



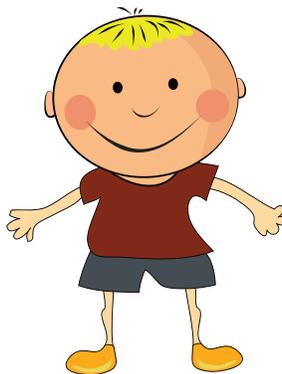
Ready... Set... Talk!

Reinforce the Learning

Your child has been learning about the changes that happen as children grow into adults. This period of change, called puberty, can be a time of confusion and fear if children have not been prepared for all the new feelings and challenges that happen on the way to adulthood.

The lessons in *Puberty: The Wonder Years* focus on helping students:

- Identify positive qualities in families.
- Know about the typical social, emotional, and physical changes that take place as they grow.
- Develop positive friendships throughout puberty.
- Get accurate information about puberty.
- Communicate with parents, caregivers, and other trusted adults.



Get More Information

- Local library, bookstore, or reliable internet source
- Local public health department, healthcare provider, or school nurse



Be an Ask-able Adult

Talking about puberty with your child may feel uncomfortable, especially at first. Yet, research shows that children whose parents talk to them about sex and relationships are less likely to have sexual intercourse as teens than children who do not learn about sex from their parents. Having these talks is too important to avoid. Here are some ideas that will let your child know that you are willing to answer questions and talk about sex:

- Accept the fact that each child has their own sexuality from birth on.
- Teach your child the dictionary terms for body parts.
- Admit it if you feel awkward, uncomfortable, or embarrassed.
- Speak positively about the human body and relationships.
- Look for natural times to bring up the subject: when your child asks a question, or a television show leads to a discussion, or a relative is pregnant.
- Keep your talks casual and relaxed.
- Answer questions calmly and simply.
- Dispel myths and incorrect information.
- Repeat information. Children often need to hear an explanation more than once.
- Talk about your family's values about sexual behaviors and relationships.
- Demonstrate love for your child and other family members.

Answer Questions

We have encouraged your child to talk to you about growing up and all the changes that are coming. These talks offer an ideal chance for you to share your values regarding physical appearance, respect for others, and sexual behavior. Your child will probably have many questions about these subjects.

When your child comes to you with a question, you might find it helpful to keep the following points in mind as you answer:

- Listen carefully to the question.
- Take a deep breath to calm yourself and collect your thoughts.
- Give a simple, short answer that is appropriate for your child's age.

- Check to make sure your child understands the answer.
- Give your child a chance to ask more questions.

Remember, it's okay to take a "time-out" to think about your answer. Tell your child that the question is important and you want time to think about the answer. Then, set a time to talk with your child later. Another way to respond to a question when you aren't sure of the answer is to say, "I don't know, but I'll try to help you find the answer."



Resources for Parents and Families

- For Parent Resources about puberty and being an "askable adult," visit Puberty: The Wonder Years at <http://bit.ly/PWYParentResources>.
- For information on being an "askable" parent and tips for talking to children, visit "I Wanna Know" by the American Sexual Health Association at <http://bit.ly/ASHA-AskableParent>.
- For videos to help parents talk to their children about puberty, visit Amaze Parents at <http://bit.ly/PWY-ParentVideos>.

