

# Preparing yourself and your child

ad·o·les·cence

,adə'lesəns/

*noun*

noun: **adolescence**

1.the period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult.

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# Rated:



- ✗ This program contains material that parents may want to discuss with their growing children. The theme itself may call for some squirming due to topics not usually discussed in public including : anatomical and biological terminology (T), your maturing child(M). some intimate situations (I).

**RATED R FOR RESPONSIBILITY!!!**

# ADOLESCENCE...NOT JUST THE BIRDS AND THE BEES.....

- ✗ While physical changes make up a large part of your child becoming an adult, there are also behavioral and emotional considerations.



# DEFINITIONS

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## ✖ Adolescence-

The period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult.

## ✖ Puberty-

The period during which adolescents reach sexual maturity and become capable of reproduction.

# PLEASE REMEMBER THAT....

- ✗ **All** children go through puberty regardless of IQ or social skills.



- ✗ These factors will only guide you in teaching strategies.

# TEACHING TIPS

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- ✖ Remember to use the same teaching strategies that you have used to teach your children other skills.
- ✖ Apply these strategies to teaching them about the changes their body is going through as they go through puberty.
- ✖ Some of these strategies may include visual or written check off lists, videos, facts in books, pictures of what is happening to their bodies, stories to predict what might occur, code words or redirection strategies or specific terminology.

# HERE'S SOME AREAS TO ADDRESS.....

- ✖ My body - What are the parts called and what are they used for?
- ✖ Hygiene - How should you properly cleanse yourself and why is that important?
- ✖ Sexual awareness - What is sex, what is acceptable behavior and when is it acceptable?
- ✖ Boundaries - What boundaries should we have for our bodies, as well as when interacting with others?

# PHYSICAL CHANGES

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- ✖ It is important to give them plenty of notice regarding what will happen as they enter adolescence and adulthood. You should teach them about these changes long before they occur.
- ✖ Starting *early* eases the process significantly.

# SO WHEN DOES THAT MEAN?????

## Girls—

- + The physical changes usually begin between ages 7 and 14.

## Boys—

- + The physical changes usually begin around age 13.
- + Some boys start prematurely at age 12 while others begin as late as 17 or 18 years of age.
- + Generally, boys' puberty lags behind girls by two years.

# LETS START WITH THE BODY.....

## ✕ For Girls-

- + Girls begin to have growth spurts, develop breasts, pubic and underarm hair, and have vaginal discharge.
- + A girls menstruation (period) usually follows within a year or two of these changes.
- + The average age a girl starts menstruating is around 12 or 13 but some girls start as early as 9 and others are as late as 17.
  - ✕ (Strong, DeVault, Sayad & Yarber, 2005). -

# AREAS TO ADDRESS

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- ✖ Wearing a bra- have them be part of the purchasing process so that tolerable material can be found
- ✖ Shaving- practice without blades or with an electric razor
- ✖ Body changes are normal- show them pictures from when you were young
- ✖ Menstrual period- practice before it starts, reassurance
- ✖ Seeing a gynecologist-what to expect, relaxation techniques, talking to the doctor

# AND FOR BOYS.....

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- + The secondary characteristic for boy's includes: growth spurts, bigger hands and feet, increased muscle mass, deepened voice, facial and underarm hair and more hair in the pubic area. Their penis and testicles also develop
- + At puberty, boys begin to ejaculate semen

(Strong, DeVault, Sayad, Yarber, 2005). -

# AREAS TO ADDRESS

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- ✖ Voice changes- use reassurance
- ✖ Growth- use a wall chart, check sizes especially shoes
- ✖ Body hair growth- reassurance that body changes are normal!
- ✖ Nocturnal emissions- explain and reassure
- ✖ Erections- reassurance and strategies if they occur in public.

# GROOMING BECOMES EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

- ✖ Puberty changes a person's body, which makes grooming even more important.
- ✖ Personal hygiene is an important life skill that all young adults must understand no matter what level of support is needed.
- ✖ Skills such as bathing, using deodorant, brushing teeth, washing hands, and shampooing hair are all important skills that need to be taught for young adults to become as independent as possible.

