

Grade 5

Talking with your tween about
Growth and Development



A parent's guide to the Grade 5 Curriculum



www.hamilton.ca/shn

Dear Parent

We believe that you are your child's most important teacher. This role continues even when your child's body and mind start to change during the tween/teen years. We hope this booklet helps you talk with your child about these normal changes.

At the time of printing, the expectations listed in this booklet are the ones that are being taught. The Ministry of Education is expected to release a new curriculum soon.

Be sure you know what your son or daughter is being taught. Please refer to the following link from the Ministry of Education website, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/healthcurr18.pdf> .



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Health and physical education

Growth and Development

Overall Expectation

By the end of grade 5 students will:

- Describe physical, emotional, and interpersonal changes associated with puberty.

Specific Expectations

By the end of grade 5 students will:

- Identify strategies to deal positively with stress and pressures that result from relationships with family and friends.
- Identify factors that enhance healthy relationships with friends, family and peers.
- Describe the secondary physical changes at puberty.
- Describe the processes of menstruation and spermatogenesis.
- Describe the increasing importance of personal hygiene following puberty.

What your tween is going through

Normal Growth and Development

During puberty tweens go through the most rapid stage of growth and development since infancy.

Puberty is starting earlier. The body is able to create a new life between the ages of 8 and 18. Girls start puberty sooner than boys. Each tween will have his/her own rate of growth. Some tweens welcome the changes in their bodies. Others feel confused. Most tweens worry if they are normal. There is a wide range of normal. Tweens who develop early and tweens who develop late may be teased or ignored by their peers as they are seen as different. They may feel embarrassed and afraid that something is wrong with them.

When parents ignore the changes during puberty, tweens may feel shame and unsure of where to go with their fears.

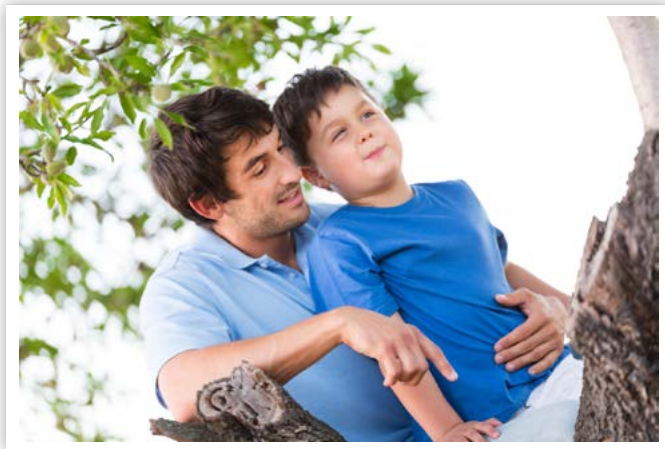
Social and emotional changes go along with body changes. Tweens are happiest with their friends. Finding ways to belong outside a family is a step toward independence. Tweens worry about who they know, who likes them, and who they hang out with. This need to fit in plays a role in the choices they make about what to wear, what music to listen to, what language to use, and what activities to enjoy.

Many tweens choose friends with similar backgrounds and likes. Some tweens choose peers that make their parents feel uncomfortable about how their tween will be influenced.

Tweens want parents to start conversations with them about healthy relationships, sexuality, violence, alcohol and drug use. They may act as if they do not. They want parents to listen, not lecture. They do not want a history lesson about “when I was a kid”.

Tweens are no longer children. They are also not as grown up as they like to pretend. They may know adult language, but they are not always able to understand what is being asked of them. It is important to check that your tween understands what you are saying. Use phrases such as “Can you tell me more about that? Or what do you mean when...?”

Tweens still need encouragement, guidance and love from their parents.



What tweens want to say to parents

"How can parents help their tween feel good about her/himself?"

- Ask about the different groups at school. If I don't fit in help me find a group through after school activities, church groups, and community services.
- Tell me everyday that you love me.
- Make a point of noticing what I do that is kind, right or helpful.
- Spend time just you and me, doing something I like.
- Do not embarrass me in front of my friends.
- Keep our talk private. It teaches me to trust you.
- Tell me that I am normal. I worry I am the only one to go through this.

