

LET'S TALK ABOUT

Preparing for Puberty

WITH OUR KIDS!



Tips for Successful Discussions

ANSWER QUESTIONS AS THEY ARISE.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Youth are curious about their bodies and body changes and will seek information from the internet or peers if not receiving it from guardians and educators.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

If unable to answer, say something like, "that's a great question and I am going to find out more information for you," and bring it up when you have the information or privacy you need to answer.

Check out:

- [Nadine Thornhill: Puberty Education consent for kids \(youtube.com\)](#)

TAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT BODY CHANGES THAT HAPPEN DURING PUBERTY USING BODY-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Body-inclusive language helps youth to fully engage with and absorb sexual health information without feeling like their identities or bodies are being minimized or ignored.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Use language like 'bodies with vulvas', 'bodies with penises', and 'bodies that menstruate.'

Check out:

- [Stages of Menstruation and Maturing Sperm Cells](#)

TAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT HAPPEN DURING PUBERTY.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Puberty is not just about the physical changes that happen to a person's body. People also encounter changes in their social interactions, emotional surges due to changes in hormones, and start prioritizing peer relationships.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

What this can sound like in practice:

- "When people start going through puberty, they may start having romantic and sexual feelings toward other people. Not everyone has the same kinds of feelings or likes people in the same ways, and this is okay!"
- "Young people experience puberty at different times and ages. It will look different for everyone."
- "What are the good things about growing up? What are the harder things about growing up?"

Check out:

- [Every Body Curious \(for youth 9-12\)](#)
- [Emotional Changes during Puberty](#)

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT HARMFUL MEDIA PORTRAYALS AND SOCIAL PRESSURES THAT YOUTH CAN EXPERIENCE DURING ADOLESCENCE.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

All bodies are good bodies! It is important to explore the messages through media about how bodies should look, and to debunk myths around what it means to be “healthy.”

IDEAS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

What this can sound like in practice:

- “How do you think the media and your community affect your ideas of the body you should have?”
- How do you think that affects your ideas of the body you think others should have?”
- Talk about what a healthy person does and feels like.

BE OPEN TO HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT BODILY AND GENDER EXPRESSION.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Children do best when their guardians show them that they are loved and accepted for who they are. The expression of gender and personality through how they present themselves in the world is a right — it’s an important part of how we show identity, connect with who we are, and connect with other people.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

What this can sound like in practice:

- “What a person likes to wear isn’t determined by their gender.”
- “We don’t know what someone’s gender is just by looking at them.”
- “Some young people will experience puberty in a way that does not feel right for their gender. Every body is different.”

Check out:

- [Beauty](#)
- [Caring for Kids \(CPS\)](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [Policy 713](#)

Parents and guardians are health educators by:

- Supporting youth in making life decisions
- Understanding how their children learn
- Sharing values, beliefs, and expectations
- Being role models for social interactions

CONSIDER HOW TO HANDLE POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS

- Will I answer appropriately?
- Will I tell them too much too young?
- Do I have accurate information?

GRADES 3–5

Students learn basic information on conception and pregnancy

GRADES 6–9

Students learn in more detail about preconception, fertilization, gestation, and childbirth

