

Québec, le 16 janvier 2020

PAR COURRIEL

**Objet : Demande d'accès aux documents administratifs**  
**Notre dossier : 16310/19-309**

Madame,

Nous accusons réception de votre demande d'accès, visant à obtenir les canevas pédagogiques en anglais pour le cours d'éducation à la sexualité en vigueur en 2019-2020.

Vous trouverez en annexe la version la plus récente des canevas pédagogiques en anglais du cours d'éducation à la sexualité. Certains ont été diffusés en réponse à la demande d'accès 18-206 et ont été révisés depuis, alors que d'autres ont été traduits plus récemment.

Vous trouverez à l'adresse suivante l'ensemble des canevas pédagogiques diffusés en réponse à la demande d'accès 18-206 du 27 mars 2019 :

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/references/tx-solrtyperecherchepublicationtx-solrpublicationnouveau/resultats-de-la-recherche/detail/article/reponses-aux-demandes-dacces-a-linformation-janvier-a-mars-2019/>

Nous portons à votre attention que les canevas pédagogiques en éducation à la sexualité ont été développés à l'attention du personnel scolaire et de leurs partenaires. Le personnel scolaire dispose d'une autonomie professionnelle quant à la diffusion du contenu proposé.

Conformément à l'article 51 de la *Loi sur l'accès aux documents des organismes publics et sur la protection des renseignements personnels*, RLRQ, c. A-2.1, nous vous informons que vous pouvez demander la révision de cette décision auprès de la Commission d'accès à l'information. Vous trouverez ci-joint une note explicative à cet effet.

Veuillez agréer, Madame, nos salutations distinguées.

La responsable de l'accès aux documents,

originale signée

Ingrid Barakatt  
IB/JG/mc

## STBBIs AND PREGNANCY

Secondary V

### Educational aims

- 1) Identify the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy associated with different contexts of a sexually active lifestyle
- 2) Reflect on the ethical issues associated with STBBIs and pregnancy

Estimated duration of the activity  
**225 minutes**

### LEARNING ABOUT STBBIs AND PREGNANCY WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is an important period of transition for learning and/or maintaining safe sexual behaviours.<sup>1</sup>

**Several factors increase the vulnerability of adolescents to STBBIs and pregnancy:**

- self-discovery, the search for identity and sexual orientation,<sup>2</sup> learning about sexuality (planning to have sexual relations, negotiating condom use,<sup>3</sup> asserting themselves in romantic and sexual relationships),<sup>4</sup> feelings of invulnerability, magical thinking,<sup>5</sup> a desire to take risks, thrill-seeking, bravado, the need to reassure themselves of their sexual maturity<sup>6</sup>
- starting to be sexually active at a younger age (longer exposure to risk),<sup>7</sup> having unprotected sex and several sexual partners<sup>8</sup>
- LGBT young people being victims of heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia, which can affect self-esteem and the ability to be self-assertive<sup>9</sup>

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS 15 TO 17 YEARS OLD

A Québec study shows that one young person in two has had sexual relations (oral, vaginal or anal)<sup>10</sup> between 15 and 17 years of age. Another study suggests that 30% of young people of this age have had sexual relations with penetration.<sup>11</sup> By the age of 16, 38.9% of young people claim to have had sexual relations with vaginal penetration.<sup>12</sup> This number increases to 68% among 18- and 19-year-olds.<sup>13</sup>

Adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 form one of the groups most at risk of contracting an STBBI:<sup>14</sup> cases of chlamydia among girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have risen more than 250% since 2006.<sup>15</sup>

- 59% of sexually active young people used condoms each time they had sexual relations,<sup>16</sup> while 10% have never used them.<sup>17</sup> The use of condoms tends to diminish<sup>18</sup> over time in adolescence, mainly owing to the use of oral contraceptives<sup>19</sup> or to having a regular partner.<sup>20</sup>
- Sexual behaviours in adolescence are characterized by their sporadic and unplanned nature,<sup>21</sup> which can have a negative effect on the adoption of safe practices.<sup>22</sup>
- Many young people who have not yet had sexual relations say that they are firmly in control regarding the use of contraception and communication with their partner.<sup>23</sup> This perception of control diminishes when young people become sexually active and are confronted with the difficulties of maintaining a relationship, and communicating and negotiating with a partner.<sup>24</sup>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>LEARNING CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING THE CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Identify the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy associated with different contexts of a sexually active lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of sexual relations: nature of the relationship with the partner, choice and number of partners, frequency of sexual relations, meeting places, risk level of sexual behaviours, consumption of alcohol and other drugs</li> <li>Measures of protection/testing: importance, frequency and times to consult a health professional and be advised on safe sexual behaviours</li> </ul>	<p><b>IDENTIFY THE RISKS OF STBBIs AND PREGNANCY ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF A SEXUALLY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE</b></p> <p>The different contexts of sexual relations influence the probability of experiencing an unplanned pregnancy or contracting an STBBI. If adolescents are able to assess the risks associated with these contexts, they will be more likely to adopt safe sexual behaviours.</p> <p><b>Context of sexual relations</b></p> <p>The following contexts increase or decrease the level of risk:<sup>25</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Nature of the relationship with the partner:</b> It is easier to plan for protection methods when in a stable, exclusive and egalitarian relationship. Being in a committed romantic relationship increases your concern for the other person and favours the use of protection for both yourself and your partner. This results in a lower risk level. However, adolescents believe that there is less risk of STBBIs when in monogamous and long-term relationships, and, therefore, less need to use condoms.<sup>26</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casual sexual relations (friend with benefits, ex-partner), one-night stands and non-exclusivity with a partner increase the level of risk.</li> <li>Serial monogamy (a series of exclusive partners over a brief period of time) and concurrent partners (several partners at the same time) also increase the risks.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Selection and number of partners:</b> The more partners you have, the more you risk contracting an STBBI or being faced with an unplanned pregnancy. It is possible that one of your sexual partners may have previously been in contact with a person who is carrying an STBBI or that your partner is a carrier without knowing it. Any person who has had several sexual partners has a higher risk of being exposed to STBBIs.</li> <li><b>Frequency of sexual relations:</b> The probability of contracting an STBBI is higher for a person who has frequent sexual relations than for one who only has sexual relations occasionally. However, even if a person has sexual relations infrequently, there are still risks.</li> <li><b>Meeting places:</b> Having sexual relations in a known, safe and comfortable place makes planning and accessing protection methods easier. At an improvised location, the risk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Context of sexual relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it true that there's no risk of an STBBI if it's the first time for both of us?</li> <li>I had sex with my girlfriend without a condom. I couldn't pull out before I ejaculated. My girlfriend's on the pill. What are the risks that she might be pregnant?<sup>38</sup></li> <li>Can you get pregnant by swallowing sperm during a blow job?<sup>39</sup></li> <li>I know someone who gave his partner herpes by giving him a blow job. They didn't know there was a risk of transmission between the mouth and the penis.</li> <li>My partner and I always have condoms with us to be sure we're protected if we have unplanned sex.</li> <li>We'd both had alcohol. We didn't even think about protection. I've been stressed about it ever since.</li> <li>I made love to a friend without using a condom. I'm on the pill to avoid pregnancy, but I'm worried about STBBIs. He got tested and doesn't have any STBBIs. But if I had one when we slept together, could I have transmitted it to him?<sup>40</sup></li> <li>I made love to my boyfriend for the first time. We had sex for the first few minutes without a condom, and I'm not on the pill. We used a condom during the rest of the sex. I was at the end of my period. Is there a risk of pregnancy?<sup>41</sup></li> <li>During foreplay with my girlfriend, I decided to ejaculate before penetration. I don't know whether</li> </ul>

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	<p>level rises when protection either has not been planned for or is not accessible at that given time and place (e.g. at a party). Also, spontaneous sexual relations lower the probability that a contraceptive method or condoms are planned or used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Risk level of sexual behaviours:</b> The risks of STBBIs vary depending on their type and on the sexual behaviours. For an STBBI to be transmitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One of the two partners must be infected: the infection must be present in a bodily fluid or in certain lesions of the skin or genitals.</li> <li>○ The fluid or lesion must come into contact with the partner’s skin lesions, mucous membrane of the mouth, or vaginal or anal areas.<sup>27</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>See Appendix 2 for details about risk levels of STBBIs<sup>28,29</sup> and of pregnancy associated with certain sexual behaviours during unprotected sexual relations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consumption of alcohol and other drugs:</b> Consuming alcohol or drugs may cause a person to be less careful about using preventive methods and using them correctly, thereby increasing the risk of pregnancy and of exposure to STBBIs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Protection and testing measures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention counselling allows adolescents to obtain protection methods and undergo screening tests at the appropriate time and frequency. This counselling, carried out by a health professional (doctor or authorized nurse), is also an opportunity to evaluate the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy and to provide advice about the adoption of safe sexual behaviours.</li> <li>• When identifying the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy, adolescents are often concerned about when they can stop using condoms. However, before ceasing to use condoms within an exclusive relationship, they should first start to use a contraceptive method and be tested.</li> <li>• Screening tests cannot rule out all STBBIs. These tests are limited given that some STBBIs (e.g. herpes and HPV infection) cannot be detected when there are no symptoms present.</li> <li>• Although screening tests are essential to ensuring that no STBBI has been contracted as the result of risky behaviours, they are not a guarantee that a person is 100% safe.</li> </ul>	<p>I wiped my penis off completely before I penetrated her and I wasn’t protected. Is there a risk of pregnancy?<sup>42</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I had sex for the first time. I’m on the pill. On the day we did it, I took two pills because I had forgotten to take one the night before. We used a condom. Is there a risk that I could be pregnant?<sup>43</sup></li> <li>• I had sex with a girl. It was our first time, and I performed cunnilingus on her. Is there a risk of getting an STBBI? She wasn’t bleeding, and I don’t have any mouth sores.<sup>44</sup></li> <li>• I just got back together with my girlfriend. We broke up a few months ago, but, before that, we were together for a year. We didn’t use a condom because she was on the pill and we were both faithful. Some people told me that she was with other guys when we were broken up. We’re supposed to see each other this weekend, and I was wondering if I should use a condom.<sup>45</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Protection and testing measures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I’d like to have sex for the first time with my partner. He has type 1 genital herpes (oral-genital). What is the most effective way to prevent or reduce the risk of contracting the virus besides condoms, which I already consider a must?<sup>46</sup></li> <li>• I’m a girl and I have sex with girls. What can I do to protect myself?</li> <li>• I take medication that makes the pill less effective. We’re using condoms for the duration of the treatment, because it’s safer.</li> <li>• We use condoms once in a while. Not always. It’s</li> </ul>



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<p>2) Reflect on the ethical issues associated with STBBIs and pregnancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of civic responsibility concerning STBBIs: using a protection method when you have an STBBI or abstaining from sexual relations, notifying an exposed partner, completing the treatment, respecting the wishes of the other person to use protection or to not engage in sexual relations</li> <li>• Unplanned pregnancy: analyzing the situation and making a decision based on possible pregnancy-related issues</li> <li>• Stigmatization and judgment of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For this reason, dual protection should be used,<sup>30</sup> meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a contraceptive method and condoms</li> <li>○ condoms (which prevent both STBBIs and pregnancy)</li> <li>○ condoms and, in the event of problems with condom use, the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)</li> <li>○ a contraceptive method within an exclusive relationship after having undergone screening tests</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>ETHICAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH STBBIs AND PREGNANCY</b></p> <p>To prevent STBBIs and pregnancy and adequately manage the consequences, adolescents need to reflect on the various associated ethical issues.</p> <p><b>Sense of civic responsibility concerning STBBIs</b></p> <p>Exercising your sense of civic responsibility concerning STBBIs means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you have an STBBI, you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ do not have sexual relations during the course of treatment, or you use condoms at all times</li> <li>○ correctly follow and complete the treatment according to the instructions provided by the doctor or pharmacist to ensure its effectiveness</li> <li>○ notify the exposed partner(s) so they can be tested, and treated if necessary, to avoid having any complications and infecting other people</li> <li>○ respect the wishes of the other person if they do not want to have sexual relations, even with condoms</li> <li>○ adopt <b>less risky sexual behaviours</b>: kisses, hugs, touches, massages, embraces, mutual masturbation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When you have a chronic STBBI (e.g. herpes or HIV), you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ notify all new partners of the presence of risk associated with your STBBI</li> <li>○ use condoms at all times</li> <li>○ respect the wishes of the other person to have sexual relations or not</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When a partner notifies you that they have an STBBI, you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ thank the person for showing respect and responsibility</li> <li>○ are discreet (keep this information confidential)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>better than nothing, right?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My girlfriend forgot to take the pill for two days. We decided to use condoms until she has her next period to avoid a pregnancy.</li> <li>• My period is late. Am I pregnant? Should I go see the nurse?</li> <li>• I kissed someone at a party. My friend told me he often has cold sores. I don't want that! Do I have to see my doctor for that? Should I wait until one appears?</li> <li>• If I have to get tested, will they call me at home to give me my results?</li> </ul> <p><b>Ethical issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel bad telling my new girlfriend that I have an STBBI. Maybe I should just tell her that I don't want to have sex until I've healed . . . .</li> <li>• I have to take a 10-day course of treatment for chlamydia. Today is day seven, and I think I'm better now. Should I finish the treatment?</li> <li>• My friend with benefits told me he found out he has chlamydia. I don't know whether I should feel relieved that he told me or angry that I might have contracted this STBBI, too.</li> <li>• My sister had herpes last year. She has a new boyfriend and doesn't know whether she should tell him. She's afraid he'll leave her if she does tell him.</li> <li>• My friend's pregnant and would like to continue with her pregnancy. She doesn't know if she should tell anyone: she's scared of what other students will think.</li> <li>• I don't know how long I've had this STBBI. Maybe I</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ take the necessary steps to be tested and, if need be, receive treatment</li></ul> <p><b>Unplanned pregnancy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unplanned pregnancy puts both partners as well as the people around them in the position of having to make various choices that can significantly impact the life of an adolescent: continuing the pregnancy with the intention of either giving the baby up for adoption or keeping the baby (parenting alone or as a couple), or ending the pregnancy (abortion).</li><li>• The outcome of a pregnancy requires making a decision that takes ethical and moral aspects into consideration (“Is the outcome good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable?”). Reflections on these considerations are built on a sense of conforming to or breaking away from society’s value systems.<sup>31</sup></li><li>• The questions to reflect on with regard to these ethical and moral aspects include:<sup>32</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What rights do each of the partners have in this situation? (e.g. the right to consent to pregnancy-related health care from age 14, the right to access a free abortion in Québec, the right to continue your education during pregnancy, the right to financial support to provide for the child’s needs, the adolescent’s right to decide whether or not to continue with the pregnancy).</li><li>○ What are the responsibilities with regard to the child that each of the partners involved have? (e.g. providing for the child’s needs, making decisions to foster the well-being and development of both the child and the partners).</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Stigmatization and judgment of others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People who have an STBBI, especially those who must live with one throughout their entire lives (e.g. herpes, HIV), can be stigmatized and judged by other people, which can then result in negative consequences such as limiting their access to information, care, services, employment, etc.<sup>33</sup></li><li>• People who have an STBBI may experience a range of difficulties in their social, family, romantic or sexual relationships because they are subjected to rejection, discrimination, stigmatization and even violence.<sup>34</sup></li><li>• It is important not to harm these individuals and to show empathy.</li></ul>	<p>should inform the people I’ve had sex with. What should I do? Who should I talk to about it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I think that if you catch an STBBI, it’s because you were asking for it. You deserve it!</li><li>• I took a pregnancy test and I’m pregnant. I want to keep the baby, but the people around me don’t want me to. I’m not working right now and I dropped out of school. I just have to finish Secondary V. What resources are available to me if I decide to have the baby and then start my DVS in September?<sup>47</sup></li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adolescents who are dealing with a pregnancy may sometimes be judged and discriminated against due to a variety of prejudices.<sup>35,36</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ With regard to adolescents who continue with their pregnancy and <b>become parents</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ E.g. a pregnant girl is seeking attention and trying to feel important; adolescents who become parents have no future, will not be able to be good parents or take good care of their children, will be poor and dependant on government assistance; a pregnant adolescent is impulsive and irresponsible; adolescent fathers do not assume their responsibilities and are immature</li></ul></li><li>○ With regard to adolescents who <b>choose abortion</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ E.g. abortion is morally unacceptable; adolescents who have abortions are not assuming the consequences of their actions or will regret it for the rest of their life</li></ul></li><li>○ With regard to adolescents who <b>choose adoption</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ E.g. adolescents who give their baby up for adoption are unable to assume their responsibilities, they are abandoning their child, they are heartless</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• A fear of judgment and criticism sometimes causes adolescents to isolate themselves, not talk to anyone about what they are experiencing, or even lie; to experience negative feelings (e.g. sadness, depression, suicidal thoughts); and to delay asking for help with the pregnancy they are facing.<sup>37</sup> As a result, these young people may not obtain the necessary care and services to which they are entitled, and there is greater risk for the spread of STBBIs (e.g. an untreated person can infect others). It is therefore important to fight against prejudices in order to ensure people's well-being and reduce the obstacles to seeking assistance.</li></ul>	

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### HAVE AN ACCURATE PERCEPTION OF THE SEXUAL AND PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOURS OF ADOLESCENTS

Adolescence is a period of discovery, curiosity, experimentation and, sometimes, risk taking. Adolescents are nevertheless a heterogeneous group in terms of sexual behaviours. Even if more adolescents are engaging in sexual behaviours, it must not be assumed that they are all sexually active.

- According to a 2010-2011 study conducted in Québec secondary schools, **about half of all adolescents have engaged in at least one consensual sexual relation**—whether vaginal, oral or anal—by the end of Secondary V. The proportion of adolescents who have already engaged in sexual relations increases by grade:<sup>48</sup>
  - 25% in Secondary I and II
  - 29% in Secondary III
  - 40% in Secondary IV
  - **52% in Secondary V**
- In Secondary V, the percentage of adolescents who have engaged in sexual relations rises, more specifically:<sup>49</sup>
  - 47% have had oral sex
  - 46% have engaged in vaginal penetration
  - 9% have engaged in anal penetration\*
- The percentage of adolescents who used condoms during their most recent sexual relations decreases by grade:<sup>50</sup>
  - It drops from 83% in Secondary I and Secondary II to 62% in Secondary V for the most recent sexual relations with vaginal penetration.
  - It drops from 60% in Secondary I and Secondary II to 44% in Secondary V for the most recent sexual relations with anal penetration.
- A high percentage (90%) of sexually active young people between the ages of 15 and 24 usually use a contraceptive method.<sup>51</sup>
  - Condoms and oral contraception (the pill) are the most frequently used contraceptive methods among young Québec adolescents (56% and 68%, respectively).<sup>52</sup>
  - The withdrawal method (coitus interruptus), though recognized as being ineffective for preventing pregnancy, is nonetheless used by some (17% of Canadian girls aged 15 to 19).<sup>53</sup>
  - Other methods (e.g. patch, vaginal ring, injectable contraceptive, IUD) may also be used by young people, but their use has yet to be well documented. A Québec study conducted among 17- to 29-year-olds reveals that about 10% of women aged 17 to 20 use a patch, vaginal ring, injectable contraceptive or IUD.<sup>54</sup>

\* Additional explanations about anal penetration:

While anal penetration is not widely practised by adolescents, it does involve risks of STBBIs, hence the importance of discussing it **along with other risky sexual behaviours** (see the appendix in the “Suggestions for the Activity” section). In addition, it is possible that:

- Adolescents have heard about it from other sources (e.g. friends, pornography), they would like to try it, or they are asked or pressured to do it. In that case, it is essential to reiterate that all sexual behaviours must be adopted with a view to pleasure, respect for your own desires and limits, and for those of the other person, as well as mutual consent.
- Adolescents are not aware that certain precautions are necessary (e.g. using lubricant to reduce the risks of injuries or discomfort) and that these precautions must be considered based on discussions with the partner beforehand and on information obtained from reliable sources, including a health professional.

**BE AWARE THAT THE LATEX BARRIER (DENTAL DAM) IS A RECOMMENDED PROTECTION METHOD FOR ORAL-GENITAL CONTACT and that it is important to address it with students**

Close to half of all students (47%) have engaged in oral-genital contact (see the “Take Time to Reflect” section), a practice that carries risks of STBBIs. When covering the dental dam, it would be appropriate to tell students that:

- the dental dam is a square piece of latex (or polyurethane) that creates a barrier between the mouth and the genitals, and that can either be purchased in pharmacies or made by cutting up a condom (see the “Refer to Resources” section to explain how to make a dental dam)
- although not widely known, it provides protection in the same way that condoms protect during mouth-penis contact
- a new dental dam must be used for each new sexual contact (just like condoms)
- students can refer to reliable resources or to a health professional to learn more about dental dams or how to obtain them

**TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT AROUND HALF OF SECONDARY V STUDENTS HAVE NOT YET HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS**

When talking about the steps to be taken after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations, take care not to pressure students by giving them the impression that all adolescents have already had sexual relations, that they are all sexually active or that some sexual behaviours are common at their age.<sup>55</sup> It is important to:

- reassure them by explaining that many adolescents their age have not yet experienced their first sexual relation (e.g. refer to statistics about the sexual relations of adolescents in Secondary V)
- use language that allows students to feel involved, whether or not they have had sexual relations (e.g. “when you choose to have sexual relations, it is important to . . .”).

