



Dear Fifth Grade Parents,

Your school is providing puberty education to your fifth grade student(s) in accordance with the Health Education standards set forth by the Delaware Department of Education. Adolescent Resource Center (ARC) at Children & Families First is presenting these sessions. Students need parental permission to participate and schools send home permission slips.

Typically, we see students in their usual class or homeroom for the first three days of sessions. Most health and science classes in middle school are mixed gender and we want to normalize that expectation for students. On the fourth day, we see students in separate gender classes.

Parents are the most important educators of their children and recognizing that, we want you to have information about the program and resources so that you can talk to your child about an important and exciting stage in their life.

Please find the session outline and a packet of information attached.

Sincerely,

Philinda Mindler, LCSW
ARC Counselor/Educator
Children & Families First

A note from Philinda

This is my fifteenth school year presenting puberty education as an ARC counselor/educator. I truly enjoy presenting to fifth graders about puberty. This is real for them and it's important that they can have the language to discuss their own growth and development with their parents in a positive way. Both as a health educator and as the parent of two teenagers, I think it's important that parents are empowered to talk to their kids about bodies and feelings and changes. I look forward to meeting your student!



PUBERTY PARENT PACKET

Parent Communication



Philinda Mindler, LCSW
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HOW TO BE AN "ASKABLE" PARENT

1. Most importantly— start talking. Do not wait for your child to begin.
2. Provide and discuss information at a level that is understandable depending on the child's age.
3. Respond when asked— do not put them off "until you're older".
4. Do not jump to conclusions.
5. Give information in an open, matter-of-fact manner that invites questions and discussion. The child will gain both knowledge and trust.
6. Nurture their self-esteem— it is crucial to teens making responsible decisions about sex.
7. Be aware that your values are being communicated to your children through your actions as well as your words.
8. Give them the vocabulary for responding to sexual pressures.
9. Do not expect to be able to control your teen's sexual behavior.
10. Sexuality education needs to be a continuing process, not a one time event.
11. Sexuality education is not just one parents' responsibility.
12. It is okay to say "I don't know" and then find out together.
13. Do not rely on the school to do all of your child's sexuality education.
14. Relax!

Studies show that adolescents are less likely to initiate sexual activity at a young age, and more likely to use contraception, when positively influenced by parents through open and honest communication regarding sexuality.

¹Eastman KL, Corona R, Schuster MA. *Talking Parents, Healthy Teens: A worksite-based program for parents to promote adolescent sexual health.* 2006 Oct. http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2006/oct/06_0012.html.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED

If you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, you are not alone!

WHAT DOES SEXUALITY INCLUDE?

- How we feel about ourselves; it's with us a lifetime
- How we relate to others
- Decision-making and communication skills.
- Feelings about being male or being female, both are of equal value.
- Our attitudes, values, morals.
- Facts about growth and development, anatomy, conception, menstruation, seminal emissions, intercourse, contraception, fetal development, birth, delivery, responsibilities.
- Our non-expertness in it all.

AS A PARENT YOU ARE THE FIRST IMPORTANT TEACHER FOR YOUR CHILD ON MANY SUBJECTS INCLUDING – AND ESPECIALLY SEXUALITY.

- Learning about sexuality is a womb-to-tomb activity.
- Start sharing with your children now; do not worry about what hasn't been done.
- It is okay to say "I don't know," then add "...but, how can we find this out?"
- You don't have to be an expert to help your child feel good about him/herself.
- You have a role in the sexuality education of your child whether you choose to deal with it or not.
- You pass on your own attitudes about sexuality to child, knowingly or unknowingly.

