

Potential Integration:  
ELA

## Health

4.ICR.2.1 Summarize the physical and emotional changes during puberty.

4.ICR2.2 Recognize that individuals experience puberty at different rates (early, average, late).

### Focus

Puberty Walk (See handout attached at the end of this lesson)- this activity will create an ah-ha moment that puberty occurs for students at different times. All of these times are normal and should help students to empathize with those that experience puberty at different times.

### Statement of Objectives

Puberty can be a confusing time, but there is information that can help young people better understand. You will learn in today's lesson the physical and emotional changes and when they are likely to occur.

### Teacher Input

Script to accompany PPT (Research shows best practice is not to separate the class by sex, but if necessary make sure to reorder the slides and start with the sex of the group you are teaching and then teach the information on the opposite sex) **YOU MUST TEACH ALL CONTENT TO BOTH SEXES**

**Slide 1-** Why is it important to be able to understand and identify the changes that occur during puberty? How can this knowledge assist you when interacting with others near your age?

**Slide 2:** Puberty is the stage of development when the body begins to change and grow. These changes are both physical and emotional. This is the time when kids begin to mature into adults.

**Slide 3:** When??? No one can pinpoint the exact time that puberty will begin. In females it can start between the ages of 8 – 13. In males it can happen between the ages of 9 – 15. No matter when it happens, it is maybe an uncomfortable time for young people. Making fun of someone because they are ahead or behind their peers only makes it worse. No one is in control of when puberty will start.

**Slide 4:** Where does it start? Puberty is triggered by the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland is a small bean shaped gland at the base of your brain. It sends a message to the ovaries in females and testes in males to start functioning.

**Slide 5:** Physical Changes for both males and females

- Sweat glands become more active: you may notice that your body starts to smell after P.E. or recess. From the video we watched earlier, what can you do when you start experiencing body odor? This means you need to start showering daily, use deodorant, and change your clothes.
- Oil glands start to produce more oil which can cause acne (also known as pimples or zits) on your face, back or chest. You should wash your face regularly to remove dirt and oils. What did the video tell us about popping pimples?

- Hair grows in the pubic region, under your arms and becomes coarser on your legs. Shaving is a personal choice and you need to choose what is right for you.
- Growth spurts occur: hands and feet may grow first and then the bones in the arms and legs. This causes an increase of both height and weight. Some people complain of growing pains as the body is growing so rapidly. During this time it is normal to feel clumsy and less skilled when playing sports. This video can be used to reinforce this information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00BYyDr8Xdg>

**Slide 6:** Physical Changes for males - Shoulders widen, increased height and weight facial hair growth, voice gradually begins to deepen, the testes and penis become larger, the testes begin to produce sperm. May experience spontaneous erections (the penis becomes engorged with blood) and/or nocturnal emissions otherwise known as a wet dream – ejaculation that occurs at night when sleeping. This is a great video to show that explains nocturnal emissions [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uotzoDDRW\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uotzoDDRW_s) After showing the video, emphasize again to your students that having nocturnal emissions is totally normal and they should not feel embarrassed if it happens to them. Also remind them that it is totally normal if they don't have them as every person is different.

**Slide 7:** Physical Changes for females – Early changes: Increased height and weight, development of breast buds, and growth of pubic and underarm hair. Later changes include: hips widen, ovulation (egg is released by the ovaries) and menstruation also known as a period. Menstruation is normal vaginal bleeding that occurs approximately every 28-29 days as the body sheds the uterine lining. No one can pinpoint the exact time you will get your first period so it is important to be prepared by having pads or tampons in your backpack or purse. This video give a good overview about what happens during menstruation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX4NjRjxwss>

**Slide 8:** Emotional/Social Changes also occur during puberty. Your emotions will feel extra intense during this time. It is common to become easily irritated or you can be happy one minute and angry or upset the very next minute. These are called mood swings and are common during puberty. Changes in feelings or friendships can include: embarrasses easily, fragile self-esteem, friends becoming more important, becoming more competitive, more aware of gender roles, uncertain if you are normal, will need reassurance.

This is a great video that illustrates the emotional roller coaster students may be experiencing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ocj0gyZwL5Y>

**Slide 9:** Maturing Early vs. Late – *Read through the following charts and have your students give you a thumbs up or down if they think the statement is an advantage or disadvantage before you tell them if it is advantage or disadvantage. (Refer to handout at the end of the lesson)*

**Slide 10:** Puberty is survivable. Puberty happens to everyone. It is normal even though you may not feel normal or think that you look normal.

**Slide 11:** It is important to talk to a trusted adult about what to expect or about the emotional and physical changes that you are experiencing.

**Slide 12:** Empathy – support your friends as they are going through puberty. This is an uncertain time, but compassion and understanding can make this transition easier.

**Slide 13:** Advocacy – This is an important skill that allows you to take a healthy stand and promote healthy norms and behaviors. You must recognize that no one has control

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over when they start puberty and everyone will eventually go through the process. No matter when a person goes through puberty, it is possible they will feel insecure about their body changes and emotional changes. Picking on others about something they cannot control only makes this process worse. Peers should be supportive of each other during this time by putting themselves in that person's shoes – ask yourself the question “How would I feel if this were happening to me?” If you see a classmate or friend being picked on, speak up (advocate for the individual).