**PLACE THE CONTENT IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS AT THE END OF SECONDARY SCHOOL**

- By Secondary V, about half of all adolescents will have had sexual relations at least once (either vaginal, oral or anal). Secondary V provides a final opportunity to inform them about certain sexual behaviours (e.g. risk level of sexual behaviours, protection methods [e.g. dental dam]) and contexts that increase the risks of STBBIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g. alcohol and drug consumption, violence, simultaneous partners, unplanned sexual relations).
- One such context is the party context. While not presuming or inferring that adolescents will have sexual relations at the prom or the after-prom, it is important to identify the aspects of this context that might increase the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy: unplanned sexual relations, consumption of substances that influence the capacity to protect oneself or give one’s consent, peer influence, greater difficulty in setting one’s limits, etc.

**USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE WITH REGARD TO SEXUAL DIVERSITY**

All young people need to be informed about contraception, STBBIs and condoms, regardless of their sexual orientation or their partner’s sex.<sup>56</sup> Some young people identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, question their sexual orientation or have experimented with sexual activities with people of the same sex. These young people must feel that the activity is relevant to them:

- Use inclusive language so that everyone feels they are being addressed (e.g. use the word “partner” instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend”).
- Explain that sexual relations between persons of the same sex can carry a risk for STBBIs, even if they do not involve the risk of pregnancy.
- Use language focused on sexual behaviours and protection methods **without regard** to sexual orientation.
- Avoid associating certain sexual behaviours with a specific sexual orientation or a group of individuals (e.g. associating anal penetration and risks of STBBIs with gay people or oral-genital contact with lesbians). Such associations, in addition to often being false, promote prejudices against certain groups or sexual orientations. Above all, it diminishes the perception of risk associated with certain sexual behaviours.



## UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES OF PREVENTING PREGNANCY IN ADOLESCENCE

- More often than not, pregnancy in adolescence is unplanned. Young people faced with pregnancy have a difficult choice to make and require guidance and support. It is therefore important to make young people aware of the implications of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood, without, meanwhile, taking on a moralizing tone. As an adult, it is important that you:
  - clarify your own values (regarding pregnancy, adolescent parenthood, abortion and adoption) to understand the impact of your sexuality education activities
  - present the real consequences of the possible options so that the students can gain awareness of them and make more informed choices (present facts rather than your opinions)
  - direct them to the appropriate resources in the health and social services system to support them in their process:<sup>57</sup>
    - Support in making their decision<sup>58</sup>
    - Free abortion, in all regions of Québec, before the 12th week of pregnancy (Young people aged 14 years or older can have an abortion without their parents' consent, unless hospitalization for longer than 12 hours is required and the young person is a minor.)<sup>59</sup>
    - Support and guidance during a pregnancy and in learning to cope with adolescent parenthood
    - Help with adoption<sup>60</sup>
- Since the early 2000s, pregnancy and abortion rates among adolescents have dropped in Québec, as has the number of mothers under 20 years of age. Many new contraceptive methods have appeared on the market (patch, vaginal ring, hormone-releasing IUDs, new oral contraceptives, etc.), and access to these methods has been made easier. Although the majority (91%) of sexually active young people aged 15 to 17 usually use at least one contraceptive method,<sup>61</sup> some adolescents face unwanted pregnancies, the subsequent decision-making process and, in some cases, abortion.<sup>62,63</sup> In Québec, in 2015, more than 1000 adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 dealt with pregnancy, about 75% of them choosing to have an abortion.<sup>64</sup> These unwanted pregnancies demonstrate that, despite the widespread use of contraception, its effective use continues to be a challenge for young people<sup>65</sup> and prevention remains important.
- Boys have their own specific issues when faced with unplanned pregnancy. It is important to reach out to them by:
  - emphasizing that they have a role to play in preventing pregnancy, in particular by using condoms and getting involved with the choice of contraception
  - allowing them to express their potential reactions to an unplanned pregnancy and the possible outcomes
  - telling them that paternity is an important undertaking: they should be able to decide and plan why, when and under what conditions they would want to become fathers

## REVIEW A FEW POINTS ABOUT PROTECTION AS COVERED IN PREVIOUS YEARS, AS NEEDED, especially:

- **Coitus interruptus**, which consists of interrupting vaginal penetration before ejaculation occurs in order to avoid fertilization, is not very effective: it results in pregnancy 25% of the time. This ineffectiveness can be partially explained by the possible presence of sperm in the pre-ejaculatory fluid as well as by the partner's difficulty in withdrawing in time. It should be remembered that this practice also carries with it **risks of contracting an STBBI**. Therefore, coitus interruptus cannot be considered a contraceptive method, despite it sometimes being used as one.<sup>66</sup>
- **Condoms** should be used:<sup>67</sup>
  - correctly and with all sexual partners, during all sexual relations
  - for the entire duration of penetration (vaginal or anal)
  - during oral sex (mouth-penis contact)
- A **contraceptive method** (e.g. pill, vaginal ring, patch) should be used:<sup>68</sup>
  - correctly (e.g. never forgetting and always following the instructions for proper use)
  - continuously (e.g. do not take a break from using contraception, do not prematurely stop using contraception, continue to use condoms when taking medication that affects the effectiveness of contraception)

## REFER TO RESOURCES brief readings, short videos

For **information about STBBIs, risk levels, condoms and screening tests**, refer to:

- The Québec government website on STBBI prevention (<http://www.itss.gouv.qc.ca/>) available in both French and English, addressed to adolescents and containing the following sections:
  - “Knowing everything about STBBI,” which presents, for each STBBI, information on the modes of transmission, the possible symptoms and complications, screening tests and treatment, and protection methods
  - “How would I contract an STBBI?” which presents the modes of STBBI transmission
  - “How should I protect myself?” which presents relevant information about condoms (reasons for protecting yourself, benefits, etc.) as well as a quiz for students
- A Health Canada brochure about STBBIs available at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/std-mts/rp/sti-its/assets/pdf/sti-its-booklet-eng.pdf> (it can be given to the students)
- An [STI risk awareness chart](#) produced by [Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights](#) for Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week

For **information about contraceptive methods**, refer to:

- The [Tel-Jeunes](#) website (under All Topics > Sex > Contraception and under All Topics > Sex > BBSTIs)
- The [contraception booklet](#) on the [Sex & U](#) website, produced by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (under Contraception > Contraception Booklet)

For information about **making latex barriers** (also called “latex square barrier,” “rubber dam,” “oral dam” or “dental dam”), refer to:

- The article “[Dental Dams: Everything You Need To Know](#),” including what they protect against, how to use them and how to make one at home
- The image “[How To Make an Oral Dam](#)” available in the “[Using Condoms](#)” section of the [Safer Sex Guide](#) that can be found on the [CATIE](#) website (Canada’s source for HIV and Hepatitis C information)

To learn about the **issues associated with adolescent pregnancy**, refer to:

- Issues of *The SexEducator Magazine* (previously called *Sexpressions*) produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), in collaboration with UQAM, the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur and Tel-jeunes (available in both French and English), and available on the [MSSS](#) website (under Publications > Subjects > SexEducator)
  - [The SexEducator Magazine #8 \(Spring 2007\)](#), pages 2-8
  - [Sexpressions Magazine #2 \(Winter 2006\)](#), pages 4-5

For **parents**:

- Sexuality education is more effective when there is collaboration between the school and the family. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process undertaken in school regarding the prevention of STBBIs and pregnancy. In fact, adolescents who can communicate with parents about sexuality and contraception also tend to have better communication with partners about protection and contraception before initiating sexual relations.<sup>69</sup>
- Parents can communicate their opinions, values and limits as well as encourage their adolescents to reflect on the responsibilities that come with becoming sexually active and the importance of choosing the right moment to become parents. You can refer parents to the above-mentioned sites as well as to the following bulletins:
  - The Mozaïk project, available on the [MSSS](#) website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > Le Bulletin – Impliquer les parents dans l’éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English), includes the following three bulletins in connection with the educational aims of this content:

**No. 16** “[How do I talk to teens about their first sexual experience?](#)” (the most relevant at this level)

**No. 17** “[How do I talk to my child about contraception?](#)”

**No. 18** “[How do I talk to my child about condoms?](#)”

- Parents can take advantage of the prom and after-prom to discuss the risks associated with sexual relations in certain contexts (e.g. parties, when consuming drugs and/or alcohol) using the following brochure:
  - [Making Prom a Night to Remember: Parents Have a Role To Play!](#) available on the [MSSS](#) website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > Pour une sortie de bal et d’après-bal inoubliable – Parents, vous avez un rôle à jouer! > English)

## **BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes**

### **PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO SECONDARY V STUDENTS**

- An activity concerning pregnancy and STBBIs should never be the first activity of the year. An STBBI and pregnancy prevention activity should take place after you have led activities on “Emotional and Romantic Life.” These activities will have allowed students to reflect on the emotional issues that can influence the adoption of safe sexual behaviours in relationships (e.g. openness about yourself and acceptance of the other person, care for the other person, commitment) and what they have learned from their previous relationships.

### **BE FAMILIAR WITH AND INFORM STUDENTS OF THE CLINICAL PREVENTION SERVICES OFFERED IN THE SCHOOL OR IN THE COMMUNITY**

- The school nurse who is authorized to do so can:
  - **Concerning protection:** distribute condoms, issue hormonal contraception or IUDs, and provide counselling on safe sexual behaviours
  - **In the event of unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations:** provide the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) at low or no cost, carry out screening tests for STBBIs or pregnancy tests, and provide the results.
    - The ECP is also available at low or no cost in pharmacies.
  - **In the event of an STBBI or unplanned pregnancy:** initiate treatments for certain STBBIs (if authorized), refer students to the appropriate resources in the event of unplanned pregnancy (e.g. help in making a decision, seeking an abortion, obtaining information on adoption services or accessing perinatal services)
- Screening tests are also available at CLSCs, at many clinics and at a doctor’s office.
  - **With or without symptoms of STBBIs:** Adolescents can undergo free screening tests carried out by their school nurse (if he or she is authorized to do so), at the youth clinic or the CLSC in their region, or at a medical clinic. Adolescents aged 14 and older can be tested without parental consent.
  - **The type of test to be administered depends on the STBBIs being screened:** Some require samples of urethral or vaginal secretions, while others require urine or blood samples. The health professional evaluates the need to carry out the tests, decides the type of test and where the samples should be taken from (genitals, anus, throat), and provides the results in person or by telephone.
  - **Treatments for bacterial STBBIs (e.g. chlamydia, gonorrhea) are free for individuals with a health insurance card.** In some cases, the treatment may even be administered directly at the school, if the nurse is authorized to do so.

**NOTE: STARTING AT 14 YEARS OF AGE,** young people can consult a health professional (nurse, doctor) in complete confidentiality (without their parents being notified). They can therefore consult a health professional without parental consent, whether to access contraception or emergency contraception or to undergo screening tests.

### ADOPT THE APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGICAL POSTURE REGARDING RISKS AND SAFE SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

- Adopt an attitude that encourages young people to develop the necessary self-protection skills to adopt safe sexual behaviours and guide them in making informed decisions should they choose to become sexually active.
  - Respect and encourage others to respect the choice of young people who want to abstain from or postpone sexual relations, while giving them information and helping them to develop the necessary self-protection skills for when they do choose to become sexually active.
  - Present the risks associated with sexual behaviours (e.g. oral-genital contact, anal penetration) and ways of protecting themselves (e.g. latex barrier) by providing information that supports decision making without pressuring students to adopt certain behaviours or resorting to sensationalism, vulgarity or too much familiarity, which could offend or upset students. ⇒ *In this regard, see the information presented in the “Suggestions for the Activity” section about taking a neutral approach to addressing the topic that is consistent with the educational aim (identification of the levels of risk for certain behaviours).*
- If some students ask questions about more suggestive sexual practices—and to avoid exposing the entire class to these practices—invite them to ask their questions *privately, on an individual basis*, or to consult a health professional to learn more about the risks of STBBIs and prevention methods (e.g. sharing sex toys).
- **Avoid making judgments** about people with an STBBI or who are dealing with an unplanned pregnancy in order to avoid stigmatizing students who have, have had or might one day have an STBBI or who might be faced with a pregnancy.
- **Avoid presenting photos or images of the symptoms of STBBIs.** This practice triggers a wide range of reactions, but is ineffective in encouraging young people to adopt and maintain safe sexual behaviours.
  - Most STBBIs are asymptomatic. Viewing photos of symptoms may lead young people to believe that these types of symptoms must be detectable before they consult a health professional to get tested and, as a result, may cause them to delay their medical consultation. Despite the absence of visible symptoms, an infected person is contagious and can transmit the infection.
  - This practice may prompt students to react with disgust. Such a reaction stigmatizes classmates who have been infected by an STBBI or who know someone who has been infected, and this could affect them psychologically.

### GATHER MATERIALS

- Order materials that are free, available and intended for young people.
  - The booklet [Getting to Know STBBIs](#), intended for 12- to 17-year-olds and available in both English and French, aims to inform them about sexually transmissible and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) and how to prevent them. To download the booklet to present it to students or to order free copies to give to students, go to the [MSSS](#) website (under Publications > Subjects > STI and STBBI).
- Be familiar with the preventive clinical services that are provided in the school and in the community.
- Prepare a resource list for the students (access to contraception, emergency oral contraception and condoms, pregnancy tests and STBBI screening tests, and support services for unplanned pregnancies [help in making a decision, seeking an abortion, obtaining information about adoption, parenting support, etc.]), or, when possible, invite the school nurse to present the services provided in the school and in the community.
- Print out useful documents for the activities:
  - Appendix 1, if it is to be used in written format
  - Newsletters for parents
  - Resource list for students
  - Etc.
- After checking which mailings have been sent to parents, write and prepare material to email (message, links to websites, etc.), if documentation for parents is sent electronically.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken to continue increasing the students' awareness and responsibility regarding the prevention of STBBIs and pregnancies in Secondary Cycle Two should:

- reinforce individual values that promote safe sexual behaviours and skills in managing sexuality, sexual risks and practices<sup>70</sup>
- emphasize the use of condoms<sup>71</sup> and contraceptive measures in order to enable young people to reduce the possibility of pregnancy or STBBIs
- encourage the adoption and maintenance of safe sexual behaviours<sup>72</sup> by reinforcing young people's sense of self-efficacy<sup>73</sup> in asserting themselves and negotiating the use of a condom
- develop the motivations and skills required to judge the risks involved in different situations<sup>74</sup>

### Key messages:

- In certain contexts of sexual relations, adolescents may be less inclined to protect themselves.
- It is important to identify the risks in order to adopt safe sexual behaviours and, if necessary, take steps to protect yourself and be tested.
- Protecting yourself, exercising your sense of civic responsibility regarding STBBIs and pregnancy, and showing respect for people who are dealing with STBBIs and pregnancy means ensuring the safety and well-being of the people involved. It also means contributing to reducing the spread of STBBIs and the impacts of adolescent pregnancy.
- Having sexual relations in adolescence requires both individual and collective responsibilities. The services available in Québec support adolescents as they assume these responsibilities.

### INTRODUCTION

- Present the two educational aims to the students.
- Activate students' **prior knowledge** by reviewing:
  - fertility, fertility mechanisms, pregnancy risks, contraceptive measures ⇒ covered in Science and Technology
  - types of STBBIs (bacterial, viral and parasitic) and their modes of transmission (through sexual relations, by blood, from mother to child) ⇒ covered in Science and Technology
  - protection methods: condoms, contraceptive methods and steps to take after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations (e.g. emergency contraceptive pill, screening and pregnancy tests) ⇒ covered in sexuality education
  - obstacles to protection that influence your ability to protect yourself ⇒ covered in sexuality education
- Introduce activities with the following messages:
  - Sexual relations involve risks of pregnancy and STBBIs that make it necessary to use protection methods. However, many factors influence the identification of risk and the ability to protect yourself against STBBIs and avoid pregnancy:
    - context (unplanned sexual relations, level of emotional commitment, alcohol consumption, etc.)
    - knowledge of facts (modes of STBI transmission, how protection methods work, etc.)
    - feelings (desire to please, romantic feelings, etc.)
    - personal values and beliefs



**To help students identify the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy associated with different contexts of a sexually active lifestyle (Aim 1):**

**Risk levels: contexts and sexual behaviours**

- Use Activity 3, “When contraception overshadows the condom,” from [The SexEducator Magazine #25 \(Winter 2016\)](#), available on the [MSSS](#) website of the (under Publications > Subjects > SexEducator).
- After this activity, emphasize that the scenarios in this activity “do not provide details on sexual behaviours. However, it is important to remember that some behaviours put people at higher risk for [STBBIs] than others (e.g. penetration without a condom is riskier than mutual masturbation).”<sup>75</sup>
- For this reason, ask the students to identify the risk levels for STBBIs and pregnancy for certain sexual behaviours (see Appendix 1).
- Complete and correct the students’ answers about the risk levels of sexual behaviours using the “Explanations Concerning Content” section, making sure to cover all the different contexts and their risk levels (under the “Context of sexual relations” heading). See also the answer key in Appendix 2.

**Protection and testing measures**

**Protection methods**

- Explain the importance of consulting a health professional to obtain protection methods and screening tests in order to reduce the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy when sexually active. Use the “Explanations Concerning Content” section (under the “Protection and testing measures” heading) and:
  - reiterate the importance of using condoms and contraception correctly
  - emphasize the importance of dual protection (condoms and a contraceptive method) in preventing STBBIs and pregnancy
  - state that they can adopt sexual behaviours that carry little or less risk
  - explain what a latex barrier is, what it is used for and how to make one to use during oral-genital contact (mouth-vulva)

**Screening tests**

- Point out to students that the older they are, the less likely they are to use condoms. They make greater use of contraception, and, with more stable relationships, greater trust in the partner and the longer period of time spent in a relationship, their perception of the risk of STBBIs and of the importance of using condoms decreases. However, “although being in a stable, monogamous relationship helps reduce the risks for [STBBIs], this does not confer immunity to previous experiences the partner may have had before entering into the relationship.”<sup>76</sup>
- Tell the students that there are certain steps that must be taken before they can stop using condoms. Have students reflect by asking them:
  - What measures must you take before you can stop using condoms with your partner?
  - Why is it important to take these measures?

To provide information about STBBIs and screening tests, you can refer to the video entitled “[How do you know if you have a sexually transmitted infection \(STI\)?](#)” produced by the Mount Sinai Health System.

- Complete the students' answers using the "Explanations Concerning Content" section (under the "Protection and testing measures" heading). Remind students of the importance of using a contraceptive method in order to avoid an unplanned pregnancy should they stop using condoms.
- Conclude this part with the following **key messages**: In certain contexts of sexual relations, adolescents may be less inclined to protect themselves. It is important to identify the risks in order to adopt safe sexual behaviours and, if necessary, take steps to protect yourself and be tested.

#### *ACTIVITY: ETHICAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH STBBIs AND PREGNANCY*

##### **To help the students reflect on the ethical issues associated with STBBIs and pregnancy (Aim 2):**

- Explain to the students that there is an ethical issue in play when choosing between doing and not doing something, and that the choice they make has important consequences which can negatively affect either themselves or other people. More specifically, different situations associated with STBBIs and pregnancy require them to exercise their **sense of civic responsibility**, that is, acting in the interests of other people's well-being, and other people acting in the interest of their well-being.
- To have students reflect on these issues and on a sense of civic responsibility, ask them what they believe would be the advisable thing to do in the following situations (draw on the "Examples in the lives of adolescents" section to support statements) and have them explain why doing so is important:
  - when you find out that you have an STBBI
  - when you have a chronic STBBI (e.g. herpes) and you have a new partner
  - when someone tells you that they might have an STBBI
  - when a new partner tells you that they have an STBBI
  - when your best friend tells you that they have an STBBI
  - when you find out that you're pregnant
  - when your partner tells you that she wants to get pregnant and have a child with you
  - when your partner tells you that she is pregnant and that you are the father
  - when you want to continue a pregnancy and keep the child, but your partner does not
  - etc.

**NOTE:** There are different ways of working on these situations, depending on the group dynamic and the time available:

- individually
  - presented and discussed as a class
  - in small groups
  - teams of 5 or 6 students writing answers to proposed questions on a large poster board on the wall
- Complete the students' answers using the "Explanations Concerning Content" section (under the "Ethical issues associated with STBBIs and pregnancy" heading), emphasizing the ways students can exercise their sense of civic responsibility in terms of STBBIs and unplanned pregnancy.

- To have students reflect on **stigmatization and the judgment of others**, discuss answers to the following questions:
  - What judgments do they hear being made about:
    - *Adolescents who have an STBBI?*
    - *Pregnant adolescents?*
    - *Adolescents dealing with a pregnancy?*
    - *Adolescents who choose abortion? Adoption?*
    - *Adolescents who become parents?*
  - What impacts do these judgments have on the adolescents concerned?
- Complete the students' answers using the "Explanations Concerning Content" section (under the "Stigmatization and judgment of others" heading), emphasizing the **effects** of the stigmatization and judgment of people who have an STBBI or who are dealing with an unplanned pregnancy.
- State further that these judgments also have a collective impact: people hesitate to consult a health professional and ask for help out of fear of being judged and stigmatized, which contributes to the spread of STBBIs and amplifies the consequences of unplanned pregnancy.
- Conclude this part with the following **key message**: protecting themselves, exercising their sense of civic responsibility regarding STBBIs and pregnancy, and showing respect for people who are dealing with these issues means ensuring the safety and well-being of the people involved. It also means helping to reducing the spread of STBBIs and the impacts of adolescent pregnancy.

