you chances like that. They just tell you that no that's wrong and you not gonna do that. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Children in the other groups all agreed that the television and radio were the best source of information. Many of these children talked about how they could not ask parents for information as then parents would assume they were sexually active.

So, you prefer TV, why not learn from home (parents)?

Because at home when you ask about such things they start to assume that you are also involved with boys.

.... Just like here at school, on Valentine's we were told to wear our red and white colours, but our class-teacher was on our case asking us what do we know about Valentine's day when we are still so young and at school. (Girl, Gauteng, informal)

I would like to know how do they start to have sex. How do they do it? I would ask my friends. If I ask my parents they will want to know why do I want to know about sex.

I want to know how does a child come? I would ask my friends because my parents won't answer me. I want to know how do people feel after having sex? I would ask my friend because my parents will ask me why do I want to know about sex.

I want to know what sex is. I would ask the teachers because my parents would want to know why do I want to know about sex. I want to know exactly where does the HIV virus come from. (Girls, Limpopo, rural)

No, no not our parents, they'd freak out and even go to our school to ask where or why they are discussing sex related issues with us, just like last year when our teachers taught us. Our parents wondered why we were being taught about sex, but then our principal explained to them that our teachers are trying to make us understand.

R: So, you mean to tell me that your parents are against your teachers teaching and telling you about sex and boys?

Ah.... Well my mother doesn't have a problem; she is open to me and she tells me everything in fact she teaches me. Bet my father, he is has a problem- he doesn't talk about these things.

Our fathers have a problem.

R: but your mothers don't have a problem?

Even me, my mother does understand and I can talk about these issues with Her and mothers make it easier because sometimes at school you don't always get straight answers and they say we are still young-

R: So, how do you feel about that; do you want to know?

In unison... Yes!

R: Why do you want to know?

Because we might do mistakes if we don't know and find out later... (Girls, Gauteng, township)

Theme 4: Protective and risk factors

Researchers explored with the children their knowledge of risky and protective behaviour. Children were asked to articulate what factors protected young men and women from HIV/AIDS and what factors placed them at risk.

One theme that emerged strongly from almost all of the groups when children were asked what could protect girls and boys was the mention of eating vegetables, eating healthy food, taking treatment and taking anti-retrovirals. Clearly messages about how to live positively with HIV/AIDS are being muddled with messages around prevention.

My question is... she is worried or afraid of AIDS; so what can she do to protect herself?

She can take HIV/AIDS pills.

She can take her treatment properly. (Girls, KZN, informal settlement)

She must eat vegetables. (Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)

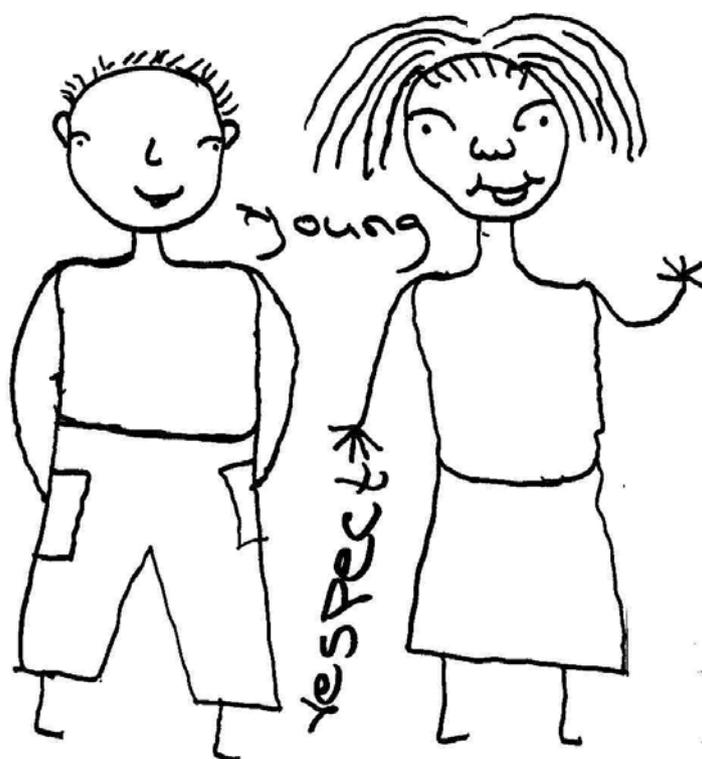
How can this boy protect himself from contracting HIV/AIDS?

He can take treatment

H must go to hospital and get 'introvirils'

He must exercise. (Boys, Limpopo, rural)

Children also felt that having only friendship relationships with no sex was a protective strategy.



I have drawn a friendship relationship. A boy and a girl are not supposed to do adult things. To behave adultish when they are little. They must be friends. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

The good relationship would be like no sex up until you are older and the bad one is like you want to have sex in an early age thinking that you are old to have sex. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

How can this girl protect herself?

