

Sexual Education

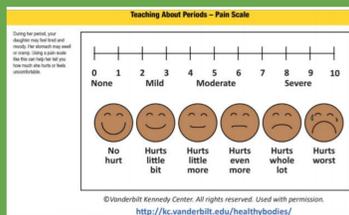
Sexual Education involves the topics of puberty, dating, safe sex, sexuality, STDs, and drugs and alcohol. Our goal is to educate our students to make sure they feel safe, and to make them feel comfortable in their own bodies.

Puberty

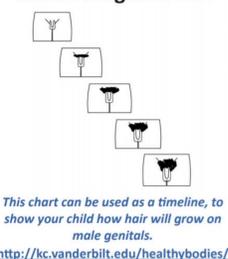
- Although some of our students transition into adulthood later in life than their peers, their bodies are still going through changes at around the same time, and we need to prepare them for this confusing time.

Tips to teaching students about puberty

- Start teaching privacy at a young age. What is appropriate to do in the comfort of your own home/bedroom vs. what is appropriate public behavior.
- It may be helpful to have a chart with social situations where one column is Public, and the other is Private, so students can differentiate.
- Model appropriate hygiene
Have kids pick out their own deodorant.
- For girls, have a daily checklist in their room when adding a bra to their wardrobe.
- When teaching about periods have a trusted female model the stages of a menstrual period by using pads and red dyes over the course of a week to show how flows can change and that is normal so girls know what to expect.
- Before girls start their periods have them practice how to use a pad/tampon so they become familiar and comfortable.
- Make a pain chart for the student to explain their pain with having cramps/bloating.
- Puberty is a challenging time so this may cause our children to runaway or wander so we need to be aware of this risk.
- When teaching children about their body be sure to use correct terminology for body parts and body functions.
- Review procedures for taking care of your body during puberty/what happens to your body frequently to build a routine.

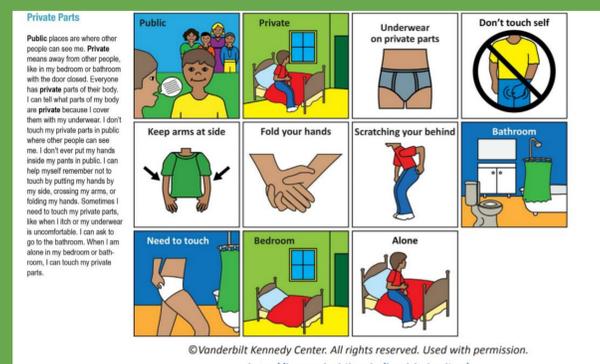


Tanner Stages of Life



Safe Sex

- “Unfortunately, it is often assumed that a person with disabilities is not sexually active” (Cornelius et al., 1982). We need to recognize that sex is a natural and very human thing so we need to teach our students how to safely have sex when the time comes.
- Students with disabilities need physical models, videos, photos, or even role playing (social scripts).
- As a teacher, be ready to assert your personal boundaries.
- Use accurate language for body parts and bodily functions (just as when discussing puberty).
- Use language that is comfortable to the child (but maintain facts and anatomy).
- Repeat and reinforce concepts over time → sex ed is a process rather than a session (don't treat it as THE “sex talk”- should not be a one time conversation).
- Discuss boundaries. Talk about other's boundaries that you need to respect, as well as the students boundaries and how to say no or express that you do not like something or when someone has crossed your boundaries. A great way to do this is through role playing.
- Use anatomy dolls for teaching about body parts
- Important to develop parent/teacher relationships and work as a team.
- A survey performed by the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health found that it is twice as likely for a teenager with disabilities under the age of 16 to have had sex without parental knowledge versus a student without disabilities.
- Be prepared to talk about and recognize sexual abuse in your child
- Stranger awareness, good touch/bad touch, public and private behaviors (Use visual supports/role playing/charts to help your child to learn these different concepts)



Online Resources

- Center for Parent Information and Resources
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/sexed/>
- RespectAbility.org
<https://www.respectability.org/resources/sexual-education-resources/>
- Easterseals
<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/living-with-disability/love-dating-relationships-disability.html>
- The Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services
<http://disability.illinois.edu/sexuality-resources>

Drugs/Alcohol

- The use of tobacco and alcohol among a sample of students with ID is comparable with or higher compared with their peers in the general population, even higher than could be expected based on a national survey. Moreover, the average age of onset of drinking alcohol among the students in this study was more than 2 years below the national average of 14.6 years
- Baseline findings showed that a large proportion of all respondents had initiated smoking (49%) and drinking (75%), well above the expected numbers based on national figures
- 6% of the students tried their first cigarette and 15% of the students drank alcohol at the age of 10 years or younger. (Kiewik et al., 2016)
- Tobacco use is similar among mild-ID students <14yo and other students.
- Students ≥14yo in general population report higher rates of tobacco use.
- Alcohol use is comparable between the two students' groups.
- Cannabis use is twice lower among students with mild-ID (Pacoricona Alfaro et al., 2017)

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