## CONCLUSION

- Provide every student with a list of places in your region (at the school or in the community) where they can consult a health professional and where, in full confidentiality, they can ask their questions about:
  - contraception (preventive or emergency)
  - vaccinations against hepatitis A and B as well as HPV
  - screening and treatment of STBBIs
  - support with decision making about a pregnancy outcome
  - abortion
  - support and guidance for adoption and adolescent parenthood
- Remind students that, as of age 14, the law allows them to access health care in full confidentiality, that is, without informing their parents. However, it is preferable that they have their parents' support when taking such steps.
- Conclude with the following **key message**: Having sexual relations in adolescence requires both individual and collective responsibilities. The services available in Québec support adolescents as they assume these responsibilities.

APPENDIX 1

Risk levels of certain sexual behaviours

Indicate, by checking the appropriate box, whether each of the following sexual behaviours represents:

- a risk of pregnancy
- a low or high risk of STBBIs

Sexual behaviours	Is there a risk of pregnancy?		What is the risk of contracting an STBBI?	
	Yes	No	Low risk	High risk
Kissing				
Touching the body				
Embracing skin to skin				
Contact between genitals				
Fellatio: oral-genital contact, mouth-penis contact				
Cunnilingus: oral-genital contact, mouth-vulva contact				
Mutual masturbation				
Vaginal penetration				
Anal penetration				
Coitus interruptus (withdrawing the penis from the vagina before ejaculation)				

APPENDIX 2
Risk levels of certain sexual behaviours – ANSWER KEY

	Pregnancy		STBBIs	
Sexual behaviours	Yes	No	Low	High
Kissing		X	X*	
Touching the body		X	X	
Embracing skin to skin		X	X	
Contact between genitals	X		X	
Fellatio: oral-genital contact, mouth-penis contact		X	X	
Cunnilingus: oral-genital contact, mouth-vulva contact		X	X	
Mutual masturbation		X	X	
Vaginal penetration	X			X
Anal penetration**		X		X
Coitus interruptus (withdrawing the penis from the vagina before ejaculation)	X			X

\* Kissing can also be high risk when a partner has a herpes lesion.
  
\*\* Refer to the note in the “Take Time to Reflect” section.



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<b>SEXUAL ASSAULT</b> <i>Applying strategies to prevent or to stop sexual assault</i>	Elementary 5
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Look at different contexts that involve sexual assault with a view to preventing or stopping them 2) Become aware that the rules to ensure your personal safety can apply to different contexts	<b>Estimated duration of activity</b>  90 minutes
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 10 TO 13 YEARS OLD</b>
<p><b>Before 18 years of age: 1 girl in 5, 1 boy in 10</b>            One (1) girl in 5 and 1 boy in 10 are sexually assaulted before the age of 18. The vast majority of aggressors are men, although it is estimated that women commit between 10% and 15% of sexual assaults (e.g. a babysitter).            Children and adolescents are the main victims of sexual assault. In 2010, they were the victims of two thirds (66%) of all sexual offences recorded by Québec police forces.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Aggressors are often known to the child</b>            Children under the age of 11<sup>2</sup> are most often the victims of sexual assault by someone they know,<sup>3</sup> often in their immediate or extended family<sup>4</sup> or among their acquaintances (e.g. neighbour, coach). A minority of sexual assaults are committed by strangers (around 10%). Sexual assault is usually committed in a private residence.<sup>5</sup> In Québec, in 2007, 23% of sexual assaults were committed by youths under the age of 18.<sup>6</sup> This means there is a need to protect children not only from adults, but also from adolescents older than themselves.</p> <p><b>Some children are at higher risk</b>            Children with limited awareness of sexuality, who have a limited social network, whose families are dealing with difficulties (e.g. lack of parental supervision, conflicts, separation), or who have a physical or intellectual disability are at higher risk. Nevertheless, sexual assault may occur in any family, regardless of socio-economic circumstances.</p> <p><b>False sexual assault allegations are rare</b>            Sexual assault is difficult to report because children usually do not talk about it. As a result, it is estimated that false allegations of sexual assault are very rare and represent less than 7% of reported cases.<sup>7</sup></p>	<p><b>Between 10 and 13 years of age:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• young people continue to develop greater independence.<sup>8</sup> This means they come into contact with more people and environments,<sup>9,10</sup> they have more frequent contact with peers,<sup>11</sup> longer periods without supervision<sup>12</sup> and increased use of the Internet, where some have already engaged in what may be considered risky behaviours.<sup>13</sup></li> </ul> <p>More than half of 9- and 10-year-olds have an email account and one third of them also use chat rooms.<sup>14</sup> Children under 12 account for 18% of victims of Internet luring in Québec.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Nonetheless, the majority of cases of sexual assault in this age group continue to be essentially committed by someone known to the victim.<sup>16</sup></p>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>LEARNING CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to distinguish, and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT</b>	<b>EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present or read this to the students to aid their understanding. The suggestions for the activity explain how to use these examples with students.</i>
	<p><b>Sexual assault (government orientations)</b> <i>Sexual assault is an act that is sexual in nature, with or without physical contact, committed by an individual without the consent of the victim, or in some cases, through emotional manipulation or blackmail, especially when children are involved. It is an act that subjects another person to the perpetrator's desires through an abuse of power, and/or the use of force or coercion, and/or implicit or explicit threats.<sup>17</sup></i></p> <p><b>Sexual assault (in children's words)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexual assault is against the law. It's when someone:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ shows you his penis or her vulva or asks to see yours</li><li>○ wants you to touch his penis or his or her other private parts, such as breasts or buttocks</li><li>○ wants to touch or kiss your penis, your breasts, your vulva or your buttocks</li><li>○ places or rubs his penis or her vulva against you<sup>18</sup></li><li>○ shows you pictures or videos where you see naked people or people performing sexual acts</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Sexual assault can also happen online.</b> It's when someone:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ shows you his or her private parts via webcam while you are online together, or asks to see yours</li><li>○ asks you to take a picture of your penis, your breasts, your vulva and to show him/her</li><li>○ sends you pictures or videos where you see naked people or people performing sexual acts</li></ul></li><li>• A sexual assault can be committed by someone you know well or not very well. Sometimes, sexual assault can be committed by a complete stranger, but this is not usually the case.</li></ul>	



# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

LEARNING CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to distinguish, and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present or read this to the students to aid their understanding. The suggestions for the activity explain how to use these examples with students.</i>
<p>1) Look at different <b>contexts that involve sexual assault</b> with a view to preventing or stopping them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situations involving someone you know well, not very well or not at all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Recreational activities, outings, activities with friends</li> <li>◦ Public places, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Situations in cyberspace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Someone you know and spend time with</li> <li>◦ Someone you do not know or have never met</li> <li>◦ Using the Internet with friends</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Contexts that involve sexual assault</b></p> <p>Sexual assault can be committed by someone the child knows or does not know. Sexual assault is mostly committed in the real world (i.e. offline), but can also take place in cyberspace (i.e. online). Cyberspace includes the Internet, online games, social media and instant messaging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the <b>real world</b>, most sexual assault is committed by <b>someone known</b> to the child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ from his or her immediate or extended family or among his or her acquaintances (e.g. neighbour).</li> <li>◦ who he or she has met during recreational or other activities, in a public place (e.g. park, skate park, camp, street, mall), etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In <b>cyberspace</b>, sexual assault is committed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>most often</b>, by a person the child knows from the real world but interacts with through social media, instant messaging or email (e.g. someone exposes himself to the child or asks the child to get naked in front of the webcam or take a nude picture).</li> <li>◦ <b>less frequently</b>, by a person the child does not know or has never met. “Child luring” is when a person contacts a child online with a view to committing a sexual assault. Often, this person (adolescent or adult) has children believe that he or she is their age and has the same interests in order to establish a friendship, build trust and, in some cases, meet them to assault them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Safety rules for protecting your personal safety</b></p> <p>The safety rules you have learned since childhood apply to different contexts. You must review these safety rules and learn to apply them when using the Internet (e.g. online games, social media, instant messaging, email) to stay safe.</p>	<p><b>Contexts that involve sexual assault</b> <i>(these examples primarily include contexts that present a risk for sexual assault)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My new coach offered to give me a ride home if I helped him put stuff away in the locker room. I’m not sure I want to. Last time I was alone with him, he told me dirty jokes.</li> <li>• When I was selling chocolate door to door, a man insisted I come into his house and closed the door behind me. It made me uncomfortable. I told him I’d wait outside, and went back out.</li> <li>• The other night, I went to a chat room, and a really nice girl came to talk to me. We exchanged pictures of our pets, then of ourselves. When I told her I had gone to the beach that summer, she asked if she could see a picture of me in a bathing suit.</li> <li>• My friends and I were in a chat room and started talking to a guy who seemed nice. Turns out he lives right next to here, and he asked us to meet him at the mall. Sophia wanted to go, but I didn’t, and I was able to convince her not to go. If I tell my parents, then they’ll know we talked to this boy . . . I don’t know what to do.</li> </ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

LEARNING CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to distinguish, and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present or read this to the students to aid their understanding. The suggestions for the activity explain how to use these examples with students.</i>
<p>2) Become aware that the <b>rules to ensure your personal safety</b> can apply to different contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Using self-protection and self-defence skills appropriate to the situation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Identifying strategies used by aggressors</li> <li>◦ Determining what information can be safely shared in the real or virtual world</li> <li>◦ Avoiding meeting with someone you do not know, whether in the real or virtual world</li> <li>◦ Reacting against sexual solicitation, whether in the real or virtual world</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Seeking solutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Asking trusted adults for help</li> <li>◦ Protecting your friends by telling an adult about a situation experienced by your friend(s) in the real or virtual world</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Overview of the rules learned in Elementary 3 to ensure your personal safety</b></p> <p><b>Self-protection skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuse to do something that makes you uneasy, get out of a place or a situation that makes you uncomfortable, listen to your inner voice (personal alarm system).</li> <li>• Tell an adult in charge where you are and what time you will be coming back, do not go to places alone, always take the same route, do not follow or go with a person you don't know (safety when going places).</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-defense skills (if you have to defend yourself):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say no, scream (assert yourself).</li> <li>• Run away, look for help.</li> <li>• Know who can help you (know the support network).<sup>19</sup></li> <li>• Ask for help, talk about it until someone helps you.</li> </ul> <p><b>Using self-protection and self-defence skills appropriate to the situation</b></p> <p><i>Identifying strategies used by aggressors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategies used by aggressors limit a child's ability to recognize a situation of sexual assault and report it. These strategies serve to gain the child's trust and establish a friendship with him or her,<sup>20</sup> and sometimes even the parents. Children must be taught to recognize these strategies.</li> <li>• The child is befriended to test his or her limits (e.g. telling obscene jokes, entering a room where the child is changing without warning, wrestling with the child, tickling the child). When online, these strategies also include creating a false identity to approach the child and create a bond of trust (e.g. making the child believe that the aggressor is the same age and wants to talk/play with him or her).</li> <li>• "Accidental" sexual touching occurs, sometimes in the context of play, so that the child does not think that the touching was deliberate or unacceptable.</li> <li>• Manipulation: blackmail, promises of gifts or threats (e.g. to harm someone the child loves). The aggressor asks the child to keep the secret between them and threatens the child to keep him or her from talking.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safety rules: applying self-protection and self-defense skills</b></p> <p><i>Identifying strategies used by aggressors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My older neighbour asked me to come play video games with him. He says he has tons of games! Tons! I don't really know him that well, but I really want to go see what games he has.</li> <li>• I have a new friend on one of my social networks, and her profile picture is one of my favourite actors. We have so much in common, it's crazy. We even like the same music and TV shows. The other day, she asked me to go to the park with her. She also asked me not to tell my parents about it. That surprised me.</li> <li>• A man came to see me at the park to ask me how to install an app on his son's tablet. He wanted me to sit beside him. I wanted to help him, but I told him I didn't have time. When I got home, I started thinking that maybe I should tell my dad about this.</li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>LEARNING CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to distinguish, and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT</b>	<b>EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present or read this to the students to aid their understanding. The suggestions for the activity explain how to use these examples with students.</i>
	<p><i>Determining what information can be safely shared offline and online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children must be taught early on not to divulge personal information:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ both offline and online (name, pictures, address, phone number, email, name of school, city, etc.) and to refuse to share any information with someone they don't know or who makes them uncomfortable</li></ul></li><li>• Children have more difficulty following safety rules when they are in a group. Most children (60%) say they have to follow safety rules at home, for instance, not sharing personal information online.<sup>21</sup> However, when children are with their friends, they tend to stray from these rules,<sup>22</sup> both offline and online.</li><li>• When online, children must know to ask permission from an adult (usually a parent) before accepting a new contact or "friend" on an online game or social network, sharing personal information or communicating by webcam. Children must also know the importance of not sharing pictures or videos of themselves or their friends without first getting permission (from their parents and friends). Children do not always realize that the people they send a picture to may in turn share that picture with others. Children must be made to understand that once a picture begins to circulate online, they can no longer control who sees it.</li></ul> <p><i>Avoiding meeting with someone you don't know well, whether offline or online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The safety rule that tells children not to go with someone they don't know or don't know well (safety when going places) also applies to cyberspace. Children must not agree to go meet someone they met online without first talking to an adult about the situation. Children may feel they know their online contact well, especially if they have been communicating with each other for some time.</li><li>• Should children be asked to meet by someone online who they don't know or don't know well, it is important they know to report the situation to a trusted adult.</li></ul>	<p><i>Determining what information can be safely shared offline and online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To play my online video games, I created an avatar with a pseudonym, with my parents' help. They said it would be best if I didn't share my real name or my age online.</li><li>• My mom says the computer has to stay in the living room. It's so annoying. I know she does that so she can check what I'm doing online.</li><li>• My friends and I went to the skate park, and this older guy showed up. He started asking us a bunch of questions, like where we went to school and where we lived. I didn't like being asked so many questions. It made me uncomfortable.</li></ul> <p><i>Avoiding meeting with someone you don't know well, whether offline or online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I gave my phone number to a new friend I met online. She kept saying that she wanted to meet up. But now, I wish I hadn't done that. I don't know what to do. If I tell my parents, they're going to yell at me.</li></ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>LEARNING CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to distinguish, and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT</b>	<b>EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present or read this to the students to aid their understanding. The suggestions for the activity explain how to use these examples with students.</i>
	<p><i>Reacting against sexual solicitation, whether offline or online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children must talk to an adult when a situation seems strange to them or makes them feel uncomfortable or confused. It is sometimes difficult for children to assert themselves and to say no to a situation, especially if they believe they risk losing something or someone they like (e.g. not seeing someone anymore, losing contact with a friend, stopping an activity, having a privilege taken away).</li> <li>To help children use self-protection skills and to report a situation, explain that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children have the right to say no to a situation that makes them uncomfortable.</li> <li>Sexual assault is unacceptable and against the law, even if the aggressor tells them he or she is doing it for their own good.</li> <li>Children are never to blame for a sexual assault, and even if the aggressor says the opposite, what has happened is always the aggressor’s fault.</li> <li>There are “good” secrets that we can keep (e.g. the birthday present your mom bought for your sister), and there are “bad” secrets that we have to tell. Bad secrets make us feel sad, embarrassed, guilty, confused or ashamed.</li> <li>Children should report anyone who has assaulted them or tried to assault them, even if the aggressor is someone they know and like or love and even if the aggressor makes threats, gives gifts or blackmails them.</li> <li>Children can get help from a family member (father, mother, aunt, grandparent), school staff (teacher, daycare educator) or a friend (classmate or neighbour).</li> <li>Children must keep trying to find help until someone listens to them, believes them and helps them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Seeking solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many situations of sexual assault are never reported (or only reported many years later) because there is often an emotional bond or a relationship of trust or authority between the young victim and his or her aggressor. As such, encourage students to <b>ask trusted adults for help and:</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Reacting against sexual solicitation, whether offline or online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My older cousin and I Skype a lot. The other day, he said that if I took my pants off in front of the webcam, he would do the same, and it would be really funny. I said no, then I shut off Skype and went to talk to my parents about it. I don’t get why he wanted to do that.</li> </ul> <p><b>Seeking solutions</b></p> <p><i>Asking a trusted adult for help</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My uncle used to babysit me a lot when I was little. He would come into my bed and rub up against me. He said it was a massage. I didn’t like it. I want to tell someone, but it happened a long time ago. We</li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

LEARNING CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to distinguish, and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present or read this to the students to aid their understanding. The suggestions for the activity explain how to use these examples with students.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Report any situation of sexual assault involving themselves or a friend to a trusted adult, whether or not the sexual assault was committed by a person they know or not.</li><li>○ Keep looking for help. If an adult doesn't do anything after the sexual assault is reported, students must talk to another trusted adult until someone listens to them, believes them and helps them.</li><li>○ Report any online incident that may make the students uncomfortable or embarrassed (access to pornography, cyberbullying, friend requests from strangers, requests for personal information or pictures, situations involving a friend, etc.) to a parent or other responsible adult.</li><li>• Be sure to inform students that they <b>can protect their friends by preventing or reporting an offline or online situation of sexual assault.</b></li></ul>	<p>talked about sexual assault at school, so now I decided to tell my parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When I went camping with my parents, I was allowed to go for a walk by myself. Another camper asked me to check out his trailer. I said no and went to tell my parents what had happened.</li></ul> <p><i>Protecting your friends by preventing or reporting an offline or online situation of sexual assault</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My friend told me that her stepfather went to bed with her at night and did things she didn't like. I told my parents, and they said that they would report the situation to the right person to make sure her stepfather stopped doing that.</li></ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

The objective is to provide children with resources that will help them to protect themselves against sexual assault in everyday life and in cyberspace by reviewing the self-protection and self-defence skills they know, applying them to different contexts and equipping them with knowledge of aggressors' strategies. Should children ever become victims of sexual assault, they must be able to identify the adults they can confide in and who would listen to and help them make the situation stop.

#### Take stock

- Clarify your comfort level with carrying out a sexual assault prevention activity. You may experience a degree of discomfort or have concerns about covering this topic with students. Taking stock of any worries you might have should give you a better understanding of the origins of your concerns and will not likely compromise your ability to conduct the activity or to guide students in dealing with this topic. You can call a toll-free sexual assault helpline that is open 24/7 throughout Québec: 1-888-933-9007 or 514-933-9007 for the Montréal region. It can help you find answers to your questions, before or after the activity, and can also be helpful to you and other adults at the school who need support.

#### Be aware of the following facts (to better understand the learning content and its relevance)

- Strategies used by aggressors limit a child's ability to recognize a situation of sexual assault and to report it. Such strategies must be taken into account to empower children.
  - Aggressors use strategies that they apply gradually and that allow them to groom a child and win the child's trust. Many situations of sexual assault are never reported (or are only reported many years later) because there is often an emotional bond or a relationship of trust or authority between the young victim and his or her aggressor. This type of conditioning usually begins with subtle behaviours:
    - The aggressor befriends a child and tests his or her limits.
    - Non-sexual touching gives way to "accidental" sexual touching. Sometimes this occurs in the context of play, so that the child does not think such touching is deliberate or unacceptable.
    - The aggressor manipulates a child using blackmail (e.g. a promised gift) or makes threats (e.g. to harm someone the child loves). The aggressor asks the child to keep this secret and threatens the child to remain quiet about it (e.g. "If you tell your mother, I'll tell her it was your fault").
- It is possible that some children were victims of sexual assault in the past but never reported the situation. As such, it is important to apply the learning acquired over several years (in Elementary 1, 3 and 5), as it may help some children decide to confide in someone.
- Sexual assault is most often committed by someone who is known to the child. As a result, helping children to develop self-protection skills that only concern safety when going places and giving them instructions about how to behave toward strangers is insufficient. For further information, download the PDF "Kids in the Know" on the website of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection at [https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK\\_StrangerDanger\\_en.pdf](https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK_StrangerDanger_en.pdf).
- Most cases of sexual assault are not committed online. However, since Elementary 5 students use the Internet and social media much more than younger children, it's a great opportunity to teach them how to be careful and stay safe when using technology.
- Certain factors increase the severity of the after-effects of assault (e.g. the duration and severity of assault, an aggressor who is a close, significant person for the child, the use of force).
- A child who is a victim gives signs or indications of distress: sudden changes in behaviour and general mood, appearance of unexplained behaviours, a need to withdraw, deterioration of concentration and marks at school, anxiety, age-inappropriate sexual behaviours, appearance of explicit sexual elements in drawings or role-playing games, etc. Such indicators may also be explained by other events in the child's life, so caution is required when interpreting such signs.



## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings and short videos

To learn more about **sexual assault**:

- Consult the “Definition,” “Forms of sexual assault” and “Statistics” tabs on the Québec government website about sexual assault (section 01 under “**Understanding sexual assault**”) at <http://www.agressionssexuelles.gouv.qc.ca/en/index.php>.
- Refer to the Media Kit on Sexual Assault of the Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ) under the tabs “Understanding sexual assault,” “The law,” “Prevention,” “Fact Sheets” and “Resources” at <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/sexual-assault/home>.
- Read “Sexual Abuse of Young People in Sport” under the “Fact Sheet” section of the website of the Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ) at <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/sexual-assault/fact-sheets/sexual-abuse-young-people-in-sport>.

