

Understand stages of development

Design learning programmes that meet students' developmental stages

Ages 5–8

- By the age of six, most children show an interest in how babies are made.
- They will want to know how the egg and sperm get together.
- They are interested in pregnancy and birth.
- Some children in this age group may be aware of the connection between “making babies” and sexual pleasure.
- They are likely to hear stories about sex in the playground.
- Some children will become aware that not everyone is heterosexual.
- They have a growing awareness of sanctioned gender roles, such as “girls don’t play soccer” or “boys don’t cry”.

Ages 9–12

- Children’s bodies develop and change while at primary school.
- All children need to know about puberty before it happens.
- Sometimes children feel anxious about puberty.
- Children have a growing interest in sex. They may look up information in books, tell rude jokes and talk with their friends about sex.
- They may go into and out of gender segregation, applying harsh gender stereotypical rules and censure to each other’s behaviour.
- Some children will have an interest in expressing their sexuality in dress.

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