

Puberty resources to support for parents and carers

Talking about growing up with your child can be awkward, tricky or embarrassing. We know from local and national surveys that many children want their parents to talk to them about how their bodies will change as they grow up, but parents can find it difficult to have these discussions.

Many older primary school children in Newcastle (years 5 and 6) will have received a puberty lesson from the school nurse attached to your child's school. However, some schools would be due to receive this lesson within this summer term and with schools closed your child may miss out on this important discussion.

The puberty lesson is one of many 'Relationships Education' (RE) lessons delivered within primary education. This lesson covers the emotional and physical changes that take place as young people grow up and the school nurse will explore diversity, attraction, personal safety and respect. At the end of the lesson your child has an opportunity to ask questions, which are answered in an anonymous and confidential way.

Children have a right to know how their bodies change and the emotional impact of puberty before starting to go through these changes. Talking about the onset of puberty with your child is important and one upside to being in lockdown is that it gives us the time to have these conversations in the comfort of our own homes at a time and pace that is suitable for you and your child.

The Public Health Team within Newcastle City Council have produced a '**Top Tips**' resource, that includes a range of websites, books and resources to help parents and carers talk about puberty and growing up with their children. If you do take this opportunity to talk to your child about puberty, we hope these suggestions help you.

We would like to acknowledge our colleagues in the School Health Team, (Newcastle Hospitals Trust) for their support and advice with the development of this resource. If you would like to speak to a member of the School Health Team, please contact their single point of access telephone number 0191 282 3319.

Top Tips for parents

1. Have a look at a range of resources to gain ideas and identify those appropriate for you and your child.



2. TV, films or a character from a book can be a useful way to explore feelings values and beliefs.



3. Use the correct terminology when talking about body parts: breasts, vulva, vagina, penis and testicles. Knowing the correct words for parts of their body helps to keep children and young people safe and look after their health. Even if you use other words at home, it's important that children know the correct terms too.



4. Talking about puberty, body image and body changes can be embarrassing which is often why we avoid it. It is OK to show your feelings, acknowledge embarrassment and use humour for any awkward bits!



5. One way of assessing your child's knowledge and feelings is for your child to draw a gingerbread person and draw or write body and emotional changes on and around the picture.



6. It is important that your child can ask you questions. Answer honestly and if you don't know the answer say you will find out. If your child asks a question at a difficult time prepare a response, e.g. *"that's a good question, let's talk about it later"*. However, ensure you do return to their question or you risk your child not coming back to you in future.



7. Take a lead from your child as to whether the discussion is pitched at the right
a. level. Don't worry though, too basic and your child will ask for more detail, too advanced and they will only take away what they understand for their age, maturity and ability.



8. Don't give up if your first attempt doesn't go well. Try a different approach or an alternative resource such as a book, video link or website.



Websites and resources

Websites that include videos as teaching aids

https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy_bodies - a series of videos, including one on puberty.

<http://Amaze.org> - age-appropriate information, clear and accurate language, with many short videos that help explore various topics around puberty, body changes, periods, etc.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/rse-ks2-puberty-whats-happening-to-my-body/znhdvk7> - BBC–The big talk. Using video clips, older primary school children pose questions about puberty and how our bodies change.

Websites that include lesson plans as teaching aids

www.outspokeneducation.com - online resources including a range of free home-schooling lessons for different age ranges, to support parents to talk openly about bodies, body image and relationships. Subscribe to a free newsletter.

www.bettyforschools.co.uk – curriculum linked lessons for 8-12-year olds, that encourage open, respectful and honest conversations about periods and the way they affect girls.