To find out more about the **effects of sexual assault on a child’s behaviour**:

- Consult the website of the Centre d’expertise Marie-Vincent, which provides support to sexually abused children 12 years of age and younger and their parents, at <https://marie-vincent.org/en/cause/what-are-consequences-of-sexual-violence/>

Well-designed, age-appropriate books for Elementary 5 students, useful for presenting **safety rules** to students:

- *Petits, mais futés: un guide pour la sécurité des enfants*, Marcèle Lamarche and Jean-François Beauchemin, Éditions de l’Homme, 2003.
- “7 Root Safety Strategies,” downloadable from the website of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection’s “Kids in the Know” program, in the “Parents” section, under the “Free Educational Resources” tab, then under “Safety Sheets,” at [https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK\\_7RootSafetyStrategies\\_en.pdf](https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK_7RootSafetyStrategies_en.pdf).
- For more information on the risks of using the Internet, consult “4 Root Safety Environments,” downloadable from the website of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection’s “Kids in the Know” program, at [https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK\\_4RootSafetyEnvironments\\_en.pdf](https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK_4RootSafetyEnvironments_en.pdf). It can be handed out to students and their parents.

Know **what to do if a student reports a sexual assault**:

- Know the **roles and obligations** of adults in the school when a student is sexually assaulted. See the document published by the Québec government, *Entente multisectorielle relative aux enfants victimes d’abus sexuels, de mauvais traitements physiques ou d’une absence de soins menaçant leur santé physique*, pages 30 to 34, available at <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2000/00-807/00-807-04.pdf> (in French).
- See the brochure “Filing a report with the DYP is already protecting a child – When and how to file a report?” published by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 2008, available at <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000897/>
- Know the resources available in your community (support networks in the school, the family, the community).
- Know about the toll-free information and referral helpline for sexual assault victims and their family, friends as well as caregivers and other persons concerned (bilingual, confidential service), open 24/7 throughout Québec: 1-888-933-9007 or 514-933-9007 for the Montréal region.



## BE PREPARED: gather and create materials, adopt appropriate attitudes

### MAKE SURE THAT STUDENTS KNOW THE BASICS, THEN PLAN THE CONTEXT

- Make sure that students have been introduced to the following concepts, knowledge and skills:
    - Awareness of the different aspects of sexuality and a positive view of sexuality (see the Elementary 3 learning content for General Understanding of Sexuality).
    - Knowledge of the basic safety rules (self-protection and self-defence skills) to prevent and report sexual assault (addressed in Elementary 1 and 3).
  - Plan a context for approaching the subject. There are only two categories of learning content in Elementary 5, and it is important *not* to start with sexual assault. It is recommended that the learning content on preventing sexual assault be presented:
    - after and not before the activity on Sexual Growth and Body Image, in order to make sure that the content related to the positive aspects of sexuality is covered first.
    - after a reflection on the recognition, expression and complexity of feelings. The Elementary 4 books on emotional and romantic relationships in Livres ouverts ([www.livresouverts.qc.ca](http://www.livresouverts.qc.ca)) could be an interesting resource. Consult the books *Léon et les émotions* <http://www.livresouverts.qc.ca/index.php?p=il&lo=49200&sec=2> and *Les sentiments c'est quoi?* <http://www.livresouverts.qc.ca/index.php?p=il&lo=44341&sec=2>. You can also visit Québec Reading Connection (<http://www.quebecreadingconnection.ca/>): *The Way I feel* <http://www.quebecreadingconnection.ca/book/the-way-i-feel>, *Happy* <http://www.quebecreadingconnection.ca/book/happy> and *Yuck, A Love Story* <http://www.quebecreadingconnection.ca/book/yuck-a-love-story>
- OR
- in the context of media literacy, start with a reflection on the use of information technologies, the advantages and possibilities for communication provided by these technologies (e.g. with friends, parents) and the general safety rules, before moving on to the risks of sexual assault these technologies present (e.g. being solicited for a picture of a sexual nature).

Make sure there are people in the school who are informed and **prepared to help during and after the activity**:

- Ensure that the following persons are informed about the objectives being pursued, when the activities will take place, and the possible reactions of students (reportings, questions, concerns):
  - school principal
  - a non-teaching professional in the school (psychologist or other complementary services professional)
  - other teachers (a student might confide in a teacher from the previous year)
  - daycare staff (students might confide in their educator)
- Make sure school staff members understand how the school files a report with the DYP (how and who).

### INFORM PARENTS

**Preventing sexual assault is more effective when collaboration is established between the school and families. Everything does not hinge upon a child's ability to say no to assault and to report it: The people in the children's life (adults at the school, parents, family) are responsible for protecting children and providing them with a safe environment. Among other things, children must have a space where they can speak freely.** It is important for a child to be able to rely on the helping attitudes of his or her peers, parents, adults and professionals who can provide support and understanding regardless of when an incident is reported.

**Inform parents in advance** (a note in schoolbags or by email) that the children will participate in a sexual assault prevention activity. Your message may contain the objectives of the activity and include some of the following resources:

- **To learn more about preventing sexual assault with their child:**
  - “7 Root Safety Strategies,” downloadable from the website of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection’s “Kids in the Know” program, in the “Parents” section, under the “Free Educational Resources” tab, then under “Safety Sheets,” at [https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK\\_7RootSafetyStrategies\\_en.pdf](https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK_7RootSafetyStrategies_en.pdf) (document for children)
  - “Safety and the Internet: A Guide for Parents of Children 10 to 12 Years of Age,” Canadian Centre for Child Protection, at [http://www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca/pdfs/TDTNL\\_SafetyAndTheInternet\\_10-12\\_en.pdf](http://www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca/pdfs/TDTNL_SafetyAndTheInternet_10-12_en.pdf)
  - Bulletin no. 7, “La sécurité des enfants sur Internet,” [http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/mosaik/bulletins/15-314-09W\\_Bulletin7.pdf](http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/mosaik/bulletins/15-314-09W_Bulletin7.pdf) (document for parents, in French)
  - Short videos on “Keeping Kids Safe” on the U.S. website “Committee for Children,” at <https://www.cfchildren.org/resources/child-abuse-prevention/>
- **To talk to someone who can be of assistance, ask questions and learn what to do if they suspect their child is a victim of sexual assault**
  - Toll-free information and referral helpline for sexual assault victims, their family, friends, as well as caregivers and other persons concerned, open 24/7 throughout Québec: 1-888-933-9007 or 514-933-9007 for the Montréal region
  - Ligne Parent website (“Enfants” section, topic: “Agression sexuelle”), at <http://ligneparents.com/enfant/enfant-agression-sexuelle/> (in French)
  - School or health professionals can help parents understand the reactions of their child who has experienced sexual assault, deal with their doubts, help them recognize their skills, identify their concerns, and help them give support to their daughter or son
  - The book *L’enfant victime d’agression sexuelle: Comprendre et aider*, Frédérique St-Pierre and Marie-France Viau, Éditions du CHU Ste-Justine, 2010

#### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES**

- Conducting a sexual assault prevention activity requires vigilance and preparation. However, it is possible to approach the subject with students in a simple manner so that they learn how to protect and defend themselves and seek help. Sexual assault prevention can be effective as long as:
  - the information shared with children is clear and allows them to recognize a situation of sexual assault
  - prevention is part of a sexuality education process that empowers children (through knowledge of their bodies, their rights and their ability to assert themselves)
- Recommended tone and attitude: calm and reassuring. Calmly reassure children that they can apply simple safety rules rather than leaving them with a fear of sexual assault. Nevertheless, a small number of children might develop fear or anxiety after the activity (less than 15% of children). This is comparable to anxiety experienced after an activity about other situations, such as a fire drill. Should this occur, let the child express his or her feelings and reassure the child. Over time, and with support, such fears will gradually fade.
- Tell the children they can come and talk to you after the activity, individually, if they feel the need to do so.

#### **PLAN WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD REPORTS AN INCIDENT**

- *Any situation where sexual assault is committed against a child under 18 years of age must be reported to the Director of Youth Protection (DYP), pursuant to section 39 of the Youth Protection Act.*
- *Have a clear procedure that is known to all staff members in the event an incident is reported.*
- *Know WHO in the school is designated to file the report with the Director of Youth Protection.*
- *Keep the information you receive confidential to protect the child and his or her privacy. Provide the child with supportive attention and supervision to ensure he or she is protected while waiting for intervention on the part of the DYP or the police.*
- If a child reports a sexual assault situation **during the activity**:

- If the other students did not hear the disclosure, it is better to talk to the child away from the other students. Tell the child that you take what he or she has just said seriously, and that he or she did the right thing by talking to you about it. Ask the child if he or she would like to stay in the classroom for the remainder of the activity or if he or she would rather go meet and speak with a school professional who can help. The bond of trust you have with the students may mean that some of them will prefer to confide only in you.
- If the other students witness the disclosure, tell the student that you take what he or she has just said seriously and that you would like to talk to him or her alone. If the student does not wish to stay for the remainder of the activity, ask another school staff member to come and collect the child. You can continue the activity with the rest of the children and then later, follow up with the student who reported the incident.
- A report must be filed with the DYP according to school policy.
- If a child reports a sexual assault situation **after the activity in the classroom**:
  - Tell the student that you believe him or her and that he or she did the right thing by talking about it. Refer to the helping attitudes below. Refer to a school professional.
  - A report must be filed with the DYP, according to school policy.
- Important **attitudes**:<sup>23</sup>
  - **Helping attitudes**: Show empathy and respect. Listen to the child, tell the child you believe him or her and thank the child for trusting you. Listen to what he or she is confiding but do not exaggerate or minimize events, emotions or consequences. Emphasize the child's courage for having spoken and support the child by accompanying him or her to a competent resource.
  - **Do not** ignore the student's disclosure (by saying it's none of your business), judge (by asking direct questions, talking too much, or making comments about the aggressor's behaviour), doubt the truth of the facts and events, be dismissive (by minimizing the facts and events), ask leading questions (e.g. "Did the person touch you here or there?"), make the child feel guilty (by asking the child why he or she did not confide in someone earlier), promise the child you will keep his or her secret (you are obligated, for the child's best interests, to report the situation to the DYP).
    - **Caution**: To avoid influencing the child's description of the event, do not try to obtain further information. Write down what the child says. Professionals are trained to interact with children in such situations and they know how to gather the necessary facts.
- Give parents helping resources: See the "Refer to Resources" section for suggested resources for parents.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

Activities aimed at preventing sexual assault for this age group must:

- focus on the students’ increased ability to recognize risks, understand exceptions and analyze various aspects of this issue<sup>24</sup>
- continue to build on their sense of self-efficacy by helping them apply the safety rules learned at a younger age in new contexts presenting a risk for sexual assault,<sup>25</sup> such as the Internet (chatting, protection of personal information)

## The basics (key messages)

Sexual assault violates children’s rights and is against the law. It can be committed by someone you know or a stranger, who may or may not be older than you. There are ways to prevent and protect yourself from sexual assault. You can always report sexual assault to an adult you trust, whether it is ongoing or has happened in the past.

## INTRODUCTION

- Provide a context by asking students questions about the concept of safety in different situations: while biking, walking, in a car, during a fire, swimming, or in a situation of violence. (Review of the concept of safety learned in Elementary 1 and 3 under this theme.)
- Announce that the activity has two goals: 1) to review the safety rules that can be applied to protect themselves from or put an end to a situation of sexual assault, and 2) to learn how to apply the safety rules in different contexts, including in cyberspace.
- Using age-appropriate language, explain sexual assault (in the real world and in cyberspace). Refer to the “Explanations Concerning Learning Content” section.

For each question below, find out what the students already know and give them the information they are missing for the questions on sexual assault (using the information above).

In other words, prepare the learning content, but do not give out all of the information in the introduction. If possible, use a visual aid: draw a table, create a concept network, prepare a slide show, have students write down their answers on sticky notes and help them organize their answers, etc.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Ask students what safety rules should apply if someone begins to behave in a way that crosses a line and makes them feel uneasy or uncomfortable.
- Review the rules learned in Elementary 3: **self-protection skills** (see the “Explanations Concerning Learning Content” section in this document) to prevent situations involving sexual assault.
- Introduce a new context that presents a risk for sexual assault: cyberspace.

CYBERSPACE: Ask students the following questions:

- What electronic tools and applications can be used to communicate with other people? (e.g. computer, cell phone, iPod, tablet, social media, instant messaging)
- With whom do they enable us to communicate? (e.g. family, friends, acquaintances, strangers)
- What do they allow us to communicate? (e.g. written information, pictures, videos)
- What are the advantages of these methods of communication?
- What precautions should be taken when using these methods of communication? In other words, what should we pay attention to? (See the “Explanations Concerning Learning Content” section for information on what can be communicated offline or online.)

To conclude this part, review the self-protection and self-defence skills that apply to real life (offline) and the safety rules to follow in cyberspace. This information will come in use for the following exercises.

- Highlight the importance of protecting personal information (e.g. other people can use the name of your school and sports team to find you).
- Hand out the “4 Root Safety Environments” document, downloadable at [https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK\\_4RootSafetyEnvironments\\_en.pdf](https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/pdfs/KIK_4RootSafetyEnvironments_en.pdf). With the students, read the safety rules to follow in the four different contexts: on the Internet, on the street, at home and in public spaces. Students can bring the document home and discuss it with their parents.

#### **ACTIVITY: THE STORY OF OLIVIA AND NAOMI**

Use the story presented at the end of this document and the accompanying questions. The story was written to cover the educational aims of the learning content. Specifically, the story shows how the rules that can be applied in cyberspace are adapted from the safety rules that the students have already learned about preventing and reporting sexual assault.

Complement the students’ answers by explaining how the safety rules apply to different contexts, the self-protection and self-defence skills to apply, and the solutions to implement for themselves and their friends (see the “Explanations Concerning Learning Content” section and the table containing the reference points to the story at the end of this document).

#### **ACTIVITY: SHORT SCENARIOS**

- Use the examples below to help students realize that they know a number of ways to protect themselves and that they can take action when necessary.
- With the entire class, ask the students what they would do to ensure their safety (self-protection and self-defence skills) in the situations presented below.

#### **WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN THIS SITUATION...?**

- My new coach offered to give me a ride home if I helped him put stuff away in the locker room. I’m not sure I want to. Last time I was alone with him, he told me dirty jokes.
- When I was selling chocolate door to door, a man insisted I come into his house and closed the door behind me. It made me feel uncomfortable.

- An older neighbour I don't really know asked me to come play video games with him. He says he has tons of them in his basement! Tons!
- A man came to see me at the park to ask me how to install an app on his son's tablet. He wanted me to come in his car so we could look at it together.
- My friends and I went to the skate park, and this older guy showed up. He started asking us a bunch of questions, like where we went to school, how old we were, where we lived. I didn't like being asked so many questions. It made me uncomfortable.
- My older cousin and I Skype a lot. The other day, he said that if I took my pants off in front of the webcam, he would do the same, and it would be really funny.
- I gave my phone number to a new friend I met online. She kept saying that she wanted to meet up. But now, I regret having done that. I don't know what to do. If I tell my parents, they're going to yell at me.
- When I went camping with my parents, I was allowed to go for a walk by myself. Another camper asked me to check out his trailer.

## CONCLUSION

*With students, take stock of what they learned using the questions below:*

- Ask students what they should do if they are in a situation involving a person (someone they know, stranger) or a place (public, private, online) that makes them feel uneasy, uncomfortable or confused.
- Ask students about the safety rules and strategies they should apply in the real world and in cyberspace to protect themselves.
- Ask students what they would do if a friend confided in them that he or she had been the victim of sexual assault (e.g. report the situation, get help from a trusted adult).
- Ask students to name two people, in addition to their parents, in whom they could confide if needed. Ask them to write down their answers (e.g. on a support sheet, in their planner).

Olivia and Naomi meet a girl on the Internet	
Story (for the students)	Content (reference points for the educator)
<p>Olivia and Naomi like surfing the Web and finding pictures and videos of their favourite music group.</p> <p>They sign up for a chat room for fans. They start chatting with a girl whose pseudonym is “SUPERFAN.” It’s so much fun! They exchange pictures, find out that her name is Sandra and that she’s going to see the band live at the arena next month! SHE’S SO LUCKY!</p> <p>A few weeks go by, and Naomi loses interest in talking with Sandra online. Olivia, however, continues to chat with her every night. Sandra starts asking Olivia all kinds of more and more intimate questions about her looks, and even asks Olivia to send her pictures. Olivia starts to feel a little uncomfortable, but she’s hesitant to tell anyone about it.</p> <p>One day, Sandra tells Olivia that she has an extra ticket to see the show and wants to give it to her for free. But Olivia has to go meet her at the corner store Friday night, and can’t tell her parents. Olivia is really excited, and tells Naomi, but Naomi warns her: “We don’t really know who Sandra is. I don’t think you should go.”</p>	<p><b>Context involving sexual assault</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olivia and Naomi sign up for a chat room for the fans of their favourite music group, and start talking to a girl whose pseudonym is “SUPERFAN” (<i>using the Internet with friends</i>).</li> <li>Sandra invites Olivia to come see the show with her and asks her to meet her to get her ticket, but without telling her parents (<i>situation in cyberspace involving a stranger</i>).</li> </ul> <p><b>Rules to ensure personal safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olivia and Naomi feel like they know Sandra (“SUPERFAN”) after chatting with her a few times: she likes the same music group and they hang out at the same fan chat (<i>identifying strategies used by aggressors</i>).</li> <li>Olivia and Naomi share information and pictures with Sandra (<i>determining what information can be safely shared offline and online</i>).</li> <li>Naomi loses interest in talking with Sandra online. She stops using the chat room (<i>leaving a place or a situation that makes you feel uneasy</i>).</li> <li>Sandra starts asking more and more intimate questions about Olivia’s appearance and asks Olivia to send her pictures (<i>identifying strategies used by aggressors</i>).</li> <li>Sandra asks Olivia to come meet her at the corner store, without telling her parents (<i>identifying strategies used by aggressors AND avoiding meeting with someone you do not know well, whether offline or online</i>).</li> </ul> <p><b>Seeking solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olivia feels uneasy about Sandra’s questions, which are becoming more and more intimate in nature. She’s hesitant to tell anyone about the situation (<i>asking trusted adults for help</i>).</li> <li>Olivia trusts Sandra, but Naomi warns her against going (<i>reporting any online incident that makes you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed AND protecting your friends by preventing or reporting an offline or online situation of sexual assault</i>).</li> <li>Naomi warns her friend and says that Olivia should not go meet Sandra (<i>protecting your friends by preventing or reporting an offline or online situation of sexual assault</i>).</li> </ul>



### Questions to ask students in connection with the educational aims

\*You may opt to ask the questions after reading the story with the class or intersperse the questions throughout the reading.

1) Why were Naomi and Olivia so quick to become friends with Sandra?

- Sandra liked the same music group as the girls: They shared a common interest they could talk about.
- Sandra and the girls write back and forth, chat online, share pictures: They get to know each other by sharing information.
- Olivia and Naomi chat with Sandra while they are together. Chatting with a new person as a group may create a greater sense of trust and lead people to share information, even if they don't know the other person.

### Key messages:

- The Internet gives its users access to a wealth of practical, instructive information, allows users to connect with different people on social media, etc. However, there are rules for using the Internet safely, especially since some websites can connect children with people they don't know.

NOTE: Even though both girls were involved in the same situation, they did not begin feeling uncomfortable at the same time. The situation shows that young people sometimes have more difficulty applying the safety rules when they are in a group. When surfing the Web with a friend, young people may feel more confident. Use this context to show students that feeling uneasy or uncomfortable is a sign, and it is important to listen to that sign, even if the other person does not also feel uncomfortable.

2) In the story, Olivia becomes uncomfortable when Sandra starts asking more and more intimate questions and asks for pictures, but she is hesitant to talk about it. Why do you think that is?

- Olivia is uneasy because Sandra's questions are becoming more and more intimate in nature.
- Olivia is hesitant to talk to her parents or other adults about the situation because:
  - she is shy or feels guilty about the situation
  - she is afraid to be punished (e.g. because she signed up for a chat room without telling her parents, because she shared personal information with Sandra)
  - she is afraid she won't be allowed to talk to Sandra anymore after she tells someone about the situation or won't be allowed to go online to communicate with her friends
  - Sandra told her not to tell her parents about meeting up and she is afraid Sandra will get mad at her
- Olivia might also feel guilty about continuing to chat with Sandra, after Naomi decided to stop when she started feeling uncomfortable.

**Key messages:**

- It may be difficult to report a situation such as the one experienced by Olivia, especially if you're afraid to be grounded, if you feel guilty about not following certain safety rules, or if the person has asked you not to tell an adult. However, it's important to remember who can help you in this type of situation and to ask an adult for help.
  - Sandra asks increasingly intimate questions, and wants to know what Olivia looks like and see pictures of her. Olivia starts to feel uneasy. It's important to listen to your feelings (personal alarm system). Your feelings will help you figure out that something is wrong and that the situation requires you to speak to an adult. It is important to go speak to an adult you trust when a situation makes you feel uncomfortable, uneasy or confused.
  - The information presented in the pedagogical framework for the Elementary 3 learning content for sexual assault contains other useful information. See the "Explanations Concerning Learning Content" section on the feelings of children who have experienced sexual assault and the difficulties related to reporting a sexual assault.
- 3) Olivia is happy that Sandra has offered her a ticket to see the show and she tells Naomi. Naomi cautions Olivia and says that she shouldn't go meet Sandra. Why do you think she says that?
- Because Naomi does not think it's a good idea for Olivia to go see someone she has never met before.
  - Because Sandra asked Olivia to go meet her without telling her parents. If Olivia goes, her parents will not know where she is and who she is with (safety rule: don't go anywhere alone or with someone you don't know).
  - Because she wants to protect her friend in case something goes wrong.

