

ARTICLE: **Young bud no know w'en berry ripe a mountain side**

Timing is everything and with the approach of the summer holidays, it's time to address the birds and the bees. Several students will proceed on summer break and spend numerous hours in the company of their peers. Friendships are developed and some new ones formed. Some of these will result in sexual activity. So by the time school resumes the administrators will again have to make decisions about pregnant students among the student body. If and when the student is separated from the school system their education is literally put on pause. Few institutions provide opportunities for them to continue their schooling even while pregnant. The Women's Center of Jamaica Foundation provides the young pregnant girls with that needed opportunity. During pregnancy and after the delivery of the baby the young mother receives care and support from the institution.

There is a saying that "**Young bud no know w'en berry ripe a mountain side**" which when translated means that the "young bird does not know when the berry ripens on the slopes of the mountain." It speaks to missed opportunities for the young because of how gullible they are even in the face of all that is happening around them.

Not having a basic understanding of how their bodies work, that is Anatomy and Physiology, sees them taking chances. Sex is an activity that should be approached cautiously until one is mature and can comprehend the ramifications. The guidance that is required must come from a trusted source such as parents, guardians and other caregivers. Research has shown that adolescents would welcome getting sexual and reproductive health information from these older persons.

Adults, must have the talk about the birds and the bees with their young charges. Do it now and paint the picture of their future that is filled with incredible possibilities. Knowledge of the basic facts on sex and reproduction is key; and let your concern for their welfare help you hurdle the anxiety of "the talk".

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