



CPRI

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM

Promoting Safety and Sexual Health

Your Child's Development 8-12 Years of Age

Physical Development

- Child begins to experience physical changes of puberty (i.e. growth of genitals, breast development etc.); Makes comparisons with others' physical changes.
- Some females may begin to menstruate. It is important to prepare your daughter for this.
- Some males may experience 'nocturnal emissions' (wet dreams). It is important to prepare your son for this.

Developmental Changes

- Children begin to establish their own identity and separate from parents, but family values are very important. They learn that friends can have different ideas and customs and still be friends.
- As physical changes occur, emotions and mood fluctuations may become apparent. It's important for children to know they can seek support and guidance from caregivers.
- Responsibility around the house increases. Parents are encouraged to avoid distinguishing separate jobs for boys and girls. Sexual discrimination can begin at a very young age.

Normative Sexual Behaviours

- Touching own genitals; some masturbation for pleasurable sexual feelings.
- Modesty/embarrassment regarding nudity and sexual talk.
- Increased need for privacy.
- Interest in sexualized media (i.e. internet).
- Role-play and exploration games.
- May participate in consensual touching of private parts of known individuals.
- Use of sexual language and jokes with limited understanding.
- Increased social interaction with opposite sex peers, shows interest in dating.
- Awareness of sexual orientation issues.
- Compares self to others.
- Develop romantic 'crushes' on friends, older teens, celebrities and other people who play a role in their life (i.e. coach, teacher).
- May start to explore romantic and sexual fantasies.
- Family values and appropriate modeling are very important.



Information on physical and developmental changes adapted with permission from calgaryhealthregion.ca
Information on normative sexual behaviour from CPRI Sexuality Education Manual