TIPS ON BEING AN "ASKABLE" PARENT:

- Respond to questions when asked; do not put off until "you are older".
- Answer questions simply and honestly which helps child grow both in knowledge and trust.
- When child's questions are not answered, child learns:
 - Not to ask questions
 - Sexuality is "bad"
 - To get answers elsewhere →



- When your child asks a question, ask them back “What do you think about...” This allows you:
 - More information about what the child is asking
 - An idea of what your child does know
 - A bit more time to think about how to answer the question
 - To let your child know that what they think is important to you
- Be willing to give direct honest answers builds good communication foundation
- Check out the library for books to give you support for answering questions
- If no questions are being asked by your child:
 - Find opportunity to initiate question
 - Talk about a TV program issue, song, commercial, news article, advertising, pregnancy, neighbor, feelings, family, etc.
 - Tell your child that you have been to a meeting and would like to talk about some things.
 - Give extra attention to your child
- Check out library books regarding sexuality and offer to read with child
- What to do with 4-letter words:
 - Ask child if s/he knows what word means (in as calm and matter-of-fact a voice as possible)
 - Demystify the word for child
 - Be aware that child may use the word for attention
 - Don’t over-react; child may not know the meaning of the word
 - Present your rational feelings about the word calmly
- It is okay to touch and hug your child to show your love at ALL ages
 - Touching should be positive and supportive of child, and not just to show displeasure, as in spanking, pushing away, restraining.

Information courtesy of the Family Planning Council of Western Mass., Inc.



TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT *SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS*

Most parents want to do their best in talking with their kids about sex and sexuality, but we're often not sure how to begin. Here's our advice:

Explore your own attitudes

Studies show that kids who feel they can talk with their parents about sex – because their moms and dads speak openly and listen carefully to them – are less likely to engage in high-risk behavior as teens than kids who do not feel they can talk with their parents about the subject. So explore your feelings about sex. If you are very uncomfortable with the subject, read some books (*see Readings for Parents*) and discuss your feelings with a trusted friend, relative, physician, or clergy member. The more you examine the subject, the more confident you'll feel discussing it.

Even if you can't quite overcome your discomfort, don't worry about admitting it to your kids. It's okay to say something like, "You know, I'm uncomfortable talking about sex because my parents never talked with me about it. But I want us to be able to talk about anything – including sex – so please come to me if you have any questions. And if I don't know the answer, I'll find out."

Start early

Teaching your children about sex demands a gentle, continuous flow of information that should begin as early as possible -- for instance, when teaching your toddler where his nose and toes are, include "this is your penis" or "this is your vagina" in your talks. As your child grows, you can continue her education by adding more materials gradually until she understands the subject well.

Take the initiative

If your child hasn't started asking questions about sex, look for a good opportunity to bring it up. Say, for instance, the mother of an 8-year-old's best friend is pregnant. You can say, "Did you notice that David's mommy's tummy is getting bigger? That's because she's going to have a baby and she's carrying it inside her. Do you know how the baby got inside her?" then let the conversation move from there. →



Talk about more than the “Birds and the Bees”

While our children need to know the biological facts about sex, they also need to understand that sexual relationships involve caring, concern and responsibility. By discussing the emotional aspect of a sexual relationship with your child, she will be better informed to make decisions later on and to resist peer pressure. If your child is a pre-teen, you need to include some message about the responsibilities and consequences of sexual activity. Conversations with 11 and 12-year-olds, for example, should include talks about unwanted pregnancy and how they can protect themselves.

One aspect that many parents overlook when discussing sex with their child is dating. As opposed to movies, where two people meet and later end up in bed together, in real life there is time to get to know each other -- time to hold hands, go bowling, see a movie, or just talk. Children need to know that this is an important part of a caring relationship.

Give accurate, age-appropriate information

Talk about sex in a way that fits the age and stage of your child. If your 8-year-old asks why boys and girls change so much physically as they grow, you can say something like, “The body has special chemicals called hormones that tell it whether to become a boy or a girl. A boy has a penis and testicles, and when he grows older his voice gets lower and he gets more hair on his body. A girl has a vulva and vagina, and when she gets older she grows breasts and her hips grow rounder.”

Anticipate the next stage of development

Children can get frightened and confused by the sudden changes their bodies begin to go through as they reach puberty. To help stop any anxiety, talk with your kids not only about their current stage of development but about the next stage, too. An 8-year-old girl is old enough to learn about menstruation, just as a boy that age is ready to learn how his body will change.

Communicate your values

It’s our responsibility to let our children know our values about sex. Although they may not adopt these values as they mature, at least they’ll be aware of them as they struggle to figure out how they feel and want to behave.

