

**Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia**

**Building Blocks of Healthy
Sexual Development**

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Building Blocks of Healthy Sexual Development

Sex & Sexuality

What is SEX?

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Building Blocks of Healthy Sexual Development

How do Children learn about sex?

- ◆ In the way they are touched, caressed, cuddled and cared for from birth,
- ◆ Through exploration and learning how their bodies feel to themselves
- ◆ By learning what is OK and not OK to do
- ◆ From the words family members say, and don't say, to refer to body parts
- ◆ By observing how family members express affection and caring for one another

Source: Blinn-Pike, Lynn (2002).

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Just Another Area of Development

- ◆ Begins at Birth
- ◆ Has Milestones
- ◆ Varies from child to child
- ◆ Can be affected by trauma or illness



Source: Blinn-Pike, Lynn (2002).



Why Do We Need to Know?

- Establishing a baseline to discuss what is developmentally expected and what is not
- Lots of ignorance about sexual development
- What is considered healthy/ normal changes over a person's lifetime
- Inappropriate behavior needs to be redirected, not shamed



Infancy: 0-2 years of age

Characteristics of sexual development

- ◆ Sensory Learning
- ◆ Natural to touch genitals
- ◆ Developing trust and capacity for pleasure
- ◆ Gender and gender role development
- ◆ Physical reflex responses



Source: Blinn-Pike, Lynn (2002).



Infancy: 0-2 years of age Characteristics of sexual development

- ◆ Help baby recognize correct names for body parts, including genitals
- ◆ Affirm child's capacity to experience pleasure from touch
- ◆ Help child differentiate between male and female
- ◆ Provide opportunities for social interaction with same age peers.

Source: Blinn-Pike, Lynn (2002).



Ages 2 to 5: Characteristic of sexual development

- ◆ More curiosity about their own bodies and those of others
- ◆ Self-soothing touches to genitals increase
- ◆ Imitate behavior associated with gender
- ◆ Toilet training
- ◆ "Playing Doctor" and "Playing House"
- ◆ Cross gender behavior

Source: Blinn-Pike, Lynn (2002).





Ages 2 to 5: Promoting healthy development

- ◆ Be supportive not punitive in toilet training
- ◆ Use inappropriate behavior as opportunity to teach appropriate behavior
- ◆ Try not to shame self-soothing behavior or punish it
- ◆ Help child understand human reproduction with simple but accurate descriptions

Source: Blinn-Pike, Lynn (2002).



Ages 6 to 9:
 Characteristics of sexual development

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- ◆ Socialization
- ◆ Gender Identity and gender consistency
- ◆ Interest in reproduction
- ◆ Sex play goes underground
- ◆ Understanding of Orientation



Source: From Health Professionals, website:
<http://www.sexualityandu.ca/eng/health>



Ages 6 to 9:
 Promoting Healthy Development

Building Blocks of Healthy Sexual Development

- ◆ Give accurate information about reproduction
- ◆ Prepare child for oncoming changes of puberty
- ◆ Teach norms as far as sexuality, including privacy and nudity
- ◆ Reinforce boundaries and body safety.

Source: From Health Professionals, website: <http://www.sexualityandu.ca/eng/health>



Ages 10 to 15:
 Characteristics of Sexual Development

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- ◆ Accelerated growth
- ◆ More adult appearance
- ◆ Preoccupation with physical appearance
- ◆ Hairy, sweaty, stinky and pimply
- ◆ Establishing sexual identity/orientation
- ◆ More focus on pleasure in masturbation



Source: From Health Professionals, website:
<http://www.sexualityandu.ca/eng/health>



Ages 10 to 15:

Characteristics of Sexual Development

For Boys-

- Testicles grow larger and fuller, penis larger and longer
- Shoulders and chest grow bigger, muscles develop
- Scrotum turns darker
- Hair grows on face (first mustache, then beard and sideburns)
- Voice changes, larynx grows bigger, Adam's apple may show more
- Produces sperm, Ejaculations

Source: Harris, Robie H. (1994). It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health.