- Don't have sex at all. That's all I can say...don't have sex. You can date but don't have sex. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

He must not ever have sex until he is grown-up and know that his girlfriend doesn't have HIV or AIDS. If you really want to have sex you must wear a condom. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

*This boy must not ever, ever have sex because he will stay and he will be thin, thin, thin if he goes out and has sex. He must stop having sex always. What will make him thin?
The HIV and AIDS. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)*

Having relationships with people of the same age was also seen as a way of protecting themselves. Relationships with older people were seen as risky.

Then I have drawn a love relationship. I am not supposed to go out with a boy who is older than me at my age. If it happens it should be my class mate. At this time the only correct love is that of friendship. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

I have drawn this relationship. This boy is older than this girl. This girl is not supposed to go out with this boy at her age. This boy cannot marry this girl at the age of 11 because this girl is too young to be married. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

The other relationship is of respect. This girl should respect herself and not go out with a boy who is so much older than her. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

I think we should have relationships with people our age or at some one year difference is also acceptable. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

An older friend is the one that is going to mislead you. (Girl, KZN, informal settlement)

You can have sex but that girl must be free like, she must not have HIV or AIDS that girl. He can have sex, but when he is older. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)

Practising safe sex and taking care not to place yourself in danger of rape were also mentioned.

*How can a girl protect herself from HIV?
She can use a condom.
She must always have safe sex.
She can take care of herself and refuse to sleep with boys and if she does sleep with them she must use condoms.
By avoiding boys.
If her friends coerce her into going to have sex with boys.
She can avoid going out at night because she might get raped. (Girls, KZN, informal settlement)*

*Use protection.
Protection is not always 100% safe. Just abstain it's the best.
If you really think you have AIDS take like a close supportive friend to go with you to have a test done.*

*Stay away from older men
Another way that men or older men get attractive to girls is when they like
wear short skirts and tops and they reveal a lot.
Never walk alone
Walk in crowds. (Girls, W.Cape, suburban)*

Keeping sex for a long-term relationship was another protective strategy mentioned.

*You shouldn't just do it with any person, it should be a person that you know
and you've been with for a long time and really trust. (Girl, W.Cape,
suburban)*

Children also frequently mentioned both partners going for a test before agreeing to have sex.

*If he has a relationship when he is 21 years old or 18 years, he must go and
test himself and that girl and see if they are both not positive and then they
can have sex with a condom. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)*

*I think to stop that people must, someone must teach him about HIV, maybe
he will be scared to have sex again. (Boy, Gauteng, suburban)*

Not touching blood was also mentioned.

*He must not touch blood
He must not have too many friends
If he is in hospital and they want to use a used injection, he must refuse
If he has a hair cut using a razor, he must make sure it has not been used.
(Boys, Limpopo, rural)*

4. Analysis and recommendations

The findings of this research provide useful information about how young people see their gender and sexual identities, how they perceive relationships between boys and girls and how these are influenced by their sense of gender identity.

Universally, children described boys as tough, rough and macho. Boys and girls associated boys with violence, even mentioning rape and crime. Girls are seen as beautiful, soft and caring. There are some deviations from this stereotype but it is dominant.

Friendships, whether they are between young people of the same sex or of the opposite sex, are valued because they provide support and caring. This young adolescent age is clearly an age of ambivalence where young people are interested in the opposite sex but not quite sure how to enter into or sustain 'love relationships'. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend is a topic of conversation, a sign of being grown up, a badge of prestige and the source of much intrigue and gossip. Yet there are clearly some children who, while aware of relationships with the opposite sex and interested in them, are not involved in them at all. Young people described relationships that vary from holding hands to those that involve deep feeling for the other person.

Many children, rural in particular, described sex as part of these relationships. In this study penetrative sex is described more often than other forms of sexual contact (excluding kissing and hugging). In only one instance in the entire study did a child speak about (genital) sexual pleasure from contact other than penetration. This could be because this is a difficult topic to discuss with a researcher but the openness with which some children discussed sex suggests that it is possibly because this kind of sexual contact is not common.

Most of these encounters are secret and the way children talk about them (particularly in the rural context) suggests that they are part of a children's culture from which adults are excluded. Boys and girls talked openly about these sexual encounters, though for girls there was some sense of shame and criticism of girls who did this because they were involving themselves in risky or 'sluttish' behaviour.

Boys in some groups were adamant that girls actively want sex and the reasons they gave for this (apart from sexual desire itself) were that they wanted babies and the money or goods they sometimes got for it. Girls saw boys as experimenting and blamed watching of 'blue' movies on TV. Both of these explanations reveal gender stereotypes. Girls said girls had sex and even babies usually because they wanted someone to love.

Forced sex was commonly described by boys and girls with some boys even admitting to it. The way young people talked about it suggested an

acceptance of it, again possibly because of the way young people perceive boys and girls.