Talk with your child of the opposite sex

Some parents feel uncomfortable talking with their child about topics like sex if the youngster is of the opposite gender. While that’s certainly understandable, don’t let it become an excuse to close off conversation. If you’re a single mother of a son, for example, you can turn to books to help guide you or ask your doctor for some advice on how to bring up the topic with your child. You could also recruit an uncle or →



other close male friend or relative to discuss the subject with your child, provided there is already good, open communication between them. If there are two parents in the household, it might feel less awkward to have the dad talk with the boy and the mom with the girl. That's not a hard and fast rule, though. If you're comfortable talking with either sons or daughters, go right ahead. Just make sure that gender differences don't make subjects like sex taboo.

Relax

Don't worry about knowing all the answers to your children's questions; what you know is a lot less important than how you respond. If you can convey the message that no subject, including sex, is forbidden in your home, you'll be doing just fine.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What's safe sex?

If two people have sexual intercourse, and one of them has HIV or another sexually transmitted disease, he could give it to his partner(s). Doctors believe that if the man wears a latex condom whenever he has intercourse, it helps to protect him and his partner from giving each other HIV. That's why people call sexual intercourse with a latex condom "safe sex."

Is it true that you can't get pregnant the first time that you have sex?

No. You can get pregnant anytime you have sexual intercourse. Wearing a latex condom, taking birth control pills, or using other contraceptives are very effective at preventing pregnancy. However, the only absolute way to not get pregnant is to not have sex at all. You might also use this question as an opportunity to point out that not having sexual intercourse is a good idea for teens. Help them understand there are other ways to show affection.

From the Kaiser Family Foundation | www.talkwithkids.org



CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS *OF SEXUALLY HEALTHY ADOLESCENTS*

PARENTS OF SEXUALLY HEALTHY ADOLESCENTS:

- Demonstrate value, respect, acceptance, and trust in their adolescent children.
- Model sexually healthy attitudes in their own relationships.
- Maintain a non-punitive stance toward sexuality.
- Are knowledgeable about sexuality.
- Discuss sexuality with their children.
- Provide information on sexuality to their children.
- Seek appropriate guidance and information as needed.
- Try to understand their son's or daughter's point of view.
- Help their daughter or son gain an understanding of their values.
- Set and maintain limits for dating and other activities outside of school.
- Stay actively involved in their son's or daughter's life.
- Ask questions about friends and romantic partners.
- Provide a supportive and safe environment for their children.
- Offer to assist adolescents in accessing health care services.
- Help their daughter or son plan for their future.

From Facing Facts: Sexual Health for America's Adolescents, SIECUS, New York, NY, 1995.



