

Stages of Sexual Development

BIRTH - 2 YEARS OLD

- Curious about their bodies.
- Finds genitals and may touch/explore.
- Can point to named body parts.
- Shows affection towards caregivers.
- No inhibitions about being naked.

3-4 YEARS OLD

- Aware of and curious about body differences.
- May self-soothe (touch & explore genitals).
- Talks about bodily functions and asks questions.
- Toilet training.
- Play house, doctor, or explore other forms of play with friends/siblings.
- May show private parts to others and may be curious about others private parts.

5-8 YEARS OLD

- Curious about pregnancy and birth.
- Strong same-sex friendships.
- Talk about having a 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'.
- Increased privacy is desired.
- Desire to make choices about how they dress.
- Compares body parts to peers.
- Humor related to body parts or functions of the body.

9- 12 YEARS OLD

- Begin puberty.
- Continued desire for privacy.
- Sexual attraction may begin.
- Peers become very important.
- Mood swings.
- May talk about sex with friends of the same sex.
- Strongly influenced by peers.
- Curiosity about their changing bodies.
- Develop crushes on friends, teens, celebrities.

13- 18 YEARS OLD

- Express desire to be more independent.
- Understands the consequences of sexual behaviors.
- Become involved in 'serious' relationship.
- Might engage in sexual activity.
- Face peer pressure and may face decisions about drugs, sex, and alcohol.
- Participate in risk taking and experimentation.
- Look for ways to express self.