Exploitative sex was commonly described, with girls having sex with boys for money. Sex with older men or boys for money was also a common survival strategy, often encouraged by parents. Sexual abuse by household members was described as a 'relationship' by children.

What is striking is the fact that as soon as researchers began to move the discussion from platonic friendship to sexual contact descriptions of caring and supportive relationships disappeared from the conversation, suggesting that young people see sex in a negative context rather than as an expression of love between people who care about each other.

When it comes to HIV/AIDS, children in this study have knowledge of protective strategies such as safe sex and abstinence though their protective strategies seldom extend beyond these. A worrying insight given by this work is the fact that children are muddling messages about prevention with messages about living healthily with HIV/AIDS, with many children suggesting that exercising, eating vegetables and even taking anti-retrovirals will protect them from HIV.

Children of this age have many, many questions about sex. They want to know about the mechanics of it as well as the biology. They also ask a number of questions related to sexual behaviour and their own growing sexuality. Most do not see family as a source of information saying that parents get angry and see questions about sex as a sign of them being sexually active. Television and radio are important sources of information for children this age. It is also clear that schools are beginning to talk with children about sexuality issues though children do not feel confident to ask teachers some of their questions.

Clearly, there is some simple knowledge that the *Soul Buddyz* series can deal with. There are also myths about boys and girls that need to be countered. But perhaps more importantly, the series should explore how young people see themselves and the different kinds of relationships they have and how they define their identities within these relationships. It would be important to acknowledge that children are sexual beings and that sex is part of their relationships. Alongside this there is a need to problematise forced sex and present alternative views of sexual expression.

Showing young people drawing on a variety of protective strategies, not just abstention, is also important. Children need to see young people grappling with their sexuality and making decisions that will protect them. All this needs to take place within the context of pressure that says, for example boys need to have sex to prove themselves or girls because it gives them prestige. Continued exploration of gender stereotypes is also important.

5. References

- Boyden J. and Ennew J. (Eds.) 1997. *Children in Focus; A Manual for Participatory Research With Children*. Stockholm: Rädda Barnen
- Bronfenbrenner, U., 1979. *The ecology of human development. Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press
- Bronfenbrenner, U., 1986. Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 732-742.
- Dawes, A. 1994. The emotional impact of political violence. In A. Dawes and D. Donald (eds.) *Childhood and Adversity; Psychological perspectives from South African research*. Cape Town: David Philip. 177-199.
- Dawes A. 2000. What happens to children when they participate? Moral and social development, *Children's Participation in Community Settings*. Oslo: ChildWatch International.
- Hewlett, L., 2006. *Youth sexuality and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A literature review*. Johannesburg: Soul City
- Ivan-Smith E. and Johnson V. 1998. The Way Forward. In E. Ivan-Smith and V. Johnson (Eds.), *Stepping Forward: Children and young people's participation in the development process*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Kjørholt AT and Qvortrup J, 2000. Children's participation in social and political change - Western Europe. In *Children's Participation in Community Settings*, Childwatch International Research Symposium: University of Oslo.
- Lewis, S. 1999 *An Adult's Guide to Childhood Trauma. Understanding traumatised children in South Africa*. Cape Town; David Philip.
- Mason, B. and Killian, B. 1994. *The psychological effects of violence on children: The development of a trauma profile for black school children aged 8-12*. University of Natal: Department of Psychology.
- Osofsky, J.D. (1997) *Children in a violent society*. New York: The Guilford Press.

6. Appendix 1: Statement of ethics

As participatory researchers with children we will:

- respect the rights of children as provided in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ensure that the research is conducted in a way that benefits children's physical, psychological and social development;
- encourage children to speak, and listen to them;
- ask for informed consent of children, and their parents where appropriate, before involving them in research or in disseminating research information;
- honour children's priorities and interests;
- honour children's cultural values;
- treat children as adequate and capable social actors;
- not impose the researcher or the researcher's ideas on children;
- not use any form of abuse or exploitation for research purposes;
- not put children at risk for research purposes;
- not hide information from children;
- not discriminate against children on the basis of age, gender, socio-economic status, caste, religion, language, race, ethnicity, capacity;
- where appropriate, try to involve children in conducting the research;
- ensure research report ownership by children or where appropriate their parents or other related persons;
- not use material without the informed consent from the participants;
- not give out real names of persons or organisations without informed consent; confidentially of all sources will be maintained;
- not use material that will be threatening to the children, even if they have given their informed consent;
- give appropriate weight and value to children's feelings;
- disseminate findings to the group(s) that contributed to the research, in media that they can understand;
- give materials gathered from research participants back to the participants, keeping copies only with their informed consent.

Adapted from a declaration during a course for researchers in participatory research with children in India/Nepal in 1995, as recorded in Boyden, J and Ennew, J (1997).