# GROOMING

- ✖ Showering- checklists or picture schedule
- ✖ Shaving- practice without blades first or use an electric razor
- ✖ Deodorant- use incentives if needed
- ✖ Brushing teeth- use toothpaste that is tolerable or add a rinse. Use tablets to show skill growth



# THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

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- ✖ Sexuality is part of being a human being and having a disability doesn't change that.
- ✖ Determine where your comfort level is with discussing sexuality and sex with your child. Educate yourself on all that sexuality entails and discuss your thoughts with your spouse or another adult.

# THE SMALL PRINT.....

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- ✖ Most adults are not comfortable talking about the body and sexuality.
- ✖ You are the main educators of sex for your son and/or daughter. Whether you are comfortable or not, wouldn't you rather they get factual information from you than from a friend, classmate, or the internet?

# THE SMALL PRINT WE DON'T WANT TO FACE

In the United States there is little recognition of a group of Americans that is one of the most at risk for sexual harassment and sexual assault:

- ✗ people with intellectual disabilities.

# HOW MUCH MORE AT RISK?

- ✘ People with intellectual disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate seven times higher than those without disabilities. (That number comes from data run for NPR by the Justice Department from unpublished federal crime data.)
- ✘ 2 times more likely to be sexually abused (Justice Department)
- ✘ Children with mental or intellectual impairments appear to be among the most vulnerable, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual violence than their non-disabled peers. (World Health Organization)
  
- ✘ Accurate statistics are difficult to come by due to several reasons:
  - + Most reported crimes don't indicate if a person with a disability is involved.
  - + The individual may have communication limits or not understand what has occurred. (ARC 2011)

# WHY YOU NEED TO STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

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- ✖ It is of great significance in reducing vulnerability to sexual assault to note the research finding that sex education for people with an intellectual disability is negatively correlated with the incidence of sexual abuse (McCabe 1992).
- ✖ That is, those with more knowledge about sexual behavior are less likely to be victimized.



## *Awesome Life Tip:*

Don't run from hard or uncomfortable situations. Take a deep breath and dive into them headfirst. The more deeply we go into the unknown, uncomfortable, and difficult situations, ready to do the work necessary, the more quickly we create ease, joy, fulfillment, love, depth, and peace in our lives.

AwesomeLifeTips.com

# AREAS TO ADDRESS

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- ✗ Family Values- this is your personal beliefs and behaviors
- ✗ Relationships- a roadmap of relationships starting from when you first meet and what healthy relationships are
- ✗ Media- doesn't portray an accurate account of relationships and sex
- ✗ Self gratification- where, when and recognize elimination may be impossible
- ✗ Sexual Activity- birth control, pregnancy, respect for both person's feelings & wishes

# BOUNDARIES!!!!!!



# PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

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- ✗ Concrete rules need to be set
  - + No touching private areas in public
  - + Self gratification or exploring your changing body needs to be done in private
  - + Who to ask if you have questions about your body
  - + Close the door when you go to the restroom

# PERSONAL SAFETY

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- ✘ Teach who can see them when they are undressed and for what reason- such as the doctor.
- ✘ Respect their privacy, give them ownership of their own body.
- ✘ Teach them who to tell if they are touched by someone else.

# BOUNDARIES OF OTHERS

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- ✖ Personal space- arms length away
- ✖ Teach what is private- using the restroom, getting dressed
- ✖ Teach that relationships are between two people- not just about how they feel about the other person
- ✖ Teach that it is okay to say no.

# DIFFERENT BOUNDARIES

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- × **People you have just met:**

- × **Example Actions:**

- × ☐ Say hello
- × ☐ Shake hands

- × **Acquaintance:**

- × **Example Actions:**

- × ☐ Waving
- × ☐ Saying hello,
- × ☐ Giving a “high five”

