

Puberty & Sexuality Resources

For Patients with Cognitive Disabilities and Their Families

Resources for Patients

***Changes in You* by Peggy Siegel.** The only book written specifically for girls and boys with cognitive disabilities, this book uses realistic drawings and straightforward language to explain the physical, emotional, and social changes of puberty. Separate books are available for males and females. Available at www.specialneeds.com.

***It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie Harris (1996).** Published by Candlewick Press ISBN: 15604021599. A comprehensive book that uses colored, animated illustrations to address male and female puberty, reproduction, birth, sexual orientation, decision making, and staying healthy. This book is a bit more advanced so parents may want to read this with their child. Available at www.amazon.com.

***The Care and Keeping of You: A Body Book for Girls* by Valerie Lee Schaefer (1998).** Published by Pleasant Company Publications. This American Girl “head-to-toe” advice book addresses female puberty changes, hygiene issues, self esteem, fitness, sleep and emotions. Lots of colored pictures (animated) and easier text makes it fun reading for girls with lower reading levels. Includes empowering messages about the body. Available at www.americangirlstore.com or at www.amazon.com.

***The Period Book: Everything You Don't Want to Ask but Need to Know* by Karen and Jennifer Gravelle (1996).** This more advanced book for females covers “changes you can see” and “changes you can't see” and includes information on tampon use, first pelvic exams, and how to handle common problems. Available at www.amazon.com.

***What's Happening to Me?: An Illustrated Guide to Puberty* by Peter Mayle (1981).** Published by Lyle Stuart. ISBN: 081803128. A humorous approach to male and female puberty. Mostly animated pictures with a few realistic drawings on body changes. Available at www.amazon.com.

Resources for Parents

***Talk to Me: A personal Development Manual for Women and Girls with Down Syndrome and Their Parents* by the Down Syndrome Association of NSW, Inc (1999).** A curriculum designed to help parents of teens and adults with Down Syndrome teach their child. A section designed to prepare parents for teaching accompanies actual worksheets that can be used for teaching. Although the title insinuates females as a target audience, most of the content is relevant for males. The section designed for young adults covers feelings, self esteem, friendships and dating, public and private, body changes, masturbation, relationships, intercourse, and sexual assault. Can be downloaded for free from www.dsansw.org.au/index.php?pg=261.

***Teaching Children with Down Syndrome About Their Bodies, Boundaries, and Sexuality: A Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Terri Couwenhoven (2007) Woodbine House.** A comprehensive “how-to teach sexuality” resource that offers practical information and teaching ideas for addressing a wide variety of sexuality issues across the life span. Includes loads of “use at home” activities that are useful for teaching about the body, privacy, relationships, and exploitation prevention. Detailed and realistic drawings that can be used for teaching are included in the appendices. Available at www.woodbinehouse.com or at www.amazon.com.

***Taking Care of Myself: A Hygiene, Puberty and Personal Curriculum for Young People with Autism* by Mary Wrobel.** Published by Future Horizons ISBN: 1-885477-94-5. This book contains already developed social stories for teaching about body changes, appropriate sexual behavior, and encouraging independence with hygiene and self care. Great ideas for creating teaching tools using Boardmaker© and Picture This© picture symbol programs. Available at www.amazon.com.