### **Assessment**

Give each student several different scenarios of kids going through puberty and have them determine if that student is going through puberty early/late. Students will pick one of the scenarios and elaborate on the story more. Students should add how the person in the scenario is feeling and how another person could advocate for that student. This assessment will demonstrate student's knowledge of understanding the stages of puberty, the feelings that can be involved, and how they can advocate for a person. (Situations are attached at the end of the lesson)

### **Closure**

Today we talked about puberty and the changes that happen during this stage of development. With this information, you will be better able to cope with those changes and help others who may develop earlier or later.

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<b>Early Maturing Males</b>	
<b>Advantage</b>	<b>Disadvantage</b>
Size for playing sports	Adults/peers have higher behavior expectations
Higher social standing	
Given leadership roles	

<b>Late Maturing Males</b>	
<b>Advantage</b>	<b>Disadvantage</b>
Adults/peers have lower behavior expectations	Lower muscle mass for sports
	Shorter than females
	Self-Conscious
	May overcompensate

<b>Early Maturing Females</b>	
<b>Advantage</b>	<b>Disadvantage</b>
Middle school confidence	Maturing in elementary school feels awkward
Envied by other females (can also be a disadvantage at times)	Adults say they are growing up too fast
	Taller than most males
	Attention from older males (advantage and disadvantage)

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<b>Late Maturing Females</b>	
<b>Advantage</b>	<b>Disadvantage</b>
Less likely to be criticized by adults	Socially disadvantage
Fewer problems with drugs and alcohol	Can be overlooked
	Self-conscious

### **Puberty Walk**

Explain to your class that the next activity is very simple but requires close attention to instructions. The most important rule is that they must be absolutely quiet during the activity – no talking allowed until it is over!

Have them form a group on one side of the room and explain that you will come into the group and tap someone lightly on the shoulder. When they are tapped, they should walk slowly across the room to the other side and turn around to face the original group. Demonstrate for them the slow, even pace you want them to use. Be sure to ask if there are any questions before you begin.

There is no rhyme or reason to how the teacher selects who is tapped. In fact, that is part of the lesson! The basic guidelines are these: The first person tapped should walk alone for most or all of the way, then send one more person, then perhaps two close together. Remember, you are trying to visually demonstrate pubertal development, so a few people will “go it alone” and then a fairly large middle group should go together or very close together. Repeat your pace and selection from the beginning of the activity at the end – a few people will be last. You should save the last person to walk slowly alone across the floor to the group, which will be waiting somewhat impatiently, no doubt. Usually, the group cheers the final “loner.”

As you probably remember, the processing/learning from this activity is easy to facilitate. Ask the person who went first what it was like. They will say things like, “I felt weird! Everybody was watching me. I was wondering why I went first?” Ask the people who went as a group how they felt. They are usually the most comfortable and say things like, “I was glad I didn’t go alone.” Ask the first loner how he or she felt when other people started arriving at the other side of the room. He or she will say, “Relieved! I felt less singled out. It was good to have other people with me.”

Ask the “stragglers” how they felt. Usually they will say things like, “I wondered why you weren’t picking me.... Why other people got to go and I got left behind.” Ask how they felt when they were finally tapped. Check in with the last person. How did he or she feel? You can imagine the response! They usually say they were relieved to be tapped but it was agonizing walking slowly across the floor knowing everybody was waiting for you. “I just wanted to hurry up and get over there!”

Tell the group the name of this activity. Explain that many of the feelings they expressed are the feelings people can have during puberty. Going first is embarrassing, not really fun. You want other people to get going. When you develop at the same time with a larger group, you may feel more “normal” though it still is not easy. Being the last is tough, too. You get the idea!

# Puberty Scenarios

(adjusted from NCDPI)

*Directions: Read the following scenarios. Based on the information provided for each scenario you are to do the following, 1) Determine if this person is experiencing puberty early, late, or around the same time as most kids in their class.*

*Pick one scenario and complete the following: 1) Describe what it must feel like to be in their current situation and 2) Write what you could say to that person or others around them to advocate that going through puberty is a common and normal experience that cannot be delayed or rushed.*

Scenario 1: Kim is the last person chosen for teams in her 7<sup>th</sup> grade P.E. class. All the other girls in her class have gone through major growth spurts and are starting to look like adults Kim has not. She is the smallest girl in her school and she gets picked on in the locker room for being so little.

Scenario 2: Andre has always been an agile basketball player. Since Winter Break he has grown 2 shoe sizes and 4 inches. As a result, he is more clumsy and loses his balance a lot. Instead of cheering for him during the 8<sup>th</sup> grade basketball game, kids are now laughing at him every time he falls.

Scenario 3: Angel is the tallest kid in her 4<sup>th</sup> grade class. She has begun developing breasts. The girls in her class look at her odd and she thinks they are whispering about her. Angel's brother is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and his friends are starting to take notice of her.

Scenario 4: After recess one afternoon in late April, Mrs. Jones notices that her 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom has a strong smell of sweat and body odor coming from at least 10 of her students. She takes a moment to discuss this observation with her entire class making sure not to call out any of these students by name.

Scenario 5: Mya has a crush on a different boy every week in her 6<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom. She wears makeup and a bra to school and is always talking about it. She texts and sends snaps to boys using her cell phone. Kayla asks other girls to go with her to talk to boys.

Scenario 6: Jayden is very popular and has a lot of friends. He is tall for his age (13). Recently, girls have started texting him and sending him pictures. The girls are always asking Jayden's friends if he likes them. Jayden loves football and doesn't think about the girls in his grade.