

Growing up & puberty

Changing times

'Growing up can be a challenging time for all and a bit of love and understanding can go a long way. Let them know you are there to support them. Sometimes it can come as a bit of a shock when your child starts to develop and change. Of course, you are still their parent and they still need you. Be there to support them and try to think back to how you felt at their age.

Discussing matters such as friendships, relationships and growing up are important. Be open-minded and do not judge them, so they feel they can trust you and turn to you when they need help and support. Look online together at suitable sites such as www.nhs.uk this will help you both have the opportunity to chat without embarrassment.

Friendships are very important to children. Having a close friend or group of friends and belonging to a group helps them feel good about themselves, learn to deal with people and develop their own identity.

You can show them how to trust their own feelings and values, building up an emotional strength that will help them as they get older.

Girls

Puberty in girls can begin from around the age of nine. Your daughter will probably be going through puberty and developing into a young woman. She will need your support and trust but she will also need some privacy, respect and encouragement.

All children develop at their own pace.

Boys

Boys' bodies can start to change from around the age of nine or ten with sexual development soon after. Your son will be developing into a young man. He will need your support and trust but he will also need some privacy, respect and encouragement.

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He keeps asking me awkward questions about sex, I am not sure what to say.

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The more they understand about growing up, the less confused they will be.

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Find out, maybe you could go online. Do not be embarrassed, let them know they can ask you anything.