**Key messages:**

- See the "Explanations Concerning Learning Content" section as well as the information under "Seeking solutions" and "Reference points for the teacher" in the scenario table.
  - Naomi and Olivia feel as if they know Sandra. They received pictures of her, but they never met her in person and can't know for sure if she is really a girl their age. Sometimes, people (adolescents or adults) use the Internet to contact children and get close to them. You must be careful about the information you share and be sure not to meet someone in person until you talk to an adult about the situation.
  - The fact that Sandra's questions are becoming more and more intimate and that she asks Olivia not to tell her parents about the situation are also hints (see the "Explanations Concerning Learning Content" section, under "Identifying strategies used by aggressors"). Some people use websites that are popular with children to get close to them. They create a false identity (i.e. they say they are the same age and have the same interests) to gradually build children's trust, ask them for more and more intimate information and meet them.
- 4) There are different safety rules to prevent and report a situation of sexual assault. These rules apply to different situations. Can you name some safety rules and apply them to Naomi and Olivia's situation?
- Remind students of the rules to ensure their personal safety (see the "Explanations Concerning Learning Content" section, under "Overview of the rules learned in Elementary 3 to ensure your personal safety"). Review these rules and, with the students, determine how they apply to Naomi and Olivia's situation.

### Key messages:

- Even if you chat online with someone and think you know him or her well, you have to be careful not to share your personal information.
- When online, you have to ask your parents' permission before accepting a new friend or contact for a game or on social media, sharing personal information, sharing pictures or communicating by webcam. You also have to ask permission from your parents or a trusted adult before creating an online account. You can also create a user ID so that others won't know your real name or be able to find you.
- You must report any online incident that makes you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed (e.g. access to pornography, cyberbullying, friend requests from strangers, requests for personal information and/or pictures, requests to meet, situation involving a friend) to a parent or other trusted adult.

### 5) How do you think the story ends?

- Possible answers from students: Naomi manages to convince Olivia not to go to the corner store; Naomi tells her parents about the situation, who in turn talk to Olivia's parents; Naomi decides not to get involved; Olivia asks Naomi to go with her to meet Sandra; etc.
- The best answer emphasizes the use of the necessary self-protection and self-defence skills for the situation: Discouraging Olivia from going to meet Sandra AND reporting the situation to an adult.

### Key messages:

- The best ending for the story is one where Olivia is discouraged from going to meet Sandra and where the situation is reported to an adult. Even though it's not always easy to suggest to someone not to do something they want to do, friends can help protect each other. By acting this way, Naomi encourages her friend to apply a safety rule. Naomi and Olivia also have to talk to an adult about the situation. If Olivia tells Naomi that she plans on going to meet Sandra anyway, Naomi could go report the situation to an adult. You have to seek help. Don't try to resolve things by yourself when this type of situation occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec, *Infractions sexuelles au Québec: Faits saillants 2010, 2012*.

<sup>2</sup> Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec, *Infractions sexuelles au Québec: Faits saillants 2011, 2012*.

<sup>6</sup> Ministère de la Sécurité publique, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Trocmé and Bala, in INSPQ, <http://securitetraumatismes.inspq.qc.ca/agressionsexuelle/les-fausses-allegations-agression-sexuelle-enfants.aspx>, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Ministère de la Sécurité publique, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Media Awareness Network, 2001.

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<sup>15</sup> Ministère de la Sécurité publique, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Ministère de l'Éducation, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, Ministère de la Justice, Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Ministère de la Sécurité publique, Ministère de la Solidarité sociale, Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, Secrétariat à la condition féminine, *Orientations gouvernementales en matière d'agression sexuelle*, 2001, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Adapted from Jocelyne Robert, *Te laisse pas faire!* Les éditions de l'homme, 2005, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Croteau, Hébert and Lavoie, 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Canadian Centre for Child Protection, [https://www.protegeonsnosenfants.ca/pdfs/C2K\\_OverviewGuide\\_en.pdf](https://www.protegeonsnosenfants.ca/pdfs/C2K_OverviewGuide_en.pdf), consulted in January 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Habilo-Médias, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> NCMEC, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Table de concertation sur les agressions à caractère sexuel de Montréal, [http://www.agressionsexuellemontreal.ca/\\_home](http://www.agressionsexuellemontreal.ca/_home).

<sup>24</sup> Tutty, 1994.

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2008.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR	Secondary II
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Educational aims	1) Discuss the characteristics of sexual behaviour in adolescence and the motives behind it 2) Recognize what can inform your choices concerning sexual behaviour in adolescence	Estimated duration of the activity  225 minutes
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LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT	CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS 12 TO 14 YEARS OLD
<p><b>In adolescence, initiation into active sexual life takes place progressively in an exploratory mode.<sup>1</sup></b>          Sexual behaviours with a partner for the most part occur in a romantic context.<sup>2</sup> The range of sexual actions that adolescents consider acceptable increases as the partners become more involved emotionally.<sup>3</sup> Those adolescents who reach pubertal maturity earliest are also, on average, the first to engage in active genital activity.<sup>4</sup></p> <p><b>Young people who understand that the development of satisfying sexuality is a learning process</b> will have more realistic expectations regarding their first sexual experiences and will be better able to evaluate how positive and negative experiences affect their self-image, their current relationships and their gender identity.<sup>5</sup></p> <p><b>Sexual behaviours are generally sporadic<sup>6</sup> and not always planned.<sup>7</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescents learn and model their sexuality on that of their friends and parents as well as the media.<sup>8</sup> They are influenced by social norms that dictate what constitutes an appropriate sexual life.<sup>9</sup> They are also influenced by a number of individual factors (romantic feelings, sexual desire, etc.), as well as by other factors connected to the relationship and its context.<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• Adolescents experiment with various actions<sup>11</sup> often performed in the same sequence (masturbation, kissing, touching, sexual fondling, oral-genital contact, sexual relations with penetration).<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Adolescents may have sexual relations with a person of their own sex. These sexual actions are either related to an openness to and desire for sexual exploration or take place in a context of discovering their own sexual orientation and later identifying as homosexual.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Adolescents seem to have different gender-based expectations regarding sexual behaviours. Girls more often speak of emotions as motives for engaging in sexual relations, while boys speak more of curiosity and sexual pleasure.<sup>14</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Young people between 12 and 14 years of age:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have not generally engaged in a sexual act with penetration<sup>15</sup> and have mostly experimented with kissing<sup>16</sup> and touching;<sup>17</sup> a Québec study has found that 4.2%<sup>18,19</sup> of young people at this age have had sexual relations with consensual penetration</li> <li>• have often already been exposed to explicit sexual material (at about 11 years old for boys and 13 years old for girls)<sup>20</sup></li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Discuss the characteristics of sexual behaviour in adolescence and the motives behind it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual desire and physiological manifestations of sexual arousal</li> <li>• Role of emotional commitment: first sexual contact is often experienced with a romantic partner</li> <li>• Exploratory and progressive nature of sexual behaviour: sequence of sexual behaviours, from exploratory activities (kissing, touching) to genital sexual relations</li> <li>• Norms of adolescent sexual behaviour: perpetuated myths about the precocious nature of adolescent sexual behaviour, contradictory nature of certain norms</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN ADOLESCENCE AND THE MOTIVES BEHIND IT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescence is a time for many kinds of exploration: self-discovery, an expanding social network, learning about the influence of new norms and discussions. Emotions and desires are new, and they evolve during this time.</li> <li>• <b>Sexual behaviour</b> refers to a set of behaviours that may occur during adolescence, with or without a partner, but that transcend sexual relations with penetration:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ affectionate behaviours: embracing, hugging, holding each other's shoulders or waist, walking hand in hand, nuzzling, etc.</li> <li>○ sexual behaviours: kissing, touching parts of the body (nape of the neck, back, buttocks, breasts, thighs) while dressed or under clothing, embracing while naked, etc.</li> <li>○ genital sexual behaviours: touching one's genitals in private (masturbation), touching a partner's genitals, oral-genital contact, vaginal penetration, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Sexual awakening prompts sexual behaviour</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sexual awakening is evidenced through cognitive behaviours: increasing interest in sexuality, curiosity, sexually suggestive jokes, seeking information about sexuality, sexually explicit content, sexual thoughts, fantasies about affection and nudity, etc.</li> <li>○ Sexual awakening also manifests in the body: signs of sexual arousal, sensation of warmth flooding the body, attraction to someone, etc.</li> <li>○ At the outset of adolescence, <b>sexual awakening</b> centres on the self (e.g. becoming familiar with physical sensations) and gradually turns toward another person (e.g. is accompanied by attraction to another person or sexual thoughts).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Sexual behaviour</b> in adolescence is often linked to emotional commitment; it is gradual, exploratory and sometimes guided by various influences. It is just as important to explore manifestations of sexual behaviour in adolescence (behaviours), as what prompts adolescents to adopt them (motives).</li> </ul>	

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Sexual desire and physiological manifestations of sexual arousal</b>  Adolescents must be able to explore what motivates and influences their sexual behaviour in order to make choices that allow them to have pleasant, positive sexual experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual desire presents as an interest in a specific person. It is an impulse, an interior impulse that prompts someone to engage in seduction and sexual behaviours.<sup>21</sup> Sexual desire is experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>in the mind:</b> having an interest in and thoughts about the other person (fantasies about kissing, touching, embracing, sharing a moment of physical closeness with this person)</li> <li><b>in the heart:</b> feeling that there is something special about the other person and that one wants to share with, draw closer to, connect with and be with THAT person</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Sexual arousal</b> is experienced <b>in the body</b>. It brings about physical manifestations such as an erection (penis hardens and grows longer) and vaginal lubrication (clear liquid flowing from the vagina, sensation of having a wet vagina). It is experienced as tension to be relieved and a need to be fulfilled. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual arousal can also manifest through other signals from the body: racing heart, butterflies in the stomach, wanting to touch and be touched, feeling weak in the knees, etc.</li> <li>The erection of the penis (external) is more obvious, visible and tangible. Vaginal lubrication (internal) is more diffuse and less visible. This sometimes makes it more difficult to be aware of sexual arousal. Vaginal lubrication can be explained as the presence of sexual “feeling” in the body and a feeling of nervousness, restlessness.<sup>22</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Role of emotional commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescents’ first sexual behaviours are most often experienced with a romantic partner or a partner to whom they feel emotionally committed.<sup>23</sup> Sexual behaviour progresses more quickly when the partners are in love.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>The first kiss is often experienced in the context of an emotional and romantic relationship. It can mark the beginning of a romantic relationship. In this case, it is motivated by feelings.<sup>25</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Sexual desire and physiological manifestations of sexual arousal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It’s embarrassing, but I get an erection just by hugging my girlfriend.</li> <li>I don’t know why, but I can’t stop thinking about doing it. Can anybody tell me why?</li> <li>Are sexual desire and love the same thing? Is it normal to be in love, but not feel sexual desire?</li> <li>Can you desire someone without being in love?</li> </ul> <p><b>Role of emotional commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I’ve already dated a guy, but with Matthew, it’s different. I feel like taking things further with him.</li> <li>“I wanted our embrace to last for an eternity or two. I felt so good. I never imagined such a drug in my whole life.”<sup>41</sup></li> <li>“Finally, I focus on Tom. I decide to check out his hair. The back of his neck. His skin. I try to imagine the scent of his skin and I only smell the dusty fabric of the armchair. I try to imagine my hand on his skin and I shiver. I realize that I’m crazy in love with this boy. It makes no sense, a minute ago I stifled a giggle and now, a warm, pleasant wave is filling my belly.”<sup>42</sup></li> </ul>



<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Exploratory and progressive nature of sexual behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the popular view, being “sexually active” means that a person has had sexual relations with penetration. As a result, adolescents are placed in two categories: being sexually active or not sexually active. However, such categories fail to reflect the diversity and scope of the sexual behaviours that adolescents experience. In a broader register of behaviours, adolescents can <b>gradually</b> become accustomed to their sexuality and the associated sensations.</li> <li>• The <b>exploration</b> of initial sexual actions varies among young people, but usually occurs in the same sequence: adolescents start by experimenting with hugs, kisses and touching the upper body before they explore and touch the genital organs.<sup>26</sup> This sequence of exploration occurs 3 to 4 years before the first sexual relations, depending on the adolescent. Experiencing first kisses and touching does not mean that adolescents will engage in their first sexual relations right away.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• The <b>sequence</b> of sexual behaviours may be tied to the level of intimacy associated with the behaviours. Adolescents consider certain sexual behaviours “more intimate.” Thus, having sexual relations with penetration is clearly considered the most intimate sexual act.<sup>28</sup></li> <li>• Masturbation is a manifestation of auto-erotic (with oneself) sexual behaviour, that is, without a partner. Masturbation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enables one to relieve the tension experienced as the result of sexual arousal</li> <li>○ enables one to <b>explore</b> bodily sensations and to learn to be familiar with one’s body before experimenting with a partner</li> <li>○ in some cases, allows one to become familiar with and have pleasurable experiences</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Norms of adolescent sexual behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The norms conveyed take the form of expectations from adolescent peers, the people around them, friends, family and the media. These norms can influence adolescents’ perceptions, attitudes and choices about sexual behaviour. They may lead adolescents to desire and seek out sexual activity<sup>29</sup> or postpone it, or even abstain from it.</li> <li>• Norms act as “external” factors in sexual behaviour (pressure from peers or the media, family or religious values, etc.) that are juxtaposed with internal factors (sexual arousal, curiosity, emotional commitment, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exploratory and progressive nature of sexual behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A hundred and twenty-seven first kisses, that’s about how many I could count, imagining how it was going to happen with Julie and by repeating them in my head – like a physical workout without a partner or without a coach. In front of the mirror in the bathroom. On my bike. In my bedroom.”<sup>43</sup></li> <li>• How far can you go the first time you meet somebody?<sup>44</sup></li> <li>• Adults say that you have to wait for the “right” person to have sexual relations. How will I know who the “right” one is?</li> <li>• “Two days earlier, we started touching each other. I couldn’t move. It was like this incredible mix of fear and emotions, trembling, heart racing had frozen my limbs.”<sup>45</sup></li> <li>• I masturbated for the first time, but I didn’t feel any pleasure. I felt guilty, but I still want to do it again.</li> </ul> <p><b>Norms of adolescent sexual behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarah and Jeanne urge Joanie to finally kiss Youssef.</li> <li>• Do girls watch pornography?</li> <li>• How do I react if I have friends who do things I don’t like at a party?<sup>46</sup></li> <li>• “So, like . . . ? Is there a minimum duration for a first kiss? Is one flick of the tongue enough? I</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><i>Perpetuated myths about the precocious nature of adolescent sexual behaviour</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The norms dictated by the media can lead adolescents, as well as the adults around them, to believe that precocious adolescent sexual behaviour is more widespread than it actually is. In fact, retrospective studies on college and university students demonstrate a trend to overestimate the sexual activity of peers.<sup>30</sup> Knowing that many are expressing their concerns and their need to feel they are the same as others, adolescents may embroider the sexual behaviours of their peers with false perceptions, which can generate greater “perceived” pressure about when they should have experienced certain sexual acts.</li> <li>• The many explicit representations of sexuality in the media and easy access to pornography can increase adolescents’ curiosity and desire to experiment,<sup>31</sup> while increasing pressure to perform.</li> </ul> <p><i>Contradictory nature of certain norms</i></p> <p>Certain contradictory norms may cause adolescents to feel confused and ambivalent about sexual behaviour. Some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are more and more messages about <b>respect for sexual diversity</b> in the social environment. Nevertheless, a heterosexual norm (heteronormativity) and homophobic messages continue to be conveyed. This may lead some adolescents feeling homosexual attraction to have their first experiences of seduction and sexual behaviours (e.g. first kiss) in a heterosexual context because it’s the norm, to test their reactions and feelings or to confirm their sexual orientation.</li> <li>• The sexual activity of adolescents is most often <b>unplanned, unexpected and spontaneous</b>, and it occurs “because the opportunity arose.” Adults, however, want adolescents to be prepared, that is, to <b>plan</b> their sexual relations by organizing a means of protection, such as a condom or contraception.</li> <li>• The media present an image of <b>numerous adolescents who are sexually active at a young age</b>, whereas in fact, only half of 15- to 17-year-old adolescents have had sexual relations.</li> <li>• Norms concerning gender can also be contradictory. For example: adolescent girls receive <b>contradictory judgments</b> about sexting; they may be judged as “prudes” if they refuse to sext, and may be perceived as “easy” when they do sext.<sup>32</sup></li> </ul>	<p>mean . . . a whole choreography with the tongue, complete with double twist, somersault and special landing. Can you kiss and breathe through your nose at the same time? Or, is it like when you blow up a balloon, a matter of lung capacity? You take a deep breath and dive in . . . When is the best season? Isn’t it embarrassing in winter, with the misty breath that comes out of your mouth? In summer, don’t two people stick to each other like two sickly sweet candies?”<sup>47</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes I want to masturbate with my best friend. But I’m not gay. Is that normal?<sup>48</sup></li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>2) Recognize what can inform your choices concerning sexual behaviour in adolescence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing yourself: attitudes toward sexual behaviours (e.g. masturbation, touching, kissing, hugging), feelings, motives, expectations, needs and limits</li> <li>• Relationship with your partner: nature and intensity of shared feelings, comfort and trust felt with your partner, ability to respect the needs and limits of your partner</li> <li>• Anticipation of positive or negative implications concerning situations of sexual behaviour, including those involving the use of technology</li> <li>• Self-assertion and negotiation</li> <li>• Real or perceived pressure from peers and the media,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people may be subjected to <b>pressure from their peers</b> or their partner urging them to have sexual relations. At the same time, adults and their peers suggest that they wait until they are ready, until they have found the right person, until they get to know the person before they engage in sexual relations, otherwise, they should abstain. Moreover, young people appear to follow two different trends, either waiting less than 6 months or more than 6 months to have sexual relations.<sup>33</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>WHAT CAN INFORM YOUR CHOICES CONCERNING ADOLESCENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR</b></p> <p>Sexual behaviour is motivated and influenced in different ways. In order for adolescents to be able to make decisions that promote consensual, pleasant and positive sexual experiences, they must be able to recognize what informs their choices about sexual behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual behaviour flows from a variety of motives. It may be guided by internal motives (e.g. sexual arousal and desire, feelings for your partner, desire for exploration and experimentation, pleasure experienced). It may also be guided by external motives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to belong to or be accepted by the peer group</li> <li>○ to become popular, through pressure from peers or the media<sup>34</sup></li> <li>○ to please or to be loved by a partner</li> <li>○ because one has been asked</li> <li>○ because the opportunity arose, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When sexual behaviour is satisfying, adolescents' experience of discovering and expressing their sexuality will evolve in a positive way. Getting adolescents to reflect on what might support <b>their choices</b> concerning sexual behaviour helps them make decisions that foster their well-being and that of their partners. The choices that adolescents make about sexual behaviour are determined by various factors, including self-knowledge, relationship with a partner, anticipation of positive and negative implications, self-assertion and response to different kinds of pressure.</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-knowledge</b></p> <p>To make informed choices about sexual behaviour, it is important to know yourself. Adolescents must recognize their attitude toward sexual behaviour, their feelings, as well as their motives, expectations, needs and limits.</p>	<p><b>Self-knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't know why people masturbate. I just don't get it.</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>including sexually explicit material</p>	<p><i>Attitudes toward sexual behaviours (e.g. masturbation, touching, kissing, hugging)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescents have different attitudes toward sexual actions in general, and how acceptable such actions are for young people of their age.<sup>35</sup> It is important for them to be able to express a <b>personal</b> opinion about certain sexual behaviours by asking themselves: What are my perceptions of these actions? Are they acceptable at my age? Even for myself?</li> </ul> <p><i>Feelings, motives, expectations, needs and limits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescents must also be able to recognize other personal perceptions of sexual behaviour. Such perceptions manifest in the heart (feelings, emotional needs), in the head (motives, expectations) and in the body (needs, limits). See the “Take Time to Reflect” and “Suggestions for the Activity” sections for further areas of reflection you can suggest to students.</li> <li><b>Over time, adolescents gradually push back the limits they set on what they want to explore:</b> they go a little bit further than the last time. They can stop or step back because they feel they have reached their limit or because the other person feels and expresses they have reached theirs. That is when <b>consent</b> must be given, and it’s important to pause and check things out. There is a distinction between <b>wanting</b> a sexual behaviour and <b>consenting</b> to it:<sup>36</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>wanting means desiring</b>, feeling you want to experience sexual arousal and its manifestations (e.g. erection, lubrication, racing heart, feeling your body wants to be close to the other person, and wants to be touched, etc.)</li> <li><b>consenting means agreeing to do something</b>, because you feel safe, protected, respected; you feel trust, comfortable, sure, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Relationship with your partner</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship with a partner supports and guides choices about sexual behaviour. Choices will depend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the nature and intensity of the shared feelings (e.g. passion, attraction, desire)</li> <li>comfort with and trust in the partner</li> <li>the ability to respect the partner’s needs and limits</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I know that some people my age have had sex. That’s their life. But I don’t want to.</li> <li>I like kissing my partner, but I don’t feel like doing any more than that right now.</li> <li>“Sometimes, I’ll nuzzle his neck, I love the scent of boys’ necks. And then we dance again, holding hands, gazing at each other. His eyes will sparkle, and I’ll think he wants to make love with me. I’ll have to say no again, and ruin everything, again. It’s not that I don’t want to. In fact, I think I really want to. I have a gut feeling. But I shouldn’t, because if I do, it would never stop. I want to wait until I fall in love. At least, I want to have a chance to be in love. Once, just the once.”<sup>49</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Relationship with your partner</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I’m going out with a new guy. As soon as we’re alone, I don’t know what to do or what to say. But I love him and I wouldn’t want him not to think so. I’d like to know how I can stop feeling ashamed of talking to him about my feelings and touching him.</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In tangible terms, adolescents have to ask themselves about the relationship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What feelings do I have for this person? Are they positive? Reciprocated?</li> <li>Do I feel listened to and accepted as I am?</li> <li>Do I feel that I'm being myself?</li> <li>Do I have the impression that the other person is evaluating me? Am I afraid of losing the other person?</li> <li>Do I dare say what I think? Do I feel comfortable saying what I want? Refusing what I don't want?</li> <li>Am I afraid that it will go too far or further than I want? Or am I afraid that my limits won't be respected if they change along the way?</li> <li>Do I enjoy it when we are intimate? Etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Anticipation of positive or negative implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In every situation of sexual behaviour (kissing, touching, etc.), adolescents may anticipate positive or negative consequences.</li> <li>The anticipation of positive experiences could motivate them to engage in a sexual behaviour, while on the other hand, the anticipation of negative consequences could stop them from doing so. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of <b>positive</b> implications: feeling emotionally closer to a romantic partner; experiencing a moment of intimacy, closeness; showing love, attraction to the other person; feeling pleasure; fulfilling a need for sexual release when aroused; obtaining social recognition or social status among peers; validation.</li> <li>Examples of <b>negative</b> implications: regret about moving too fast with regard to their wishes, discomfort experienced in a situation, regrets about suggesting or agreeing to a sexual act that they really didn't want, fear of negative judgment from their peers (e.g. insults, teasing, feeling worthless), feeling of being used, disappointment with pleasure or satisfaction they experienced, disgust, guilt, fear of disapproval from their parents or friends, fear of feeling pain or causing the other person pain (e.g. first vaginal penetration).</li> </ul> </li> <li>With the use of new technologies, adolescents may also anticipate positive or negative implications of their actions in the virtual world.<sup>37</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yoan wanted to go further than kissing yesterday. I told him I wasn't ready. He said he understood.</li> <li>"Sure, there are times when you don't really like it all that much, but you do it anyway. Because sometimes, if you have a girlfriend and she wants to try it and you don't really agree, but you love the girl, so you do it anyway."<sup>50</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Anticipation of positive or negative implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"And then there are two major questions . . . One, what sets off the first kiss? Two, if you mess it up, can you start all over from scratch? And if you do, is the second kiss the first kiss?"<sup>51</sup></li> <li>I've never kissed anyone. The day it happens, I'm afraid the other person will think I'm a bad kisser.</li> <li>I posted a photo of myself at my aunt's wedding. I hope to get Carl's attention; I've wanted him to notice me for so long.</li> <li>"Tonight's the night. The big night. I've been seriously dating Jasmine for six months. And she agrees. To all of it. Six months I've been waiting. Tonight, Saturday, June the 8th. At eight-thirty on the dot, her parents are going out somewhere. To see friends, or to the movies, I don't know and I don't care. All that matters is that they'll be home late, very late. At eight-thirty-one, she'll leave her house. She'll hop on her bicycle and ten minutes</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Examples of <b>positive</b> implications: thinking that sexting will increase their popularity, that they will please a partner, feeling validated in the eyes of their peers because they have photos or videos, getting positive, validating comments about their posts.</li> <li>○ Examples of <b>negative</b> implications: fearing that sexting will harm their reputations, that their photo or video will be shared, fear of being perceived as an “easy” girl.<sup>38</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Self-assertion and negotiation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assertion enables adolescents to feel confident in making decisions about sexual behaviour. In tangible terms, self-assertion means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ recognizing and communicating what I want and what I don’t want</li> <li>○ being able to say yes to what I feel like doing</li> <li>○ being able to say no to what goes beyond my limits</li> <li>○ saying what I like and what I don’t like</li> <li>○ being able to resist pressure</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is important for partners to define their needs and their limits so that sexual contacts are enjoyable.</li> <li>• When partners express their needs and limits and there is conflict, negotiating enables them to find an area of agreement. However, sometimes they may find it difficult to assert themselves out of fear of displeasing the other person, out of fear of their reaction, because everything is happening too fast, or out of modesty or embarrassment, because they can’t find the words, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real or perceived pressure from peers and the media, including sexually explicit material</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions that adolescents make about their sexual behaviour may be influenced by pressure that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>real</b>: being asked to do something</li> <li>○ <b>perceived</b>: having the impression that they have to do something to be popular, win someone’s respect, not lose a romantic partner or please a romantic partner, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Such pressure may lead adolescents to adopt a behaviour “because they HAVE TO do it” and not “because they FEEL LIKE doing it” (because their body, heart and mind make them want to</li> </ul>	<p>later, she’ll be at my place. By 10 o’clock, it should be a fait accompli. I’ll be a hero or a zero.”<sup>52</sup></p> <p><b>Self-assertion and negotiation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My boyfriend wanted me to send him a photo of my breasts because he wanted to see me. I said no to him. I don’t feel comfortable.</li> <li>• During the party at Leanne’s, all my friends kissed a girl. They laughed at me because I didn’t want to kiss Leanne. I like her. I don’t want to ruin everything by kissing her fast in front of everyone.</li> <li>• While we were kissing, she touched my penis. It surprised me! It was pleasant, but I didn’t think we had gotten to that stage yet. I talked to her about it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real or perceived pressure from peers and the media, including sexually explicit material</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julia told us she has kissed at least ten boys since she started high school. Karyanne, five. Me? None. How does that make me look?</li> <li>• “Some girls feel bad because they have regrets and they felt they went too fast. They didn’t want to go that far right away.”<sup>53</sup></li> </ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
	<p>adopt this behaviour). This kind of pressure may also lead adolescents “to DO IT IN SUCH AND SUCH A WAY” because they are receiving messages about the sexual behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This kind of pressure may come from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>peers:</b> kissing someone because everyone has done it, to be recognized or accepted by their peers, because they said they have to do it, do something because at a given age or stage in a relationship they should have done this, to be seen as “cool,” etc.</li> <li>○ <b>the media:</b> video games and the Internet expose young people to a variety of representations of seduction and sexual behaviour that may influence their decisions</li> <li>○ <b>sexually explicit material:</b> Most often, young people are exposed involuntarily to sexually explicit material.<sup>39</sup> It often happens by chance, for example when browsing the Internet, opening an email or downloading files containing music, that they find a pornographic image or website.<sup>40</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I’ve seen pictures of penises on the Internet. My penis is not as big as what I’ve seen! I don’t want to be naked in front of my girlfriend.</li> <li>• I found out that my boyfriend had already looked at pornography by listening to him talk to his friends. I feel really uncomfortable. Especially because I am not ready to make love to him.</li> <li>• I’m a shy guy. All the guys I see in the movies are hyper-confident, know how to approach girls, take them in their arms and kiss them. How am I going to be able to approach a girl?</li> <li>• I am a guy and I masturbate like other guys. But I don’t last very long. I’d like to learn how to do it, because I don’t know if I’m doing it too fast or if I’m doing it wrong.<sup>54</sup></li> </ul>



## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT as an adult working with students

#### Have an accurate perception of the sexual behaviour of adolescents at this age

- Adolescence marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a period of change, discovery, sexual curiosity and, sometimes, risk-taking. Young people have many questions about sexual relations and they experience them through exploration.
- The sexual behaviours that they experiment with are part of a continuum ranging from sexual thoughts through fantasies, masturbation and sexual relations.<sup>55</sup> The expression of adolescent sexuality is an integral, normative aspect of development that has the potential to promote growth and well-being.
- Young people make up a heterogeneous group in terms of sexuality. They have not all reached the same level at the same time and do not share the same level of comfort in talking about sexuality. Some young people have sexual experiences earlier, while others start having them much later. Certain young people may adhere to virginity and abstinence (not having sexual relations before marriage) or to sexual continence (not engaging in sexual relations with penetration), or they may choose to postpone sexual relations until a later time. It is important to be aware of the diversity of these realities and not to make any judgments.

#### *About masturbation*

In France, a study conducted with people from 15 to 24 years of age indicates<sup>56</sup> that close to 50% of young people first experienced masturbation between 11 and 14 years of age, that is:

- 15% of them experienced it between 11 and 12 years of age
- 32% of them experienced it between 13 and 14 years of age

#### *About first intimate contacts and the first kiss*

A longitudinal study in the United Kingdom<sup>57</sup> on sexual behaviours conducted with over 13 000 young people from 11 to 13 years of age shows that over the last year:

- 39% of girls and 43% of boys from 12 to 13 years of age stated they had held someone's hand
- 30% of girls and 34% of boys from 12 to 13 years of age stated they had kissed someone on the mouth
- 4% of girls and 6% of boys from 12 to 13 years of age stated they had been touched underneath their clothing
- between 1% and 2% of boys and girls had been undressed, had had their private parts touched by someone or had touched someone's private parts

#### *About sexual relations*

A study conducted in 2010-2011 in Québec secondary schools indicates that by the end of secondary school, about half of young people had had consensual sexual relations with vaginal, oral or anal penetration at least once. The number of young people having had sexual relations rises with the school year:

- 25% in Secondary I and Secondary II
- 29% in Secondary III<sup>58</sup>

Since sexual relations often occur spontaneously and are unplanned, discussion about sexual relations and motives for engaging in them must take place BEFORE young people become sexually active,<sup>59</sup> therefore, starting in the early years of secondary school.

**NOTE:** It might be necessary to distinguish between vaginal discharge and vaginal lubrication, because they do not have the same function, and may be confused. **Vaginal discharge** is linked to the ovulatory and menstrual cycle (fertility). It is usually white-yellow in colour and the consistency varies according to the phases in the cycle. Discharge plays a necessary role in preventing vaginal

dryness and in protecting against infections. **Vaginal lubrication** is linked to sexual arousal. It is a clear liquid that flows from the vagina and facilitates vaginal penetration. It is, in a way, the equivalent of an erection. It represents the body reacting under hormonal influence to a sexual stimulus or physical attraction.

### **What you should know about the first kiss**

The first kiss is an important manifestation of sexual behaviour that has a special form of representation and significance.<sup>60</sup>

- The first kiss is perceived as a technical gesture, rather than a natural, spontaneous one. In fact, the “how-to” for the first kiss preoccupies adolescents (how to kiss, position yourself, breathe, move, etc.), which may lead them to apprehend this first act of sexual behaviour and to imagine scenarios for experimenting with it. Sometimes they anticipate negative implications for first kisses: fear of being disgusted, rejected, awkward, disappointing the other person, etc.
- There are two scenarios for first kisses:
  - **Kissing in the context of social play:** this generally occurs around the age of 11 in a context of play. Adolescents derive social validation from it. The kiss is perceived as a form of initiation or a rite of passage that confers adult status. This kiss can be a pleasant and voluntary experience or, in contrast, a forced and unpleasant experience. Peer pressure is the central element of this type of kiss.
  - **The romantic kiss:** this kiss occurs in private, in the context of a relationship with a partner. It can be either pleasant or unpleasant, voluntary or forced. With time, this type of kiss becomes more pleasant and positive because adolescents have greater control over the emotions, sensations and situations involved. As a result, the romantic kiss awakens pleasant physical, even erotic sensations. Romantic feelings and young love are the central elements in this type of kiss.

### **Be aware of the norms to which adolescents are exposed regarding sexual behaviour in their social environment and the media**

- **Concerning masturbation**
  - A Canadian analysis of the depiction of masturbation in movies for adolescents shows that<sup>61</sup> masturbation is:
    - usually practised by young, single men
    - mainly motivated by sexual thoughts about a person the character feels attracted to, an unfulfilled sexual need, through the viewing of sexually explicit material or boredom or loneliness
    - associated with negative implications (interruption, being “caught in the act” or disappointment, disaster) and less often with benefits (release of tension, pleasure)
    - seen as a rather negative experience for male characters and a rather positive one for female characters
- **Concerning sexually explicit material**
  - A review of literature<sup>62</sup> describing the impact of Internet pornography on the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of adolescents indicates that it:
    - leads adolescents to adopt more permissive attitudes toward different sexual behaviours and sex “without commitment”
    - reinforces stereotypes about male domination, female submission and women as objects
    - is linked to greater acceptance of violence against women and aggressiveness in sexuality
    - creates pressure to conform to ideals about body image and a drop in self-confidence (e.g. feeling less attractive, physically inferior)
    - may create pressure to perform (e.g. speed of sexual arousal, duration of an erection and penetration, intensity of experienced pleasure)

#### For parents:

- A study conducted in 2011 with mothers and 14- to 17-year-olds reveals that **45% of adolescents consider their parents to be their model for sexual behaviour**. The study also indicates that 32% of adolescents identify with their friends and that only 15% are inspired by celebrities. These results shatter the stereotype of parents having no influence on the sexuality of their adolescents in terms of sexual relations and confirms the importance of communication between parents and their adolescents about sexual relations. To read the article, visit: <https://www.chusj.org/en/Calendrier-salle-presse/nouvelles/actualites/2011/Les-adolescents-plus-influences-par-la-sexualite-d>.
- Sexuality education is more effective when there is collaboration between the school and the family. Parents can play a complementary role in reflecting on first sexual relations and the issues that adolescents face: adolescent behaviours are more influenced by their parents than by their friends. Furthermore, a strong parent-adolescent relationship, parent openness and discussions about sexuality delay first sexual relations.

#### REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos, etc.

To understand **adolescent sexual behaviour**, refer to:

- [The Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls](#) on the website of the [American Psychiatric Association](#) (under Topics > Sex).
- [When Seduction Amongst Adolescents = Power, Sexual Acting Out and Provocation](#) on the [Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux website](#) (under Publications > English > Subjects > *The SexEducator* > #5).

To understand **adolescent perceptions of sexual behaviour**, refer to:

- [The Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls](#) on the website of the [American Psychiatric Association](#) (under Topics > Sex).

To understand **masturbation during adolescence** and how to talk about it, refer to:

- The video [Masturbation Myths with Planned Parenthood's Experts](#).

For information about **being exposed to sexually explicit images, the Internet, the use of social media and new technologies**, refer to:

- [Pornography on the Internet and the consequences for youth: How do we intervene?](#) on the [Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux website](#) (under Publications > English > Subjects > *The SexEducator* > #9).
- [Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Sexuality and Romantic Relationships in the Digital Age](#), pages 21 and 22, available on Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy, [MediaSmarts website](#) (under Research).

## **BE PREPARED: gather and create materials, adopt appropriate attitudes, etc.**

### **PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO SECONDARY II STUDENTS**

Content on sexual behaviour can be presented:

- **after** the content for the “Emotional and Romantic Life” theme: This will allow you to present romantic relationships as a context in which sexual behaviour may be experienced.
- **before** the content for the “Sexual Violence” or “STBBIs and Pregnancy” themes: It is preferable to start with positive themes rather than preventive themes, and it is more productive to talk about sexual behaviour before dealing with ways of reducing risks.

### **CLEARLY DEFINE THE POSITION YOU WILL TAKE: REFLECTION ON MOTIVES AND INFLUENCES WHEN MAKING CHOICES**

This content aims to lead students to reflect on the motives for engaging in sexual acts and to recognize what influences them and guides them in their choices. For this reason, it would be preferable to ask them questions to get them to reflect and help them to make informed choices of their own, rather than to tell them what they should or shouldn't do, or to simply explain the dangers and risks associated with certain situations. The goal is to help students to connect to what they think and feel and to be more aware of external factors (e.g. peer pressure, influence of the media, warnings from adults) that may influence them in terms of their sexual behaviour.

### **GATHER MATERIALS**

- Print out scenarios for individual reading and teamwork.
- Prepare materials to be emailed to parents, if applicable.

### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

- **Discuss sexual behaviour without suggesting norms or pressuring students to engage in sexual behaviour**

Discussing sexual behaviour may give young people the impression that this topic is about widespread activity among adolescents. When sexual behaviours are described as “norms,” adolescents could perceive implicit pressure to conform. To avoid this undesirable consequence, you can:

- tell students that the goal is to reflect on what motivates and influences sexual behaviour, regardless of whether or not they are engaging in sexual behaviour themselves
- tell students that sexual behaviour is not merely about sexual relations (see the “Explanations concerning content” section for further details)
- remind students that a minority of young people of their age have had sexual relations (as evidenced by the statistics provided in the previous section)

- **Use inclusive language with regard to sexual diversity**

Early in adolescence, some young people identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, or wonder about their sexual orientation. Regardless of their reality, they need to feel the theme is relevant, and this is why it is important to use inclusive language (e.g. use the word “partner” instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend”), do not presume heterosexuality or a romantic relationship context for adolescent sexual relations. Other young people may be exploring sexual experiences with peers of the same sex (gender), but not be homosexual. Using inclusive language allows you to reach all young people, regardless of whether or not they identify or are out as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken with young people in Secondary Cycle One should:

- take into account the fact that sexual behaviour is an important preoccupation in the lives of adolescents, whether or not they have had actual sexual experiences<sup>63</sup>
- encourage them to reflect on their expectations, their intentions of engaging in sexual actions or not<sup>64</sup> and the context of adolescent sexual relations so that they can develop a realistic vision of future sexual experiences<sup>65</sup>

### Key messages

- Sexual behaviour refers to first kisses, embracing, touching, masturbation, sexual relations and certain actions in the virtual world (e.g. sexting).
- A variety of motives prompt adolescents to engage in sexual acts: sexual arousal, feelings for another person, a curiosity and desire to experiment.
- Adolescents' sexual behaviour may be influenced by a number of external factors (e.g. norms, peer pressure, myths). Certain norms are often contradictory. They may create ambivalence and confusion for young people.
- In seeking positive initial sexual experiences, adolescents must base their choices on self-knowledge, relationships with others and self-assertion.

### INTRODUCTION

- Present the educational aims.
- Activate prior knowledge by asking students about what they know about “sexual awakening”:
  - What is sexual awakening?
  - How does it manifest at your age: in your head, heart, body?
- Review the definition of sexual awakening, under the heading “Characteristics of sexual behaviour in adolescence and the motives behind it” in the “Explanations concerning content” section.

### ACTIVITY: MOTIVES BEHIND SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

**To help students discuss the characteristics of sexual behaviour in adolescence and the motives behind it (aim 1):**

- Explain to students what sexual behaviour is and what it refers to, using the “Explanations concerning content” section, under the heading “Characteristics of sexual behaviour in adolescence and the motives behind it.”
- Tell them that they don't need to have experimented with certain sexual actions to be able to reflect and take part in subsequent discussions.
- Then, ask them:
  - What prompts adolescents to engage in the sexual actions identified?
  - What are the reasons and motives that lead adolescents to adopt certain behaviours? Why do they do it?

## NOTE BEFORE TEAMWORK

Before starting the teamwork, give an example of elements to identify (motives, sources of influence), using the example of masturbation below. Since this topic might be a source of embarrassment or discomfort, it would be more appropriate to suggest aspects for reflection rather than ask students to make suggestions. To prepare for a discussion of the topic, see the “Take Time to Reflect” and “Refer to Resources” sections. In tangible terms, the following aspects may be introduced for discussion:

**Example of an adolescent (any gender) who is masturbating, or who wants to try it, or who hears people talking about it.**

**What is the motive for engaging in this specific sexual behaviour?**

- Sensations of sexual arousal, of curiosity; sexual exploration of one’s body; sexual awakening linked to hormones.

**What is likely to influence the adolescent?**

- What the adolescent has heard from friends (e.g. jokes among friends, “everybody’s doing it”), the media (e.g. humorous scenes in movies), their family (e.g. boundaries of intimacy, private acts), people around them (e.g. prohibition associated with their religion), in society (e.g. it’s disgusting, it’s wrong, it makes you blind or deaf, it’s pleasant, it enables you to feel comfortable with your body), etc.
- The physical sensations the adolescent feels and the anticipation of pleasure.
- The adolescent’s personal beliefs about the topic.
- Etc.

- Ask the students to form teams of 3 or 4 to analyze the characters’ stories in Appendix 1. Tell them that they will have to identify the following:
  - What prompts the characters to experiment with these sexual acts? What are their motives?
  - What influences the characters? Who influences them (peers, family, media, others)?
- Review the students’ work, asking the team members to name the elements they have identified. If need be, write the responses on the board in two columns: Motives, Influences.
- Complete the two columns using the content references in Appendix 1, if necessary.
- Explain to the students the characteristics of sexual behaviour, the motives behind it and what influences it (see the “Explanations concerning content” section):
  - Explain to them what may **motivate sexual behaviour** (see “Sexual desire and physiological manifestations of sexual arousal,” “Role of emotional commitment” and “Exploratory and progressive nature of sexual behaviour.”)
  - Explain to them what may **influence sexual behaviour** and the contradictory nature of certain norms (see “Norms of adolescent sexual behaviour”).
- Discuss the content with them next, asking them:
  - In order for sexual experiences to be pleasant, what should prompt or motivate adolescent sexual behaviour?
  - Do you feel any influences? Which ones? What are the effects of these influences on you?
  - Do influences create ambivalence for adolescents?