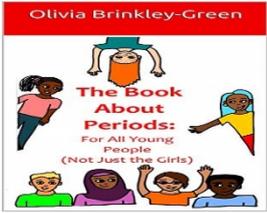
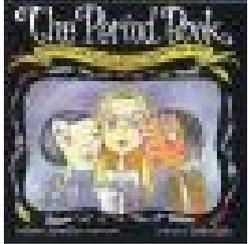
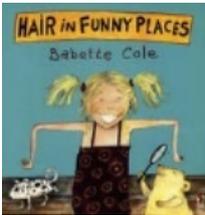
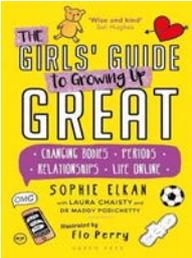
<https://learn.brook.org.uk> - parents, carers and teachers can sign up to Brook Learn for free online modules on a range of RSE topics.

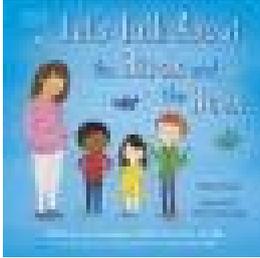
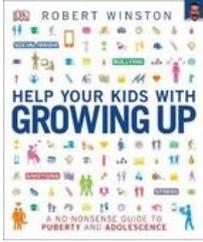
Websites and resources for children with additional learning needs

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/sex-education.aspx> - good advice from the National Autistic Society on talking about puberty to a child with autism.

<https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/bookshop/paperbacks/susans-growing> - books on growing up for parents to share with children with learning disabilities

Books on puberty and growing up

<p>The book about periods: for all young people By Olivia Brinkley-Green</p> <p>ISBN: 1090605641</p>	<p>This book is for all young people growing up and wanting to learn about periods, as well as parents, carers and teachers.</p>	
<p>The period book: everything you don't want to ask but need to know By Karen Gravelle</p> <p>ISBN: 9780749917050</p>	<p>This book answers questions about menstruation and will guide you through all the physical, emotional and social changes that come with periods, as well as related issues such as; dealing with spots, mood swings and new expectations from friends and family.</p>	
<p>Susan's Growing Up By Sheila Hollins and Valerie Sinason</p> <p>ISBN: 9781784581152</p>	<p>This is a story about a young woman with a learning disability who starts her period and doesn't know what is happening. Susan receives reassurance from both her teacher at school and her mum once she returns home.</p>	
<p>Hair in funny places By Babette Cole</p> <p>ISBN: 9780099266266</p>	<p>This book uses cartoons of a girl and her teddy bear to explain the changes that happen to our bodies as we grow up.</p>	
<p>The Girls' Guide to Growing Up Great: Changing Bodies, Periods, Relationships, Life Online By Sophie Elkan</p> <p>ISBN: 9781472973580</p>	<p>An accessible, clear and empowering book for girls going through puberty or wanting to know more. Looks at body changes, emotions, staying safe and having fun, with advice from other girls and women about growing up.</p>	

<p>Questions children ask and how to answer them By Miriam Stoppard ISBN: 9781785040658</p>	<p>This book provides age-appropriate answers to a large range of questions that children ask. The author draws on research in child development and addresses what children can handle at each age.</p>	
<p>Where Willy went By Nicholas Allan ISBN: 9780099456483</p>	<p>By using cartoons and humour this book explains how sperm meets an egg in reproduction.</p>	
<p>Let's talk about the birds and the bees By Molly Potter ISBN: 9781472946416</p>	<p>This book uses clear, easy to understand language to answer questions about sex and relationships and covers subjects from puberty to consent with accuracy and honesty.</p>	
<p>Helping your kids with growing up By Robert Winston ISBN: 9780241287255</p>	<p>This book demystifies puberty for parents and their children and covers issues such as social media and sexting, while also explaining mood swings, periods and breaking voices.</p>	
<p>What's happening to me? By Susan Meredith ISBN: 9780746069950 ISBN: 978-0746069950</p>	<p>A series of books to help children aged 9 and above understand body changes during puberty and adolescence.</p>	
<p>It's Perfectly Normal: changing bodies, growing up, sex, and sexual health By Robie H Harris ISBN: 9780763668723</p>	<p>A book about changing bodies and growing up, covering a range of topics from puberty, gender identity, sex, masturbation, birth and sexual abuse.</p>	