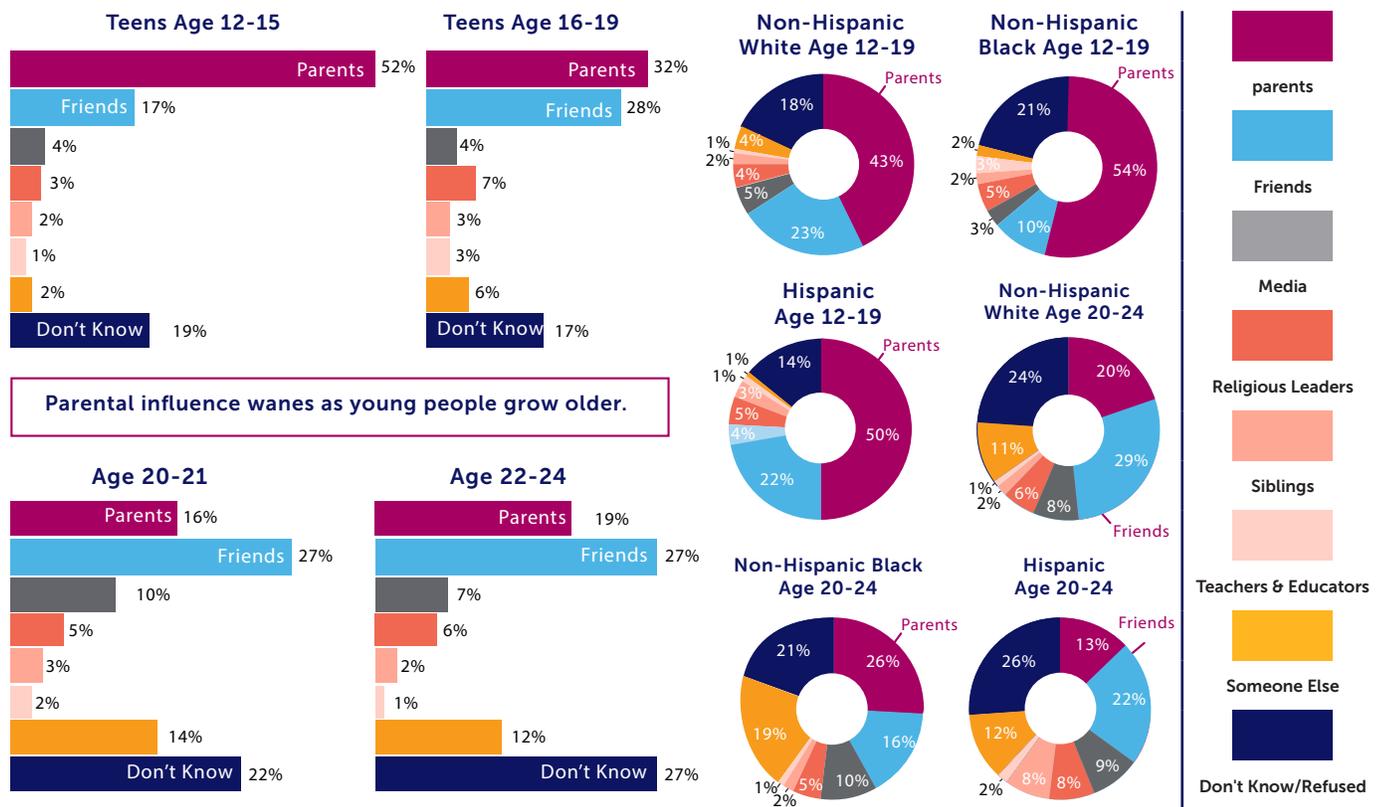
SURVEY SAYS

POWER TO DECIDE, THE CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT UNPLANNED PREGNANCY

Parent Power

Power to Decide has been assessing public sentiment on a number of topics for two decades. One of the most consistent findings over the years has been the power of parental influence. Specifically, in survey after survey, teens say parents most influence their decisions about sex. Our findings this year paint a similar picture: Parents matter. For the first time we have also asked centennials (age 12-19) and millennials (age 18-24) about who influences their decisions about sex. As the following make clear, parental influence wanes as young people grow older.

Who most influences your decisions about sex?



The following data are from the TRU Youth Monitor 2016, a survey of 3,038 individuals age 12-24 and fielded online in November and December 2015. The sample is representative of the U.S. population, including non-Hispanic Whites, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic Blacks. Hispanic respondents were able to take the survey in either English or Spanish. The margin of error is +/- 1.78% at the 95% confidence level.

Additional Resources

Below are some helpful books and websites that can give you some more information in talking about this important stage of life with your children. You can decide which sources of information are best for your family

Helpful Books

For Kids

American Medical Association. **American Medical Association Boy's Guide to Becoming a Teen.** Jossey Bass, 2006.

Dunham, Kelly. **The Boys' Body Book: Everything You Need to Know for Growing Up YOU!** Applesauce Press: 2017.

Dunham, Kelly. **The Girls' Body Book: Everything You Need to Know for Growing Up.** Applesauce Press: 2017.

Harris, Robie H. **It's So Amazing!: A Book About Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies and Families.** Candlewick Press: 2008.

Harris, Robie H. **It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health** Candlewick Press: 2014.

Hickman, Ruth. **Going Through Puberty: A Boy's Manual for Body, Mind and Health.** Lesson Ladder Inc: 2013.

Reynolds, Kate. **What's Happening to Ellie? A Book About Puberty for Boys and Young Men with Autism and Related Conditions.** Jessica Kingsley Publishers: 2015.

Reynolds, Kate. **What's Happening to Tom? A Book About Puberty for Girls and Young Women with Autism and Related Conditions.** Jessica Kingsley Publishers: 2014.