- Add that in order for their sexual experiences to be pleasant, as adolescents, they have to make choices. Explain that this will be the topic for the next activity.
- Conclude this part using the following **key messages**:
  - Sexual behaviour refers to first kisses, embracing, touching, masturbation, sexual relations and certain actions in the virtual world (e.g. sexting).
  - A variety of motives prompt adolescents to engage in sexual acts: sexual arousal, feelings for another person, a curiosity and desire to experiment.
  - Sexual behaviour may be influenced by external factors (e.g. norms, peer pressure, myths).

#### ACTIVITY: WHAT GUIDES CHOICES CONCERNING SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

##### To help students recognize what can inform their choices concerning sexual behaviour in adolescence (aim 2):

- Remind students that they have discussed motives (what prompts them) and what influences adolescent behaviour (what influences them).
- Tell them that in order for their experiences with sexual behaviour to be pleasant, they have to make choices that are appropriate for them. Thus, the activity will enable them to recognize what these choices may be based on.
- To do so, ask them to form teams of 3 to 4 members. They must identify the elements that indicate what the characters' choices are based on, by referring to the same stories used for the previous activity, using the following elements:
  - **ME**: What does the character want? What are the character's needs? Limits? Preferences? What does the character feel like doing?
  - **THE OTHER PERSON**: How does the relationship with the other person guide the character's choice?
  - **IMPLICATIONS**: What consequences for that choice does the character anticipate? For the sexual behaviour? How does this influence the character's choice?
  - **EXTERNAL PRESSURES**: Is the character experiencing external influences or pressures that influence their choice? What are the influences?
- Review the students' work by asking them to name the elements they have identified. Optional: Write them on the board in four columns: Me, The other person, Implications, Pressures.
- Complete the four columns using the content references in Appendix 1, if necessary.
- Explain to the students that to make choices that promote pleasant experiences, they can ask themselves questions that enable them to:
  - **KNOW THEMSELVES**
    - **In their heart**: What feelings do I have for THIS person? Are they positive? Do I feel good with this person? How do I think I will feel experimenting with a given behaviour?
    - **In their head**: What reason or reasons would make me want to express my sexuality with this person? What are my hopes for this? Do I believe it will have a positive impact in my life? On my sexuality? Do I have any hesitations, doubts or fears?
    - **In their body**: What does my body feel about the idea of taking these actions? How does my body react to sexual actions (e.g. it wants more, feels good, relaxes, stiffens, contracts, becomes tense)? Does my body show signs of sexual desire or sexual arousal? Do I feel like having this experience?
  - **See how THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER PERSON influences their choices**:
    - What feelings do I have for this person? Are they positive? Are they reciprocated?
    - Do I feel I am being heard and accepted as I am?



- Do I feel I am being myself?
- Do I have the impression that the other person is evaluating me? Am I afraid of losing them?
- Do I dare to say what I think? Do I feel comfortable saying what I want? And refusing what I don't want?
- Am I afraid it will go too far, or further than I want it to go?
- Do I enjoy our physical contact, our touching each other?
- **Become aware of the IMPLICATIONS of their behaviours and EXTERNAL PRESSURES (if any)**
  - If I adopt a given behaviour, what will change? (for example, in the relationship)
  - What will happen? How will I feel?
  - How will other people react: peers, friends, family, etc.?
  - Am I subjected to external pressures that encourage me to adopt a given behaviour? Which ones? How do they influence me?
- Then, with the whole class, ask the students what the characters in each of the stories should do.
- Emphasize the following:
  - The characters have a greater chance of having safe, consensual and pleasant sexual experiences if they assert themselves and negotiate when it comes to adopting certain kinds of sexual behaviours ⇒ see the “Explanations concerning content” section, under the heading “Self-assertion and negotiation.”
  - Sexual behaviour in adolescence is new for them: they are experiencing a time of discovery, exploration and learning. As a result, they need to give themselves time to learn to know themselves and to know the other person. They also have the right to assert what they want and what they don't want and to learn from their experiences.

## CONCLUSION

- Conclude using **key messages**
- To have positive first sexual experiences, adolescents must make choices based on:
- self-knowledge
  - their relationship with the other person
  - an awareness of the implications of their behaviours
  - the ability to assert themselves and to negotiate

**APPENDIX 1: Stories and content references for the activity**

Stories (for students)	Content references for the activity
<p>I’ve had a crush on Hugo for such a long time. I never thought he would ask me out! He is so cute, and he’s older than me. We’ve been going out for three weeks. We went to the movies and he held my hand. Every night, we see each other at the park, and we kiss. I really like it! When we are standing up, he touches my butt while we kiss. It excites me.</p> <p>The other night, we went a little bit further. While we were kissing, he put his hand on my breast. I wasn’t sure I liked that, but I didn’t say anything to him. But when he put his hand down my pants, I stepped back and I said I had to go home. I don’t feel ready to go further, but I don’t know how to tell him. I love him and I wouldn’t want to lose him. He’s older than me and he has more experience.</p>	<p><b>Aim 1</b></p> <p><b>Motives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Romantic feeling</li><li>• Gradual exploration of sexual behaviour</li><li>• Feels “excited” when he touches her butt</li></ul> <p><b>Norms that have an influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has been going out for three weeks</li><li>• Older, very handsome partner</li></ul> <p><b>Aim 2</b></p> <p><b>Elements to be taken into account in making choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-knowledge: enjoys kissing and touching on top of clothing, but does not appreciate anyone touching her breasts and genitals</li><li>• Relationship with the other person: doesn’t feel comfortable expressing her limits, doesn’t know how to assert herself, is afraid of losing him</li></ul>
<p>There is a guy on social media I’m really interested in. In his photo, he’s very cute and he’s really popular! I’d really like him to notice me. My girlfriends encouraged me to post a sexy photo of myself. So I posted a photo of myself in a bathing suit on my profile.</p> <p>It worked because he asked me to send him more photos, sexier pictures. If I send him more photos, maybe he will ask to meet me. But at the same time, I’m hesitating. I’m not really the type to take sexy selfies. I’ve never done that. I’m afraid that he’ll share my photos. I don’t want them to be shared and I don’t want people to make fun of me.</p>	<p><b>Aim 1</b></p> <p><b>Motives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Romantic feeling</li><li>• Getting noticed and asked out by a potential partner, pleasing the partner</li><li>• Exploration of sexual behaviour (posting and sending sexy photos)</li></ul> <p><b>Norms that have an influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pressure from girlfriends to post a photo</li><li>• Very handsome, popular guy: positive judgment from others if he becomes her boyfriend</li></ul> <p><b>Aim 2</b></p> <p><b>Elements to be taken into account in making choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-knowledge: isn’t comfortable with taking sexy photos</li><li>• Relationship with the other person: wants to meet his request to impress him, doesn’t want to say no to him</li><li>• Anticipation of negative implications: afraid that her photos will be shared</li></ul>

My name is Gabrielle. I really liked Hakim and he really liked me too. We weren't officially together, but last night, we kissed. It was weird! I was stressed out; it was my first kiss. All my girlfriends have already kissed someone. I had to do it too. He leaned over me and planted his lips on mine. His nose was very cold. He stuck his tongue in my mouth. I played along, but I didn't feel comfortable. I didn't know what to do with my tongue. There was saliva everywhere! We mingled our tongues one way, then the other. I was afraid of not being good enough. I couldn't wait for it to be over, but I didn't know how to stop it.

And then something happened that made me feel really uncomfortable. I felt something push into my thigh. I realized it was his erect penis. It surprised me! I removed my lips from his right away. It was embarrassing for him, too. We haven't spoken to each other since.

I've always known that I'm not attracted to girls. There was one girl who kept hanging around me. My friends said she was crazy about me and they encouraged me to approach her. I didn't really know what to do. I was curious to find out what it would be like to kiss someone. Since she was interested, I thought I should try it. If I kissed her, maybe I would feel something for her.

One night at the skate park, while I was sitting beside her on a bench, I went for it. I took her by the shoulder and pulled her toward me. Our lips touched and our tongues mingled. After a few seconds, I felt nothing and I thought it was disgusting, I felt like stopping. We scraped each other's teeth. Why does everyone want to try it? Why do boys want to kiss girls? Why, in romantic movies, are the kisses always natural, spontaneous, passionate and all-consuming?

**Aim 1**

**Motives**

- Exploration of sexual behaviour: experimenting, because she has an "opportunity"
- Not officially going out together, but they "really like each other" (emotional commitment)

**Norms that have an influence**

- All her girlfriends have already kissed someone
- Wants to be "good at it": fear of not being good enough, of not knowing how to do it, feeling stressed

**Aim 2**

**Elements to be taken into account in making choices**

- Self-knowledge: didn't find it pleasant, felt uncomfortable with the kiss, felt embarrassed about the erection
- Relationship with the other person: didn't feel comfortable talking about the subject
- Perceived peer pressure

**Aim 1**

**Motives**

- Exploration of sexual behaviour: curiosity, experimenting, because he has an "opportunity" (girl who is hanging around him)
- Wants to test what he will feel with a girl by kissing her, looking for answers about WHO attracts him (sexual orientation)

**Norms that have an influence**

- Seizing the opportunity to kiss someone (peer pressure)
- "Idealized" images of kissing in movies: it's romantic, passionate, natural, spontaneous, easy, etc.
- Heteronormativity: boys should like girls; boys should like kissing girls

**Aim 2**

**Elements to be taken into consideration in making choices**

- Self-knowledge: not feeling attracted to the girl, feeling disgusted with the kiss, wanting to stop, not feeling comfortable with the kiss
- Relationship with the other person: relationship not developed enough to be open
- Perceived peer pressure to seize the opportunity

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<sup>6</sup> Fortenberry, 2010; Kirby, 2007.

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<sup>10</sup> Brooks-Gunn and Paikoff, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Fortenberry, 2010.

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## STBBIs AND PREGNANCY

Secondary IV

### Educational aims

- 1) Be familiar with the steps to take after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations
- 2) Identify strategies favouring safe sexual behaviours based on factors that influence your own ability to protect yourself

Estimated duration of the activity

225 minutes

### LEARNING ABOUT STBBIs AND PREGNANCY WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is an important transition period for learning and/or maintaining safe sexual behaviours.<sup>1</sup>

**Several factors increase the vulnerability of adolescents to STBBIs and pregnancy:**

- self-discovery, the search for identity and sexual orientation,<sup>2</sup> learning about sexuality (planning to have sexual relations, negotiating condom use,<sup>3</sup> asserting themselves in romantic and sexual relationships),<sup>4</sup> feelings of invulnerability, magical thinking,<sup>5</sup> a desire to take risks, thrill-seeking, bravado, the need to reassure themselves of their sexual maturity<sup>6</sup>
- starting to be sexually active at a younger age (longer exposure to risk),<sup>7</sup> having unprotected sex and several sexual partners<sup>8</sup>
- LGBT young people experiencing heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia, which can affect self-esteem and the ability to be self-assertive<sup>9</sup>

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS 15 TO 17 YEARS OLD

A Québec study shows that one young person in two has had sexual relations (oral, vaginal or anal)<sup>10</sup> between 15 and 17 years of age. Another study suggests that 30% of young people of this age have had sexual relations with penetration.<sup>11</sup> By the age of 16, 38.9% of young people claim to have had sexual relations with vaginal penetration.<sup>12</sup> This number increases to 68% among 18- and 19-year-olds.<sup>13</sup>

Adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 form one of the groups most at risk of contracting an STBBI:<sup>14</sup> cases of chlamydia among girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have risen more than 250% since 2006.<sup>15</sup>

- 59% of sexually active young people used condoms each time they had sexual relations,<sup>16</sup> while 10% have never used them.<sup>17</sup> The use of condoms tends to diminish<sup>18</sup> over time in adolescence, mainly owing to the use of oral contraceptives<sup>19</sup> or to having a regular partner.<sup>20</sup>
- Sexual behaviours in adolescence are characterized by their sporadic and unplanned nature,<sup>21</sup> which can have a negative effect on the adoption of safe practices.<sup>22</sup>
- Many young people who have not yet had sexual relations say that they are firmly in control regarding the use of contraception and communication with their partner.<sup>23</sup> This perception of control diminishes when young people become sexually active and are confronted with the difficulties of maintaining a relationship, and communicating and negotiating with a partner.<sup>24</sup>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Be familiar with the steps to take after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency oral contraception: consultation process</li> <li>Possible outcomes of pregnancy (abortion, continuing with the pregnancy with the intention of keeping the baby or giving the baby up for adoption): impacts and responsibilities of adolescent parenthood</li> <li>Testing for STBBIs: consultation process, physical and psychosocial consequences of STBBIs</li> </ul>	<p><b>STEPS TO TAKE AFTER UNPROTECTED OR POORLY PROTECTED SEXUAL RELATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Unprotected</b> sexual relations means that contraception and condoms were not used.</li> <li><b>Poorly</b> protected sexual relations means that, despite all the steps taken, contraception and condoms were not used effectively: forgetting to take the pill(s), delaying the injectable contraceptive or the changing of the contraceptive patch or vaginal ring, tearing or slipping of the condom, putting the condom on after penetration has begun or taking it off before ejaculation, etc.</li> <li>In the event of <b>unprotected</b> or <b>poorly</b> protected sexual relations, steps must be taken to deal with the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Emergency oral contraception: consultation process<sup>25</sup></b>  The emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) is commonly known as the morning-after pill. However, the ECP can be used up to five days (120 hours) after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sooner the ECP is taken after sexual relations, the more effective it is in preventing pregnancy. Out of 100 girls who use the ECP within 5 days of unprotected sexual relations, only 3% will become pregnant.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>The ECP interferes with ovulation. It is not a method of abortion; it acts before a fertilized ovum is implanted in the uterus. If a pregnancy occurred despite the use of an ECP, the developing pregnancy would not be interrupted, nor would the embryo be harmed.</li> <li>The ECP can be obtained at low or no cost from the school nurse, a youth clinic or a CISSS (CLSC). You can also obtain the ECP from a doctor (medical clinic, hospital, etc.), or a pharmacist without a prescription, although certain fees may apply.</li> <li>The use of the ECP seldom causes side effects. Even if it is used several times, it does not endanger health or fertility.</li> <li>The ECP does not protect against STIs. After using it, you must start or continue to use a contraceptive and, if necessary, be tested for STIs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Steps to take after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I forgot to take my pill yesterday. I’m not sure, but should we use a condom for the rest of the month?</li> </ul> <p><b>Emergency oral contraception</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The condom tore during sex. My boyfriend offered to come with me to see the school nurse the next day to get the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP).</li> <li>I think the condom slipped yesterday while we were making love. Should I take emergency oral contraception? How does it work? Can it also protect me against STBBIs?</li> <li>How can I get the morning-after pill?<sup>44</sup></li> </ul>



# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Possible outcomes of pregnancy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pregnancy test that reacts to the presence of pregnancy hormones in urine is required to confirm a pregnancy. A pregnancy test cannot be taken the day after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations: you must wait until the anticipated date of your next menstrual period for there to be enough hormones in your blood to be detected.</li> <li>• You can visit the school nurse to take a pregnancy test or you can buy one at the pharmacy without a prescription.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• Three options can be considered in the event of a pregnancy: abortion, continuing with the pregnancy with the intention of keeping the child or giving the child up for adoption.</li> <li>• Each option has consequences and repercussions. Adolescents must be able to explore these options in order to make their own decision. They therefore need to evaluate the impact of a pregnancy and a child in the various areas of their life: educational and professional paths, social life, romantic life, family life, financial situation, psychological aspects, etc.<sup>28</sup></li> <li>• Adolescents who are facing pregnancy can receive services in the health and social services system: help in making their decision,<sup>29</sup> help finding information about having an abortion,<sup>30</sup> support during their pregnancy, parenting education if they continue with the pregnancy and assistance with adoption.<sup>31</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Repercussions and responsibilities of adolescent parenthood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a child and becoming a parent has a major impact in the life of an adult, and even more so for an adolescent.</li> <li>• The consequences of adolescent parenthood vary among young people, who evaluate the potential outcomes of pregnancy based on how they anticipate the perceived consequences and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Consequences are experienced in physical, psychological, social, emotional, romantic, sexual, family and financial terms.<sup>32</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Possible outcomes of pregnancy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting pregnant would be an absolute disaster for me. It’s important for me to use condoms.</li> <li>• I can’t be pregnant, that’s not possible! What am I going to do? I don’t have any money, and my parents will be so angry.</li> <li>• Do I have to drop out of school if I get pregnant?</li> <li>• I’ve always wanted a baby. But not now. If a girl has an abortion, can still she have kids later?</li> <li>• If a girl gets pregnant, how many weeks into the pregnancy will it be too late to have an abortion?</li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible consequences of continuing with a pregnancy with the intention of becoming a parent include higher risks of complications with pregnancy and childbirth, higher risk of having an underweight baby, isolation from friends, potential difficulties and breakup with the partner, difficult relationships with family, risk of dropping out of school and psychosocial problems, challenge of balancing an adolescent life with parental responsibilities, risk of poverty, etc.<sup>33,34,35</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Screening for STBBIs</b><sup>36</sup> <i>Consultation process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people can get tested for STBBIs by a health professional when they have had unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations (whether or not they have symptoms). <b>The health professional evaluates the need to proceed with tests.</b></li> <li>Young people have access to free STBBI screening tests with their school nurse (if authorized to administer tests), at their local youth clinic or CLSC, or at a medical clinic. Anyone 14 years of age or older can get an STBBI test without their parents' consent.</li> <li><b>These tests do not make it possible to find out if you are free of all STBBIs. They are limited in scope because some STBBIs (e.g. herpes and HPV infection) cannot be detected when there are no symptoms. Although screening tests are essential to ensure no STBBI has been contracted as the result of risky behaviours, they do not guarantee that a person is 100% "safe."</b></li> <li>To limit the consequences of undetected and untreated STBBIs, it is important to get tested as quickly as possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical and psychosocial consequences of STBBIs</b> STBBIs have different repercussions or consequences in the lives of young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Immediate:</b> Worrying about contracting an STBBI, taking steps to get tested, various feelings (e.g. embarrassment, shame, anger, distrust, decreased self-esteem, disgust, guilt, doubt, fear of contaminating someone else)</li> <li><b>Short-term</b> (when you are infected by an STBBI): Experiencing certain symptoms</li> </ul>	<p><b>Screening for STBBIs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I had sex without a condom. It was the first time! I don't think there was any risk, but I'm still worried. Should I go see a health professional?</li> <li>I'd like to know more about screening tests (how do they work, how old do you have to be, and what are they used for?).<sup>45</sup></li> <li>Who can perform STBBI tests?<sup>46</sup></li> <li>Do STBBI tests hurt?</li> <li>I'd like to know what I can do to get tested without my parents knowing. I'd also like to know how it's done.<sup>47</sup></li> <li>When you get tested for an STBBI at a gynecologist's office or a CLSC, how long does it take before you get the results?<sup>48</sup></li> <li>I'm embarrassed to go see the nurse. Will I have to tell her all the details about my sexual experience?</li> <li>Who can perform STI screening tests?<sup>49</sup> Where do I have to go?</li> <li>I read that you can catch an STI by giving a blow job. How can this STI be detected? Where does it show up? In the mouth? On the genitals?<sup>50</sup></li> </ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

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<p>2) Identify strategies favouring safe sexual behaviours based on factors that influence your own ability to protect yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk factors: peer and social pressure and norms, nature of the sexual activity with the partner, questions regarding your own sexual orientation, difficulty accessing resources</li> <li>Protection factors: individual responsibility, desire to adopt and maintain safe sexual behaviours, shared responsibility (to protect yourself and to protect the other person), personal values (self-care and care for the other person, safety, equality, exclusivity)</li> </ul>	<p>(when there are symptoms present), waiting for the test results, having to inform your partner(s), fear of transmitting STBBIs even when there are no symptoms and even if you do not know if you are infected, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Long-term:</b> Without treatment, certain STBBIs can cause severe complications. Gonorrhea and chlamydia are major causes of pelvic inflammatory disease and sterility.<sup>37</sup> If chlamydia goes untreated, one out of five cases evolves into an inflammation of the sexual organs, and one out of four people affected by this kind of inflammation is likely to develop serious complications that may lead to infertility. Some STBBIs, such as herpes and syphilis, may triple one’s risk of contracting HIV.<sup>38</sup> HPV can cause condylomas (genital warts) and cancers.</li> </ul> <p><b>STRATEGIES FOR SAFE SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS AND THE ABILITY TO PROTECT YOURSELF</b> Safe sexual behaviours prevent STBBIs and unplanned pregnancies.<sup>39</sup> These behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>postponing and planning first sexual relations</li> <li>using condoms correctly in all sexual relations</li> <li>using a contraceptive method correctly in all sexual relations</li> <li>avoiding concurrent sexual partners (having several partners at the same time)</li> <li>decreasing the frequency of sexual relations</li> <li>reducing the number of sexual partners</li> </ul> <p>Different factors influence adolescents’ ability to protect themselves. When these factors are present, adolescents’ perception of control and sense of self-efficacy will enable them to overcome obstacles to protecting themselves.</p> <p><b>Risk factors</b> Factors that increase the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy in the context of sexual relations include:</p>	<p><b>Strategies for safe sexual behaviours</b></p> <p><i>Risk factors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matthew says he doesn’t like wearing a condom. He says that we don’t need one. He goes to CEGEP, so he must know what he’s talking about.</li> <li>I’m gay. I’ve always used protection with girls, but yesterday, I had sex for the first time with a guy. It was the first time I really clicked with a guy. Everything happened so fast that we didn’t use a condom for the blow job.</li> <li>I don’t think that young people need to protect themselves. We haven’t had a lot of partners. We’re not really at risk.</li> <li>All my girlfriends told me not to take the pill because it makes you gain weight. I don’t think I should use it.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Norms and peer pressure</b>  For example, young people tend to be less careful about protecting themselves when they believe that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they are not at risk for STBBIs, they don't like condoms or their partner doesn't want to use condoms, their male friends don't protect themselves the way their female friends do, the pill causes weight gain</li> </ul> </li> <li> <b>Norms and social pressure</b>  For example, young people believing that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at their age, they are not at risk for STBBIs; carrying condoms means being perceived as promiscuous; most young people their age have already had sexual relations</li> </ul> </li> <li> <b>Nature of the relationship and age difference between the partners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being in a stable, exclusive, egalitarian relationship reduces the risks (e.g. the age difference between two partners may give rise to a relationship based on pressure and power).</li> <li>Having casual sexual relations (friend with benefits, ex-partner) or one-night-stands is usually perceived as a higher risk for young people. Non-exclusivity with a partner, serial monogamy (a series of partners over a brief period of time) and concurrent partners also increase the risks.</li> </ul> </li> <li> <b>Exploring and questioning your sexual orientation</b>  Some adolescents question their sexual orientation or are uncomfortable with the gender to which they are attracted. If they have the opportunity to have sexual relations, whether with young people of the same sex or of the opposite sex, preventing STBBIs and pregnancy may not be the focus of their concerns, since the need to validate their sexual orientation may be of greater importance. </li> </ul>	

