

All Change

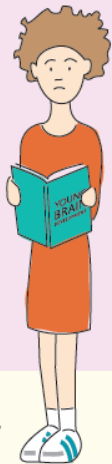


Parents & Carers

A booklet on helping your child through puberty

Some effects on young people due to brain development and reorganisation at puberty:

- More questioning of everything, more unconventional thinking and more open to new ideas and change.
- More creative.
- More passionate and increased emotional intensity with mood alteration and mood swings.
- Increased desire for intimate romantic and sexual relationships.
- Sensation seeking, an increased desire for risk with a lower ability to assess risk.
- Less ability to reason.
- Greater conflict with authority and authority figures.
- About a 20% decrease in ability to gauge emotion from the faces of others, so less able to read social situations.
- Less able to imagine how others feel, put themselves in others' shoes or to empathise with others.
- Less ability to organise themselves, to plan/forward plan and prioritise.
- Greater concern over self and self-image.
- Less sense of who they are and self-esteem issues.
- Young people's brains get a bigger "hit" from nicotine, alcohol and other drugs, so earlier consumption of these can increase the likelihood of dependence.



Top tips for helping your child through this time

Children and young people have lots of questions about puberty and sex (see a range of these at the back of this booklet). These have been collected from lots of children.

Help them express their feelings in a positive way. Try never to say: 'You can't feel like that' or 'Don't feel that way' or 'Stop feeling like that'.

We cannot help our feelings – they are a biological response to events and thoughts. What we can control, however, is how we behave; so children and young people need to be guided through how to acknowledge their feelings and to learn how to behave in a way that is acceptable to those around them when they have strong feelings.

Young people may worry that they are different from others.

Whether that's being slower or quicker to develop physically or because they have a learning or physical disability, or they are gay or lesbian and worry that there's no-one else like them. Acknowledge that this may feel difficult for them, reassure that you are there for them and that on most occasions their difficult feelings WILL get better. Encourage them to feel good about themselves and their bodies from birth and into adulthood.