- × **Friends:**

- × **Example Actions:**

- × ☐ Shoulder hug
- × ☐ Hold hands

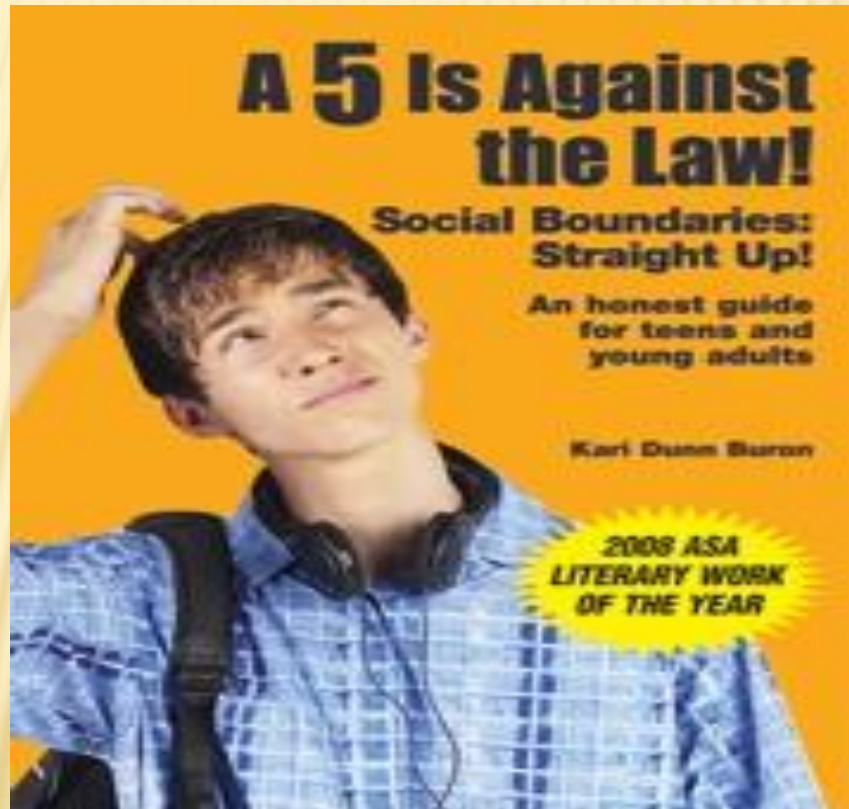
- × **Intimate**

- × **Example Actions:**

- × ☐ Close hugging
- × ☐ Kissing

# 5 IS AGAINST THE LAW

- ✗ This is a good teaching tool to use.



5

**Physically hurtful or threatening behavior.** These are behaviors that are against the law. For example, hitting someone or grabbing them in a private place. You will get fired from a job, suspended from school and maybe even go to jail if you engage in these behaviors.

4

**Scary Behavior.** This could include swearing or staring. You would probably get fired from a job for this behavior or suspended from school. This behavior could also end up being against the law.

3

**Odd Behavior.** This behavior could make other people uncomfortable. It might include sitting too close to someone or putting your face too close to someone who wasn't expecting it. It could also include showing up at a party you weren't invited to. You might get fired from a job because this behavior makes other people nervous. This is not against the law.

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**Reasonable Behavior.** This type of behavior is like going to a party you have been invited to and talking appropriately to someone you know. It might be playing a game with someone, working with someone in a group at school or eating lunch with someone. People are enjoying each other's company at this level. This is where people get to know each other better.

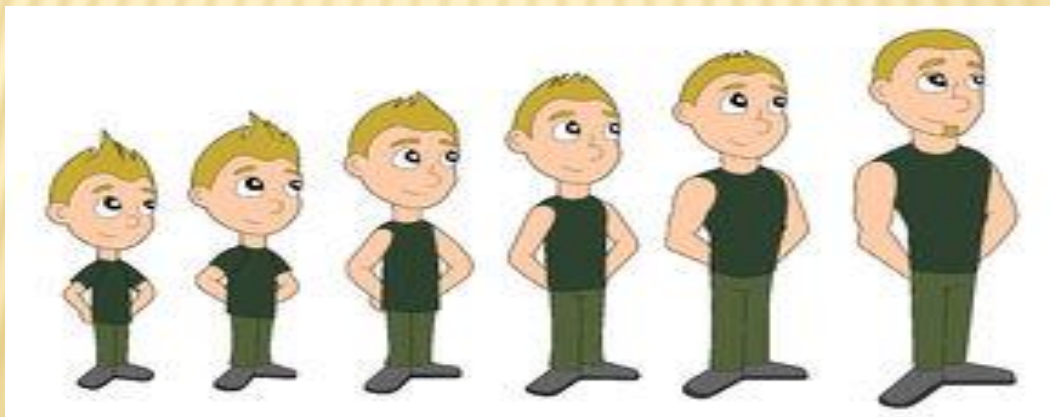
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**Very Informal Social Behavior.** This is like waving to someone or smiling at someone in the hallway at school. If you just say "Hi" and keep on walking it is also a 1. This is totally OK and is the way most people first notice each other.