Loulan, Joann & Worthen, Bonnie. **Period. : A Girl's Guide.** Book Peddlers: 2001.

Natterson, Cara. **The Care & Keeping of You 2: The Body Book for Older Girls (American Girl Library).** Wisconsin: Pleasant Company Publications: 2012.

Natterson, Cara. **Guy Stuff: The Body Book for Boys,** 2017.

Metzger, Julie. **Will Puberty Last My Whole Life? REAL Answers to REAL Questions from Preteens about Body Changes, Sex, and Other Growing Up Stuff.** Little Bigfoot: 2018.

Taylor, Sonya Renee. **Celebrate Your Body (and Its Changes Too!): The Ultimate Puberty Book for Girls.** Rockridge Press, 2018.

Wrobel, Mary. **Taking Care of Myself: A Hygiene Puberty and Personal Curriculum for Young People with Autism.** Future Horizons: 2003.

For Parents

Berman, Laura. **Talking to Your Kids About Sex: Turning the Talk into a Conversation for Life.** DK Publishing: 2009.

Couwenhoven, Terri. **Teaching Children with Downs Syndrome about their Bodies, Boundaries and Sexuality.** Woodbine House: 2007.

Chirban, John T. **How to Talk to Your Kids About Sex: Help Your Kids Develop a Healthy, Positive Attitude Towards Sex and Relationships.** Thomas Nelson Inc.: 2012.

Kowal-Connelly, Suanne. **Parenting Through Puberty, Mood Swings, Acne, and Growing Pains.** American Academy of Pediatrics, 2018.

Owens-Reid, Danielle. **This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids: A Questions and Answer to Everyday Life.** Chronicle Books: 2014.

Richardson, Justin & Schuster, Mark. **Everything You Never Wanted Your Kids to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid They'd Ask): The Secrets to Surviving Your Child's Sexual Development from Birth to the Teens.** Three Rivers Press: 2003.

Roffman, Deborah. **Talk to Me First: Everything You Need to Know to be Your Child's Go To Person About Sex.** Da Capo Lifelong Books: 2012.

Schwier, Karin Melberg. **Sexuality: Your Sons and Daughters with Intellectual Disabilities.** Brooks Publishing Co.: 2000.

Health Information Websites & Videos

www.kidshealth.org

Easy to read, with articles in English and Spanish, this website has three viewable modes (teen, parent, child) in which you can find so much information regarding health, behavior, and development.

Some of our favorite articles are:

Talking to Your Child About Puberty

Talking to Your Child About Menstruation

A Parents' Guide to Surviving the Teen Years

Kidshealth videos: <http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/crushes/talkabout-crushes.html>

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/girlstuff/puberty-normal-video.html>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/boys-puberty.html?WT.ac=ctg#catboy>

www.common sense media.org

Want to know how kids are using social media? Is the newest movie right for your child? Information about social media, privacy and ratings on shows, movies and video games and information on electronic media.

www.youngwomenshealth.org and www.youngmenshealth.org Award-winning websites from the Children's Hospital of Boston that discusses teen health.

www.powertodecide.org

The Parents and Champions section of Power To Decide provides parents and teens with a wealth of information on talking to their kids about responsible decision making regarding preventing pregnancy. Nationwide data and studies are also available for view.

www.stayteen.org/

A teen-friendly site for information on preventing unplanned pregnancy.

www.loveisrespect.org/

Great website regarding healthy relationships and avoiding dating violence.

www.dethrives.com/teens/

Delaware Thrives is run by the State of Delaware and focuses on helping teens plan their futures.

NOTES:



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10.2018

ARC Training Outline for Fifth Grade Puberty Sessions

Day One

Introduction to ARC Educator and Expectations

- One Voice – only one person should be talking at a time, raise your hand if you want to be called on!
- Respect! Treat others as you want to be treated. Everyone deserves respect. It's really important not to laugh at a classmate.

What is Puberty?

- Stage in Life- everyone goes through stages in life. We start out as a baby, grow into a child and eventually become an adult. Puberty is the stage of being a preteen or tween and a teenager.
- Something that happens to everyone – everybody goes through puberty. All the adults they know already went through puberty
- Lots of changes- we have changes in our feelings, in our body, and how we get along with others
- Normal- Going through puberty is perfectly normal!

