



Conversation Starters and Scenarios for Parents: Puberty Ages 9-11

You know you should be talking with your child about sensitive subjects like sexuality, but you don't know where to begin. Our experts are here to help by sharing a few conversation starters, or phrases, to introduce the topic. The scenarios are situations that you and your child can read together to help frame a meaningful discussion. Remember to decide ahead of time what points you want to cover and what you want your child to take away from the conversation. The primary message should be that they can always come to you with questions and concerns about these topics. Be prepared to listen and learn from your child as well.

Conversation Starters

- "Have you noticed how tall some of the kids in your class have grown lately?"
- "I'm going to the grocery store today. Would you like me to pick you up some deodorant?"
- "Wow, it seems like you grew out of those clothes overnight! Didn't we just shop for them recently?"
- "You seem a little moody. You know it's normal to have your emotions change quickly at this age. What do you think?"

Scenarios

- Your child is in class and notices that one of his/her classmates has body odor after recess. Should he/she tell this classmate? If no, why not? If yes, why? What should he/she say?
- Your daughter is worried that she may get her first period while at school. How can she be prepared if that does happen? Try to think of all of the scenarios and how to make sure she is comfortable with her options.
- Your child is being teased at school for having acne. How do you address this with your child? How can your child handle this at school with his/her classmates?
- Your son is worried about getting a spontaneous erection at school or having a nocturnal emission during the day. How do you address these issues with him to make him feel more comfortable?
- Your daughter is developing faster than her classmates. Her breasts are growing bigger and hips getting wider. While these changes are completely normal, she feels really self-conscious and is starting to talk about going on a diet, calling herself "fat." How do you address these feelings with her? How do you, as a parent, feel about these body image discussions?
- Your son sees the girls in his class getting taller and physically changing but has not noticed anything happening to him. Why are these changes happening to others and not him? Is he normal?