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NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK OPENS HONEST DISCUSSION ABOUT FAMILIES

ORONO – Forget the stork when talking with children about how babies are made and how families form. Instead, a new children's book will answer the questions children may have — and more.

“Children are naturally curious about where babies come from,” said author Dr. Sandra Caron, a professor of family relations and human sexuality at the University of Maine in Orono, Maine. “This book serves as a guide for parents of young children, as well as a lesson plan for elementary school teachers. Many books on where babies come from simply cover the typical way that a baby is conceived and end there. This book sends the message of inclusion and acknowledges the millions of children conceived through reproductive technologies and the many families formed through adoption and foster care.” The book was written with the assistance of Samantha Schulte and illustrated by Robert Ryan Kenny.

According to the Center for Disease Control's National Survey of Family Growth (2006-2010), one in eight couples will have trouble getting pregnant or staying pregnant. The same survey showed that 7.4 million women (12%) have received infertility services in their lifetime and approximately 44% of women with infertility have sought medical assistance. To date, approximately five million babies have been born using Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) including IVF, IUI, sperm donation and more. In addition, there are 1.5 million adopted children and over half a million children are in foster care.

“It is important to recognize that the traditional approach does not work for all people and it is estimated that one in eight couples will have difficulties conceiving,” Caron said. “Some people who experience infertility turn to ART for help in becoming pregnant — and ultimately parents. There are also people who are single or in same-sex relationships that have also turned to ART to become parents, as well as adoption and foster care. Knowing the various ways does not weaken or shame the process but instead celebrates the love and desire to be parents.”

Using colorful illustrations to compliment the story, the book is set in a multiethnic classroom with a teacher and her students discussing the typical way of getting pregnant through sexual intercourse. As the book continues, the class learns the many other ways - including ART, foster care and adoption - that parents seek to grow a family. The book emphasizes the great diversity of families.

By using honest, age-appropriate language, the book will help parents and educators communicate positive messages about how families are formed. Some terms are footnoted at the bottom of each page to assist parents and educators in deciding how simple or complex to make the discussion. A glossary, located at the end of the book, defines medical and biological terms used throughout the story.

Birds and Bees and More: How Babies are Made and Families Form is published by Maine College Press, Inc. and available for purchase from Amazon.com in paperback form (\$19.99) or as a hard cover (\$25.99) on Lulu.com. In addition, the book has a companion website: birdsandbeesandmore.com.

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For questions or to set up an interview contact Dr. Sandra Caron, (207) 581-3138, scaron@maine.edu. Dr. Caron is a Professor of Family Relations and Human Sexuality at the University of Maine in Orono. She has been a member of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapist and The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality for over 30 years. Other books she has authored include, *The Sex Lives of College Students: A Quarter Century of Attitudes & Behaviors*; *Sex Around the World: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Human Sexuality*; and *Sex Matters: College Student FAQs on Sexuality*.