



## GCAPP PARENT TOOLKIT:

# What Pre-Teens Should Know About Human Sexuality

Between ages 9 and 13, children experience important physical, emotional, and social changes. Providing accurate information now helps them understand their bodies, build healthy relationships, and develop respect for themselves and others. Without guidance, they may rely on peers or media for answers, which can be confusing or misleading.

## PARENT ACTIONS TO SUPPORT LEARNING (CONT.)

### 3. Be Approachable

Make sure your child knows they can ask questions safely.

### 4. Model Respect

Show respectful relationships in your words and actions.

### 5. Provide Trusted Resources

Offer books, websites, or professionals appropriate for their age.

### 6. Be Inclusive & Affirming

Respect that some children may have questions about gender identity or attraction.

## SAMPLE PHRASES TO USE

- ▶ *"It's normal for your body and feelings to change as you grow."*
- ▶ *"Everyone has the right to say yes or no, and that should always be respected."*
- ▶ *"If you have questions or feel uncomfortable about something, you can always talk to me."*
- ▶ *"Not everything you see in media shows real life or healthy relationships."*

## SOURCE:

- <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents/middle-school/what-should-i-teach-my-middle-schooler-about-sex-and-sex>
- <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/sexuality-what-children-should-learn-and-when>

GCAPP



GEORGIA CAMPAIGN FOR  
ADOLESCENT POWER & POTENTIAL  
Education • Prevention • Action  
For Adolescent Health

## 1. UNDERSTANDING THEIR BODIES

- Explain the physical changes of puberty: growth spurts, voice changes, hair growth, breast development, menstruation, erections, and more.
- Help them know what is normal, and that timing varies from person to person.
- Encourage good hygiene and self-care.

## 2. REPRODUCTION & HEALTH

- Teach the basics of human reproduction in an age-appropriate way.
- Explain that sexual activity has responsibilities and consequences, including pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Emphasize that questions about reproduction are normal and okay to ask.

## 3. RESPECT, CONSENT, AND BOUNDARIES

- Introduce the concept of personal boundaries: everyone has the right to say yes or no to touch, attention, or interaction.
- Teach respect for others' feelings and bodies.
- Encourage your child to speak up if they feel uncomfortable or pressured.

## 4. HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Discuss what makes friendships and romantic relationships healthy: respect, trust, communication, and boundaries.
- Help them recognize unhealthy behaviors, such as teasing, manipulation, or peer pressure.
- Encourage open conversations about emotions and experiences.

## 5. MEDIA AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

- Explain that media often shows unrealistic portrayals of bodies, relationships, and behavior.
- Teach critical thinking skills to help them question what they see online, on TV, or in movies.

## Parent Actions to Support Learning

### 1. Start Early & Keep Talking

Have ongoing, honest conversations rather than one "big talk."

### 2. Use Correct Language

Use proper terms for body parts and functions to reduce confusion.