Ages 10 to 15:

Characteristics of Sexual Development

For Girls-

- Whitish fluid comes out of the vagina
- Hips grow wider, body more curvy
- Breasts and nipples grow larger and fuller, nipples may become darker
- Menstruation

Source: Harris, Robie H (1994). It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health.



Ages 10 to 15:

Promoting Healthy Development

- ♦ Make child aware of changes that will occur
- ♦ Emphasize changes in hygiene
- ♦ Media Literacy skills
- ♦ Discuss rights and responsibilities
- ♦ Educate yourself and them on STDs
- ♦ Clarify terms

Source: Harris, Robie H (1994). It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health.



Statistical Data

- ◆ **40 to 85%** of children engage in at least some sexual behaviors **before 13**
- ◆ Approx. **1 in 5 adolescents** has engaged in sexual intercourse before his or her 15th birthday
- ◆ More than **1 in 10 girls** who had intercourse before 15 describe it as nonvoluntary and many more describe it as unwanted.

Source: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Washington, DC (2003), 4 and Younger: The Sexual Behavior of Young Adolescents



Statistical Data

In a survey of teens 13-16,

- 91% said intercourse is sex
- 77% agree that oral sex is sex
- 45% agree that touching someone's genitals or private parts is sex

Source: NBC/People (2004)

Among sexually active high school students,

- 34% used a condom or birth control pills
- 25% used alcohol or drugs around before last sexual intercourse

Source: YRBS "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System" (2001)

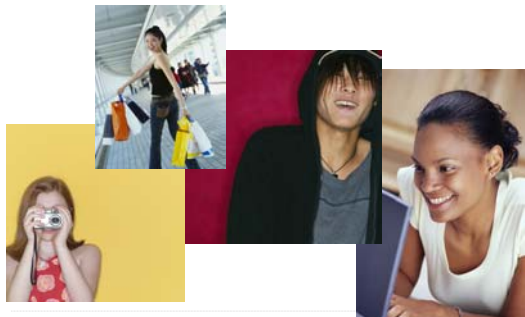


Protected Class

Major vs. Minor



Not Children, Not Adults





Teens and Technology: Summary of Findings at a Glance

- ◆ Close to nine in ten teens are wired.
- ◆ 45% of teens have cell phones and 33% are texting.
- ◆ Email is still a fixture in teens' lives, but IM is preferred.
- ◆ Teens share more than words over IM.
- ◆ Face-to-face time still beats phone and screen time.
- ◆ The size of the wired teen population surges at the seventh grade mark.
- ◆ Older girls are power communicators and information seekers.

Source: Lenhart, A. Madden, M., Hittin, P., *Teens and Technology: Youth are Leading the Transition to a Fully Wired and Mobile Nation*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, July 27, 2005.



A word about the Internet

[W]hat you see that happens online mirrors and magnifies what happens offline. That mirroring and magnification is actually really critical because it means that the good, the bad, the ugly that you see offline, comes in online. What is weirder about that mirroring is that it's often the kinds of stuff that adults normally don't have access to that is mirrored.

-Danah Boyd

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Conceptual Differences

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Physical Issues

- ◆ Amygdala vs. Frontal Cortex
- ◆ Higher Risk for Injury and Disease
- ◆ Fluctuating Hormones and Cycles

Source: Dr. Yurgely-Todd, "Inside the Teenage Brain", website: <http://www.pbs.org>.

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Why Sex is Like Matches

- ◆ Children cannot give consent
- ◆ Mentally not ready
- ◆ Physically not ready
- ◆ Long-Term consequences of inappropriate contact

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Prevention

Discussion:

How does learning about
Healthy Sexual Development
play a role in preventing child
sexual abuse?





One last thought . . .

Children know when you are
uncomfortable talking about
SEX.

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Building Blocks of Healthy Development



1. Positive body-image and high self-esteem
2. Easy access to accurate information
3. Language to express feelings
