

What Families Need to Do to Raise Sexually Healthy Youth 9-12 years of age

- Help young people understand puberty and the changes they are going through. These changes, including menstruation and nocturnal emissions, are normal.
- Respect young people's privacy, while encouraging open communication.
- Convey growth and maturation rates differ from person to person.
- Help young people understand, while they are maturing physically, they still have lots of emotional and cognitive growth ahead. Sexual intercourse is not healthy, appropriate or wise at this time in their lives.
- Acknowledge abstinence is normal and healthy and that sexual development is healthy and natural. Help them understand that as they grow older, there will be several ways to express their sexuality that does not involve sexual intercourse.
- Discuss the important relationship between sexual and emotional feelings.
- Be open to conversations about contraception and condoms. Respond honestly and accurately when young people ask about them.

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What Families Need to Do to Raise

Sexually Healthy Adolescents 13-17 years of age

- Clearly articulate your family and religious values regarding sexual intercourse. Express that even though sex is pleasurable, young people should wait to initiate sex until they are in a mature, loving and responsible relationship.
- Express that we all have a variety of options for experiencing intimacy and expressing love.
- Discuss together the factors, including age, mutual consent, protection, contraceptive use, love, intimacy, etc. that you and your teen believe should be a part of decisions about sexual intercourse.
- Discuss contraceptive options and sexually transmitted infections. Talk about the importance of condom use.
- Discuss exploitive behaviors and why it is unhealthy and (in some cases) illegal.
- Help youth identify various physical and verbal responses to avoid or get away from sexual situations that make them feel uncomfortable.
- Discuss teens' options should an unprotected intercourse occur.