What ages do people go through puberty?

- Wide range of normal- kids can begin to go through puberty as early as age 7 or as late as 16.
- Average length of puberty Boys usually take 5-6 years to go through puberty and for girls about 4-5 years.

What starts puberty?

- Pituitary gland and hormones – Our pituitary gland in our brain releases a hormone (a chemical signal) when it's time for us to go through puberty.

3 main types of changes

- Emotional- changes in our feeling
- Social- changes in how we get along with other people. At school, at home, everywhere
- Physical- changes in our body

ACTIVITY

Chris Story: ARC Educator reads a story aloud about Chris (Chris could be a boy or a girl- all of the changes in the story are changes that both girls and boys experience) who is going through puberty, then students are given a handout and asked to underline 4 changes in puberty that Chris talks about. Then we discuss as we talk about changes in puberty. Students bring this paper home on Day 1.

ARC Training Outline for Fifth Grade Puberty Sessions

Emotional Changes

- Being moody and having mood swings

ACTIVITY

Small Group 30-Second Brainstorm: ARC Educator asks students to get into small group to talk about strategies to make yourself feel better when you are in a bad mood. ARC Educator then asks students to volunteer to share ideas with class and then discuss. Some examples that students often share: talking to an adult, taking some time to yourself, listening to music, watching something funny, making something (drawing, writing, cooking), spending time with a pet. ARC Educator emphasizes that it's important to have different strategies to take care of your feelings, just like we have different strategies to solve a math problem.

- Embarrassed
- Feeling things more strongly
- Feelings of attraction and crushes
- Importance of talking to adults at home about feelings

ARC Educator tells students that if someone feels sad for more than 1 week or has trouble handling anger, it is very important to talk to an adult at home

Social Changes

- Wanting to make more decisions
- Thinking about the future more
- Spending more time with friends/peers
- Wanting independence

DISCUSSION: What are good things they have heard about being in middle school next year?

Physical Changes

ARC Educator introduces the concept that everybody changes, including:

- Underarm hair
- Deepening voice
- Getting taller and having growth spurts
- Changing body shape
- Sweating more

Healthy Habits

- Sleep- it's important to turn off/put away electronic devices before bed
- Eat nutritious meals- 50% of your plate should be fruits and vegetables
- Be active for at least 60 minutes a day

ARC Training Outline for Fifth Grade Puberty Sessions

- Shower or bathe daily

Students are given a Take Home Worksheet – Day One to share with adults at home. This worksheet includes a list of what we talked about and plus it asks students to write down 1 healthy habit and 1 thing they learned.

Day Two

Body Changes

Students are given a notes page/worksheet that covers body changes for girls and body changes for boys, including:

- Pimples may become more common
- Voice changes
- Underarm hair grows
- Genitals grow
 - ARC Educator explains that these are the parts of the reproductive system that are on the outside of the body

Students are asked to volunteer the answers and the ARC educator gives information about each change.

ACTIVITY:

Each student is provided with a notes page/worksheet to complete as we discuss, which they will take home on Day 2.

Day Three

ARC Educator explains:

- Female reproductive system, ovulation and menstruation, and provides an age-appropriate handout for students
- Male reproductive system, erections, ejaculation and nocturnal emissions, and provides an age-appropriate handout for students
- Age appropriate discussion of human reproduction basics, how the sperm gets to the egg, development of the baby and how the baby is born

ACTIVITY:

Students are provided with a summary of our puberty session topics to share with adults at home. Students fill out some questions about themselves to take home: What is their favorite topic to learn about? What is a club or activity that they would like to join in middle school? What was the most interesting thing they learned? What is a question that they still have?

ARC Training Outline for Fifth Grade Puberty Sessions

Day Four

This is Question Day! Classes are separated by gender.

ARC Educator responds to questions that are within the scope of the puberty session and standards.

In addition to answering question, the ARC Educator also reviews:

- What a role model is
- Good hygiene habits, and
- Focus on overview of reproductive system by gender of class