"What would you like your parents to know about you?"

- I need friends. Teach me how to start and keep friendships.
- Get to know my friends. Teach me that a good friend makes you feel good about yourself. A good friend does not ask you to do things against your values.
- Respect my privacy. Knock before entering. Wait until I say it is OK to come in.

- My body is changing. Make private time to talk with me. Let me know what to expect. Listen to my concerns.
- I imagine I always have an audience.

"What do you want to say to your parents about sexuality?"

- Let me know you are willing to talk about any subject. It doesn't matter if you do not know all the answers. Be willing to help me find them.
- Prepare me for the start of menstruation (my period) or spermatogenesis (wet dreams). If I do not know what will be happening to my body, I will be frightened.
- Buy supplies I may need for menstruation before it happens. I may be too shy to get them myself. Spend time talking with me about when I might start my period and how to handle it.
- Talk to me about dating. Tell me dating is part of a caring relationship where people spend time getting to know each other. Let me know that dating one-on-one is not a good idea until about age 16.



Background Information

The Sexual Health Network

The Director of the Healthy Living Division of Public Health Services, invited interested community agencies, parents and teens to be part of the Sexual Health Network (SHN). The goals of the SHN include:

- Encouraging teens to wait to have sex.
- Lessening teen risk taking behaviours.
- Promoting positive self esteem and good decision making.
- Helping parents talk with teens about sexuality.

Teens in Hamilton told the SHN that they wanted their parents to start talking with them. They also wanted correct information with their peers at school. Since forming in 1998, the SHN has created:

- The I'm Worth the Wait annual April media campaign. The campaign promotes abstinence from sexual activity. It is aimed at 11-15 year olds.
- Booklets for parents of students in grades 5 through 8. The booklet lets parents know what is being taught at school as part of the Ontario Health Curriculum. It is hoped that parents will talk with their tween about growing and developing.
- An annual April parent workshop. Past workshop topics included: The Teenage Brain; Parenting in the 21st Century; Raising Teens in an age of Overindulgence; The Five Love Languages of Teens; and Raising Emotionally Strong Children.



The Sexual Health Network wishes to thank the students, parents, educators, and community members in the City of Hamilton who contributed to the development of this booklet. The material in the booklet is a reflection of the concerns, questions and hopes expressed during focus groups, parent conferences, classroom sessions, and best practice evidence. For further information please contact Ann Tyrrell, Public Health Nurse, City of Hamilton, Co-Chair of Sexual Health Network at ann.tyrrell@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424 x7341.

Resources

Public libraries, Chedoke Child and Family Centre, local bookstores and the internet have a wealth of information on growth and development.

Opening the door

to talking to your tween

These tips for talking with your tween can be read many times over the years as your tween grows up.

- Make time everyday to talk with your tween.
- Stop what you are doing and look into his/her eyes.
- Listen to what your tween is saying.
- Use a calm tone of voice when you talk.
- Give your tween all your attention. If this isn't possible, say "I cannot talk right now, but we can talk about this after dinner". Then keep your promise.
- Listen more than you talk.
- Think about questions that your tween might ask and how you will answer them.
- Answer questions honestly.



Some Door Opening comments are

- That's a good question.
- What do you think?
- I am glad you asked that.
- It sounds like you are wondering about or feeling that...
- What do others in your grade, class, or club, think about that?
- This is what I heard you say. Is that what you meant?
- I do not know but I will find out.



Slamming the door

to talking to your tween

- DO NOT...** talk only when he/she has done something that makes you angry.
- DO NOT...** avoid eye contact.
- DO NOT...** use a loud voice or sound mad.
- DO NOT...** interrupt.
- DO NOT...** lecture.
- DO NOT...** talk while doing something else.
- DO NOT...** talk about what he/she has told you to others.
- DO NOT...** answer questions with a lie.

Some Door Slamming comments are

- I do not care what your friends think or do.
- Because I said so! Because I am the parent!
- When I was your age...
- What would you know about that?
- You should not be thinking about that at your age.
- That is a stupid question (or answer).
- You always/you never...
- I know what you mean.
- Go ask your mother or father.



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