



MESSAGES FOR PARENTS

9-12 Years

At this age, many children will:

- Undergo physical changes associated with puberty.
- Begin to show emotional, psychological, and social changes associated with puberty, including an increased desire for privacy and independence.
- Some children may also begin to experience romantic feelings, like “crushes”.

Healthy Sexual Development

- Teach your child what to expect and how to cope with the changes of puberty.
- Teach your child to recognize and deal with potentially risky social situations.
- Show interest in your child’s relationships with peers and support them in building healthy relationships.
- Talk about myths or misconceptions about sex, sexuality, and gender that your child may learn from peers or the media. Remind your child that media messages do not reflect reality.

Promotion of Sexual Health and Prevention of Sexual Abuse

- Teach your child about safety, privacy, and boundaries when sharing information or chatting online.
- Encourage your child to tell someone they trust if they have been or are being sexually abused, exploited, or bullied.

Resources

The best time to start communicating sexual health information with your child is in the early stages of development. Your child may come to you with questions about sex, sexuality, and sex-related matters. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but you do want to be a reliable educator for your child. Take time to find accurate answers to your child's questions and return to the conversation when you feel comfortable and prepared.

To become more comfortable with discussions on sexual development, we encourage you to visit your local library or bookstores for books and DVDs. Remember to choose materials carefully; some may be more explicit than you thought. Think about the level of detail that would be good for your child's stage of development and their personal preference.

Below is a list of recommended websites:

1. Teaching Sexual Health for Parents
<http://teachingsexualhealth.ca/parents>
2. Stages of Child Sexual Development
<https://www.centreforsexuality.ca/learning-centre/stages-of-child-sexual-development/>
3. It's Easier Than You Think: Tips for Talking With Your Kids About Sexual Health
<https://skprevention.ca/sexual-health/information-for-parents/>