At a time when anyone with access to a stable internet connection can find more information about more things than could possibly be absorbed in a lifetime, it’s easy to forget the power of information. At a time when so much of what we learn about the world around us is mediated by companies that profit from our attention, as measured in fractions of a second and clicks, it’s easy to think of all information as the same. It’s all content for our consumption.

But I am reminded daily that neither of these things is true. Information is powerful. We know this in part when we see the lengths some individuals will go to prevent others from accessing it. The recent organized attempts to remove information from libraries, to make it harder for those who have the least access to find life-saving information, is a reminder of what is powerful about information and about libraries.

But as we fight for everyone to have access to information, we have to remind ourselves that information isn’t actually enough. What is powerful about libraries is not only that they are full of information. It’s also that they are full of librarians.

Growing up with a mother who was a children’s librarian makes me biased, of course. But I also think I’m right. As a queer kid who didn’t know they were queer (or even that the word existed as a liberatory identity), libraries were a place that felt safer. They were places where I could be near other kids without them harassing me (because they had to be quiet, and read!). More importantly, my local library was a place where there were librarians who were available to help me find information I needed to understand the world around me and my place in it, without giving me answers. Librarians wanted to help me figure things out on my own.

Early in my and Fiona Smyth’s newest book, You Know, Sex we explain that while our 432-page book has lots of information about bodies, gender, puberty, and sex, it doesn’t have answers. This is because when it comes to discovering who we are, and how we want to be with others in the world, we all need to find our own answers. To do this we all need access to information that is both deep and broad, in language that is accessible to us and, most importantly, that is connected to our lives and communities.
It’s been ten years since we published our first book for kids, and in that time the most common response we receive from families is thanks for giving them a way to talk about these subjects in a way that aligns with their family’s values.

The most common misperception adults who want to have our books banned hold is that our books somehow brainwash kids, or influence kids’ thinking and behavior in ways that threaten adults (a threat they displace by claiming our books threaten kids). Of course, there’s no evidence this happens. It was a school librarian who first pointed out to me that children are their own best censors. If a book is too much for them, they stop reading. If something is too advanced, they read around it.

When we began the project of re-imagining sex education for young people we didn’t start with the idea of teaching certain information or topics, we started with an approach. One of the things that makes our books different is the way that the questions asked of the reader are treated with as much importance as the information we provide. Contrary to the fears of some adults, our books are written precisely to provide information in a way that makes room for every family’s values and beliefs.

In our first book, *What Makes a Baby*, geared to kids 4 to 6, we offer a way of talking about reproduction, gestation, and birth that works for any kind of kid and any kind of family. In *Sex Is a Funny Word*, which is for readers 7 and up, we introduce consent, gender, body autonomy, and boundaries. Our books can be read alone, but they are written collaboratively and meant to be read that way as well.

*You Know, Sex*, our newest book, is about puberty for readers aged ten and up. It’s a continuation of our approach that values the answers young people find for themselves over those they may find in our books. That value is what all our books ultimately have been about: providing information about bodies, gender, feelings, and relationships in a way that makes room for knowledge, and, for all of us, to grow.

I can’t thank you enough for supporting young people’s rights to learn and grow in all the ways they will.

Cory Silverberg