

Here are just a few more guides we have available!

Guides on specific subjects

Rainbow Guides

Transitions Guides

PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD HANDBOOK
A Guide to Transitions from Year 9 Onwards

RAINBOW Guide
SUNDERLAND'S GUIDE TO SEND SUPPORT BY PARENT CARERS FOR PARENT CARERS
2024/2025

RAINBOW Guide
DURHAM'S GUIDE TO SEND SUPPORT BY PARENT CARERS FOR PARENT CARERS
2024/2025

THE SCHOOL, A BIG ADVENTURE
PARENT & CARER GUIDE TO SEND TRANSITIONS

Puberty

Parent Carer Guide to Talking Puberty

Your Child, Your Choice

Because one size doesn't fit all

Find our website here:



As parents we can all remember how well or how terribly the puberty talk went when we were younger. Then before we know it, we are having to discuss this topic with our children.

However, when discussing the topic with children with additional needs, it can be harder as a parent carer how to navigate the topic, where to start, and to know what information to tell them.



Puberty can sometimes be a puzzling time for young people, as there are a lot of changes in the chemicals in the body (hormones) and in the way they think and feel. Some children completely welcome the changes that puberty brings, whilst others may be confused or uncomfortable.

Young people who have a learning disability may find it difficult to understand the changes that are happening, manage their emotions, and communicate with others how they are feeling. They may also find it difficult to understand what is appropriate and inappropriate.

Here are some top tips on having those conversations with your child:

Start early - Begin the discussion before signs of puberty begin. Breaking down puberty into segments instead of one big conversation is huge! It probably won't be a one-time thing but rather ongoing lessons and conversations about what they may feel or experience and make sure they know questions are ok!

Use the 'Proper' terms - When it comes to wording use the correct terms. This is something I would actually suggest for all parents having "the talk". Using the proper names and terms helps paint a clearer picture and leaves less area for confusion. If your child needs something visual use pictures or a doll to discuss body parts and how they function.



Physical Development in Girls - When a child with special needs starts their period, consider their independence level. If they manage toileting independently at school, that's likely expected there too. Prepare them by using social stories with pictures to show the steps involved. Practice applying pads at home beforehand. Also, use this time to teach about hygiene and proper wiping.

If they are unable to toilet independently, speak to staff and make them aware. Discuss how you maybe changing and handling your child's care at home and ask them to do the same. You are not alone and support staff are likely to have done this before. If you are concerned, speak to your child's doctor, in certain circumstance medication can be considered to stop their period.

Physical Development in Boys - During puberty, boys experience significant physical changes driven by hormonal shifts. They'll see a growth spurt, often accompanied by increased muscle mass and strength. Their voice deepens, and they'll start to grow facial and body hair. The reproductive system matures, leading to the onset of sperm production, wet dreams, and unwanted erections. Open conversations, social stories, and image cards can help with supporting the discussion around public behaviours when this might occur.



In the link here you will find wonderful information from The National Autistic Society on navigating puberty, Sex education, Relationships and more with your child.

