

# PUBERTY

Preteens are children between the ages of 10 and 12. Many important changes occur in children during this time. Every child is different. As you try some of the suggestions below, keep your individual child's personality in mind.



*Every Child has a unique temperament, but many parents find their preteens more emotional, irritable, or sensitive than before.*

Puberty is the time of growth in a child's life when the body begins to develop into an adult body (e.g., voice and hormones change, romantic feelings begin, body shape becomes fuller, etc.). Usually these changes happen between the ages of 10 and 12 (in the "preteen" years), but they can begin as young as eight years old and continue until the age of sixteen. These changes can make both girls and boys feel nervous and unsure of themselves, and cause a "roller coaster" of confusing emotions that you may not have seen before.



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## How you can help – and stay connected to your child



*“Sometimes I really have to make an effort to notice something good that Sammy is doing. The other day I saw her being really kind to her little brother - I made sure I told her how proud I was of her.”*

1. **Talk regularly with your child.** Explain that changes during puberty are completely normal and that they don’t happen the same way for each person. Ask them if they have any questions and let them know what to expect. If you can, tell them a story or two about how you felt when you were going through this time in your life. Consider offering them a book on puberty they can read on their own. Above all, let them know you are there for them whenever they need to talk.
2. **Be patient.** Your child may start getting more upset about things than before, and may even blame you for making them feel this way. This is normal behaviour for this stage in life. Try not to take negative comments personally. If you are patient, kind and forgiving during this often difficult time for your child, you will help them to build more open communication and trust in you.
3. **Encourage a bit more independence.** Your child may want to be treated more like a “big kid” or adult now. This is a good time to start encouraging your child to be more involved in making decisions about their daily life and activities. This will help them to become more prepared for the teen years when they will need and want to be more independent.
4. **Focus on the good.** Always look for the good in your child. When your child does something well or nice for someone, make sure you praise them for it. This will help build their confidence and your relationship, and help both of you get through any difficult times more easily.
5. **Have fun!** Puberty can be a time when you and your child feel anxious about changes to come. Don’t forget to have fun together, laugh together and enjoy each other’s company. Regularly do something together that you both like (e.g., cooking, going for a walk, playing a sports game, watching a TV program, visiting a museum, shopping, listening to music).

### **Need more support?**

Visit [psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/publications/youAndYourPreteen\\_eng.pdf](http://psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/publications/youAndYourPreteen_eng.pdf)

Or contact your family doctor, local public health organization, or school guidance counsellor.

### **Need More Information?**

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