# REMEMBER THIS?

## ✖ Adolescence-

The period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an **adult**.

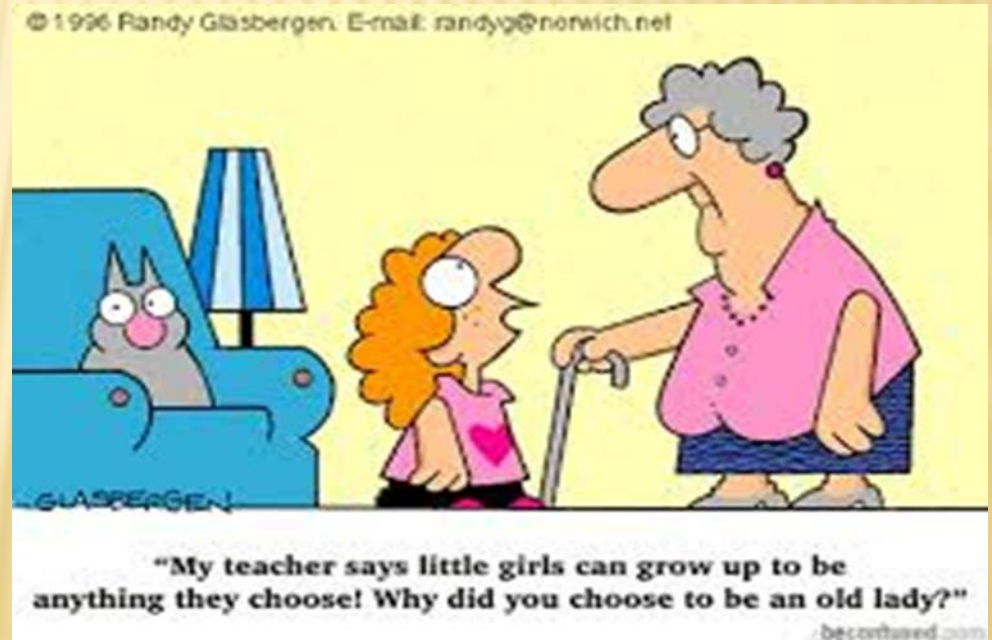


# ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.....

- ✖ Think of your parents and your upbringing
- ✖ How many of you
  - + Did everything exactly how your parents wanted you to?
  - + Believe the exact way your parents do?
  - + Have never disappointed your parents or made mistakes?
  - + Dated only a person that your parents picked out for you?
  - + Are living the life your parents wanted you to lead?

# ADULT LIFE

- ✖ What do you want for your child when they are an adult????
- ✖ Most importantly what does **your child** want for adulthood?



# ALLOW GROWTH AND SELF DISCOVERY

- ✘ Hardest thing as a parent, whether your child has a disability or not- letting go and allowing them to have their own life.

Sometimes growing up  
means growing *a p a r t*

- ✖ By teaching them openly and honestly, especially about themselves and relationships you are giving them a better chance for that life to be purposeful and safe.

IT TAKES  
COURAGE  
TO GROW UP  
& BECOME WHO  
YOU REALLY  
ARE. — E.E. CUMMINGS

# RESOURCES

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- ✕ Kids Health
  - + Talking to your child about puberty
  - + Surviving the teen years
- ✕ Autism Speaks Tool Kits
- ✕ Autism Society Resources
- ✕ Teaching Sexual Health
- ✕ Sexuality and Down syndrome
- ✕ Healthy Bodies Tool Kit