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Difficulty accessing resources</b> Difficulty accessing protection methods such as condoms or contraception (e.g. not having access to a health professional, not having the money to buy condoms) is an obstacle to adopting safe sexual behaviours.</li> </ul> <p><b>Protection factors</b> Your capacity to protect yourself depends on recognizing and taking individual responsibility, and on sharing this responsibility with your partner.</p> <p><b>Individual responsibility</b> Everyone is responsible for adopting and maintaining safe sexual behaviours. Your ability to take responsibility is influenced by your personal perceptions, beliefs and attitudes, including the following:<sup>40</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perceiving yourself to be at risk for STBBIs and pregnancy</li> <li>seeing the negative consequences of a pregnancy and an STBBI in your life</li> <li>believing in the effectiveness of contraception and condoms and intending to use them</li> <li>believing that your peers, partners and parents support the use of condoms and contraception</li> <li>believing in your ability to use condoms and contraception, despite any obstacles (e.g. self-assertion and asserting your intentions, bringing up the subject)</li> </ul> <p><b>Willingness to adopt and maintain safe sexual behaviours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When faced with obstacles to adopting safe sexual behaviours, it is the willingness to adopt them and the ability to maintain them that allow you to deal with these issues. Your <b>perception of control and sense of self-efficacy</b> determine your ability to protect yourself. The more motivated you are to adopt a behaviour, the more you feel in control of yourself and the situation, and the easier it is to assert yourself and cope</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protection factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He said that condoms don't fit him, so he doesn't use them. At the time, I froze. But I told him it was important to me.</li> <li>My partner told me that he could pull out before he ejaculated so that I wouldn't get pregnant. It stresses me out. I told him so and suggested we use a condom.</li> <li>My partner told me she hates condoms. I don't dare tell her that I absolutely want to use them. Even though I'm afraid of how she'll react, I'm going to keep some in my bag for the next time.</li> <li>I trust my partner, but I have doubts about whether he is faithful. How can I talk to him about it? I don't want to get any STBBIs.</li> <li>My girlfriend was really frustrated with me yesterday. I refused to have sex with her because we didn't have any more condoms. I'm not sure what to do anymore, but I think I did what's right for me.</li> <li>My partner is on the pill. I wonder if she takes it every day. I have no control over how she takes it. How can I be sure without her thinking I don't trust her?</li> </ul>

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	<p>with the unexpected. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adopting safe sexual practices even if your partner does not perceive the risks or see the importance of avoiding STBBIs and pregnancy</li> <li>○ broaching the subject of protection with a partner who does not talk about it</li> <li>○ taking the steps to obtain condoms despite any embarrassment</li> <li>○ refusing to have unprotected sexual relations even if you love your partner</li> <li>○ interrupting a risky sexual behaviour even if you are highly aroused</li> <li>○ asking to use a condom even if you know your partner does not like to use them</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>perception of control</b> means regarding a behaviour as easy or difficult to adopt. More specifically, it is the view young people have of the power they hold over situations that helps them determine whether or not to adopt safe behaviours. This view is based on past experiences and anticipated obstacles.<sup>41</sup> In other words, does the young person perceive that they have <b>power</b> over a situation and their behaviours, and that they will be capable of taking action?</li> <li>• A <b>sense of self-efficacy</b> refers to a young person's confidence in their abilities to adopt safe behaviours or deal with different situations that create obstacles. This feeling is based on the person's resources and previous experiences.<sup>42</sup> In other words, does a young person have <b>confidence</b> in their abilities despite the obstacles?</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsibility of the other person and shared responsibility</b></p> <p>The responsibility of protecting yourself from STBBIs and pregnancy must be <b>shared</b> equally between partners, which requires:<sup>43</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recognition of your responsibility:</b> Partners must be aware of the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy, be concerned with adopting safe sexual behaviours and value the involvement and protection of the other partner (e.g. sign of responsibility and maturity, sign of respect for yourself and respect for the other person)</li> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> Partners must talk about contraception and condoms, bring up the topic and discuss why it's important for them, what they want, what either of them can do about it, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'd like to start taking the pill and I want to talk about it with my mom. I'm afraid of how she'll react. I went to see the nurse for some advice.</li> <li>• My partner doesn't want to use condoms, but it doesn't bother me. I know I'll be able to convince her, because I've always worn condoms with all my other partners.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reciprocity:</b> Even though certain roles are carried out differently depending on the partners (e.g. girls use contraception and experience pregnancy), each partner must play their role and recognize that the responsibility must be shared.</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal values</b>  Personal values have an impact on how responsibilities are taken and safe sexual behaviours are adopted. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-care: Wanting to protect your health and respecting your reasons why, expressing your feelings, etc.</li> <li>• Care for the other person: Wanting to protect the other person’s health, caring for the other person, recognizing the value and integrity of the other person</li> <li>• Safety: Valuing self-protection methods given the risks associated with sexual behaviours</li> <li>• Equality: Considering both partners as equally responsible for adopting safe sexual behaviours, even if they play different roles at times</li> <li>• Fidelity: Considering that exclusivity between partners contributes to reducing the risks of STBBIs</li> <li>• Commitment: Communicating, sharing responsibilities, being mutually involved in self-protection</li> <li>• Freedom: Choosing an appropriate contraceptive and protection method, talking about your choices, exploring and experiencing your sexuality with peace of mind and with pleasure when you protected, etc.</li> </ul>	



## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### HAVE AN ACCURATE PERCEPTION OF THE SEXUAL AND PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOURS OF ADOLESCENTS

- Sexual relations can occur spontaneously and unexpectedly. Discussions about safe sexual behaviours and the prevention of STBBIs and pregnancy must take place BEFORE young people become sexually active.<sup>51</sup>
- According to a 2010-2011 study conducted in Québec secondary schools, about half of all adolescents will have engaged in at least one consensual sexual relation—whether vaginal, oral or anal—by the end of Secondary V.
  - The proportion of adolescents who have already engaged in a sexual relation increases by grade:<sup>52</sup>
    - 25% in Secondary I and Secondary II
    - 29% in Secondary III
    - **40% in Secondary IV**
    - 52% in Secondary V
- Condoms and oral contraception (the pill) are the most frequently used contraceptive methods among Québec adolescents (56% and 68% respectively).<sup>53</sup>
- A high percentage (90%) of sexually active young people between the ages of 15 and 24 usually use a contraceptive method.<sup>54</sup> The withdrawal method (coitus interruptus), though recognized as being ineffective for preventing pregnancy, is nonetheless used by some (17% of Canadian girls aged 15 to 19).<sup>55</sup> Other methods (e.g. patch, vaginal ring, injectable contraceptive, IUD) may also be used by young people, but their use has yet to be well documented.
- A Québec study reports that over two-thirds (68%) of secondary students aged 14 or older used a condom during their most recent consensual vaginal sexual relation. This proportion is higher among boys than among girls (75% and 62% respectively). The proportion of young people who used a condom during their most recent vaginal sexual relation decreases by school year, dropping from 83% in Secondary I and Secondary II to 67% in Secondary IV.<sup>56</sup>

#### TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT ABOUT HALF OF ALL STUDENTS HAVE NOT HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS

When talking about the steps to take after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations, take care not to pressure young people by giving them the impression that all adolescents have already had sexual relations, that they are all sexually active or that some sexual behaviours are common at their age.<sup>57</sup> It is important to:

- reassure them by explaining that many adolescents their age have not yet had their first sexual relation (e.g. refer to statistics about the sexual relations of adolescents in Secondary IV)
- use language that allows students to feel involved, whether or not they have had sexual relations (e.g. “when you decide to have sexual relations, it is important to . . .”)

#### PRESENT APPROPRIATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS OF ADOLESCENTS AT THIS AGE

It is preferable not to bring up certain sexual practices at the outset (e.g. cunnilingus, anal penetration, sharing of sex toys) to avoid exposing students to realities that are beyond their needs or their psychosexual development. It is possible to make them aware of the risks without detailing all sexual practices. If some students ask questions about these sexual practices, or refer to or engage in more suggestive sexual practices:

- Invite these students to ask their question privately, on an individual basis, so as not to expose the entire class to sexually explicit content and to maintain confidentiality.
- Suggest that students consult a health professional to learn more about the risks of STBBIs (e.g. sharing sex toys) and the methods to prevent STBBIs.

### USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE WITH REGARD TO SEXUAL DIVERSITY

All young people need to be informed about contraception, STBBIs and condoms, regardless of their sexual orientation or their partner's sex.<sup>58</sup> Some young people identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, question their sexual orientation or have experimented with sexual activities with people of the same sex. These young people must feel that the activity is relevant to them:

- Use inclusive language so that everyone feels they are being addressed (e.g. use the word “partner” instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend”).
- Explain that sexual relations between persons of the same sex can still carry the risk of STBBIs, even if they do not involve the risk of pregnancy.
- Use language that focuses on **risky and safe sexual behaviours** rather than on sexual **orientation** or groups of individuals.

### BE AWARE OF THE OBSTACLES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE FACE WHEN ACCESSING SERVICES

Young people encounter certain obstacles when taking steps after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations.

- Faced with the prospect of taking these steps, young people report that they:<sup>59</sup>
  - do not know which services they can access
  - do not know where to get screening or pregnancy tests
  - have difficulty obtaining an appointment (limited hours in walk-in clinics)
  - do not have time
  - feel afraid, ashamed or uncomfortable talking about their sexual activities
- However, young people have a high rate of satisfaction with the services received for their most recent STBBI test. They appreciated that the doctors or nurses provided answers and explanations that they could understand, that their confidentiality was respected and that they did not feel they were being negatively judged based on their sexual life.<sup>60</sup>
- A number of false beliefs held by young people about emergency oral contraception, such as the timeframe for taking the ECP, impede its use as a method to avoid pregnancy: 7 young women out of 10 (71%) think that the “morning-after pill” is only effective if it is taken within 24 hours of unprotected sexual relations.<sup>61</sup> Also, many young people wrongly believe that the ECP acts as an abortive agent and causes side effects.<sup>62</sup>

### UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES OF PREVENTING PREGNANCY IN ADOLESCENCE

- More often than not, pregnancy in adolescence is unplanned. Young people faced with pregnancy have a difficult choice to make and require guidance and support. It is therefore important to make young people aware of the implications of pregnancy and adolescent parenthood without, meanwhile, taking on a moralizing tone. As an adult, it is important that you:
  - clarify your own values (regarding pregnancy, adolescent parenthood, abortion and adoption) to understand the impact of your sexuality education activities
  - present the real consequences of the possible options so that the students can gain awareness of them and make more informed choices (present facts rather than your opinions)
  - inform young people of the appropriate resources in the health and social services system.<sup>63</sup>
    - Support in making their decision<sup>64</sup>
      - Free abortion, in all regions of Québec, before the 12th week of pregnancy (Young people aged 14 years or older can have an abortion without their parents' consent, unless hospitalization for longer than 12 hours is required and the young person is a minor.)<sup>65</sup>
      - Support and accompaniment during a pregnancy and in learning to cope with adolescent parenthood
      - Help with adoption<sup>66</sup>

- Since the early 2000s, pregnancy and abortion rates among adolescents have dropped in Québec, as has the number of mothers under 20 years of age. Many new contraceptive methods have appeared on the market (patch, vaginal ring, hormone-releasing IUDs, new oral contraceptives, etc.), and access to these methods has been made easier. Although the majority (91%) of sexually active young people aged 15 to 17 usually use at least one contraceptive method,<sup>67</sup> some adolescents face unwanted pregnancies, the subsequent decision-making process and, in some cases, abortions.<sup>68,69</sup> In Québec, in 2015, more than 1000 adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 dealt with pregnancy, about 75% of them choosing to have an abortion.<sup>70</sup> These unwanted pregnancies demonstrate that, despite the widespread use of contraception, its effective use continues to be a challenge for young people<sup>71</sup> and prevention remains important.

#### **PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO BOYS WITH REGARD TO UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES**

- Boys have their own specific issues when faced with unplanned pregnancy. It is important to reach out to them by:
  - emphasizing that they have a role to play in preventing pregnancy, in particular by using condoms and getting involved with the choice of contraception
  - allowing them to express their potential reactions to an unplanned pregnancy and the possible consequences
  - telling them that paternity is an important undertaking: they should be able to decide and plan why, when and under what conditions they would want to become fathers

#### **REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos**

For information about **the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)**, refer to:

- The World Health Organization website (select News room > Fact sheets > Emergency contraception) at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/emergency-contraception>
- The Tel-Jeunes website (select All topics > Sex > Contraception > The morning after pill) at <https://www.teljeunes.com/Tel-jeunes-en/All-topics/Sex/Contraception/Morning-after-pill-ECP>

To learn more about **STBBI screening tests**, refer to:

- [\*The SexEducator Magazine #14 \(Winter 2010\)\*](#), produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and available on its website under Publications > Subjects > SexEducator

To learn how to address the topic of **STBBIs and the associated risk factors** in the classroom, visit:

- The Québec government website about STBBI prevention, specifically the sections “[I think I have an STBBI, what should I do?](#)” and “[How should I protect myself?](#)” at [http://www.itss.gouv.qc.ca/accueil\\_en.dhtml](http://www.itss.gouv.qc.ca/accueil_en.dhtml); the content in each of these sections is both concise and relevant

To read about the **impacts of pregnancy and parenthood** in adolescence, refer to:

- [\*The SexEducator Magazine #2 \(Winter 2006\)\*](#), pages 2-3, produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and available on its website under Publications > Subjects > SexEducator

#### **BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes**

##### **PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS**

An activity concerning pregnancy and STBBIs is necessary, but should never be the first activity of the year. An STBBI and pregnancy prevention activity should take place after you have led activities on “Emotional and Romantic Life” and “Sexual Behaviour.” These activities will have allowed students to discuss factors that can influence the adoption of safe sexual behaviours and the issues associated with sexual relations (e.g. peer pressure, social norms, consent, alcohol or drug use), sexual intimacy in adolescence and the prevention of violence in adolescent relationships.

### **BE FAMILIAR WITH THE PEDAGOGICAL BEST PRACTICES FOR PREGNANCY AND STBBI PREVENTION**

- Adopt an attitude that encourages young people to develop the necessary self-protection skills to adopt safe sexual behaviours and to guide them in making informed decisions should they choose to become sexually active.
  - Validate the choice of young people who want to abstain from or postpone sexual relations, while giving them information and helping them to develop the necessary self-protection skills for when they do choose to become sexually active.
  - Avoid making judgments about people with an STBBI or who are dealing with a pregnancy in order to avoid stigmatizing students.
- **Avoid presenting photos or images of the symptoms of STBBIs.** This practice triggers a wide range reactions, but is ineffective in encouraging young people to adopt and maintain safe sexual behaviours.
  - Most STBBIs are asymptomatic. Showing photos of symptoms may lead young people to believe that these types of symptoms must be detectable before they consult a health professional to get tested and, as a result, may cause them to delay their medical consultation. Despite the lack of visible symptoms, an infected person is contagious and can transmit the infection.
  - This practice may prompt students to react with disgust. Such a reaction stigmatizes classmates who have been infected by an STBBI or who know someone who has been infected, and this this could affect them psychologically.

### **BE FAMILIAR WITH AND INFORM STUDENTS OF THE CLINICAL PREVENTION SERVICES OFFERED IN THE SCHOOL OR IN THE COMMUNITY**

- Some school nurses are authorized to give out condoms, issue hormonal contraception or IUDs, and provide counselling on safe sexual behaviours. When consulted by students who have had unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations, the nurse can also:
  - provide the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP), at low or no cost
  - carry out screening tests, provide the results and initiate certain treatments
  - carry out a pregnancy test
  - refer students to the appropriate resources in the event of an unplanned pregnancy (e.g. help in making a decision, seeking an abortion)
- Screening tests are also available in CLSCs, many clinics and at a doctor's office. The type of test to be administered depends on the STBBIs being screened: some require samples of urethral or vaginal secretions, while others require urine or blood samples. The nurse or the doctor will decide on the type of test and where the samples should be taken from (genitals, anus, throat). The results are conveyed by a health professional either in person or by telephone.
  - Treatments for bacterial STBBIs (e.g. chlamydia, gonorrhea) are free for individuals with a health insurance card. In some cases, the same treatment may even be administered directly at the school, if the nurse is authorized to do so.
- The ECP is also available at low or no cost in pharmacies.

**NOTE:** For up to seven days following unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations, another highly effective emergency contraceptive option is also available: the “emergency IUD” (copper IUD). A nurse or a doctor can inform adolescents about the emergency IUD. However, it is not easily accessible because an available doctor who can insert it must be first found.

**STARTING AT AGE 14,** young people can consult a health professional (nurse, doctor) in complete confidentiality (without their parents being notified). They can therefore consult a health professional without parental consent, whether to access contraception or emergency contraception or to undergo screening tests.

#### For parents

- Sexuality education is more effective when there is collaboration between the school and the family. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process undertaken in school regarding the prevention of STBBIs and pregnancy. In fact, adolescents who can communicate with parents about sexuality and contraception also tend to have better communication with partners about protection and contraception before initiating sexual relations.<sup>72</sup>
- Parents can communicate their opinions, values and limits as well as encourage their adolescents to reflect on the responsibilities that come with becoming sexually active and the importance of choosing the right moment to become parents. You can refer parents to the above-mentioned sites as well as to the following bulletins:
  - The Mozaïk project, available on the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > Le Bulletin – Involving parents in their children’s sex education > English), includes the following three bulletins in connection with the educational aims of this content:
    - **No. 16** “[How do I talk to teens about their first sexual experience?](#)” (the most relevant at this level)
    - **No. 17** “[How do I talk to my child about contraception?](#)”
    - **No. 18** “[How do I talk to my child about condoms?](#)”

#### GATHER MATERIALS

- Order materials that are free, available and intended for young people (e.g. STBBI pamphlet; see the “Refer to Resources” section).
- Be familiar with the preventive clinical services that are provided in the school and in the community.
- Prepare a resource list for students (access to the emergency contraceptive pill, screening tests, etc.) and, when possible, invite the school nurse into the classroom to present the services offered in the school and in the community.
- Print out useful documents for the activities (questionnaire, newsletters for parents, resource list for students, etc.).
- After checking which mailings have been sent to parents, write and prepare material to email (message, links to websites, etc.), if documentation for parents is sent electronically.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken to continue increasing the students' awareness and responsibility regarding the prevention of STBBIs and pregnancies in Secondary Cycle Two should:

- reinforce individual values that promote safe sexual behaviours and skills in managing sexuality, sexual risks and practices<sup>73</sup>
- emphasize the use of condoms<sup>74</sup> and contraceptive methods in order to enable young people to reduce the possibility of pregnancy or STBBIs
- encourage the adoption and maintenance of safe sexual behaviours<sup>75</sup> by reinforcing young people's sense of self-efficacy<sup>76</sup> in asserting themselves and negotiating the use of a condom
- develop the motivations and skills required to judge the risks involved in different situations<sup>77</sup>

### Key messages

- After having unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations, you can turn to the ECP, a pregnancy test and an STBBI screening test.
- Having confidence in your abilities influences your capacity to protect yourself and to deal with the obstacles to adopting safe sexual behaviours, despite any associated challenges.
- It is essential for partners to share responsibilities and to communicate about sexual relations and protection.

### INTRODUCTION

- Outline the educational aims.
- Activate **prior knowledge** by:
  - reviewing the learning students have acquired in sexuality education in Secondary III about STBBIs, contraception and pregnancy
  - making connections between the themes “Emotional and Romantic Life” and “Sexual Behaviour” previously covered in Secondary IV and the theme of the current activity (e.g. young people may experience different realities in their romantic and sexual relationships, which can go on to influence their ability to protect themselves: thrill-seeking, peer pressure, a controlling relationship)
- Give a **brief introduction** using the following question:
  - What do you think it means for sexual relations to be unprotected or poorly protected? (e.g. methods used, what the partners have or have not done)

*Answer: **UN**protected sexual relations mean that contraception and condoms were not used. **POORLY** protected sexual relations mean that, despite all the steps taken, contraception and condoms were **not used correctly** and are therefore not completely effective: forgetting to take the pill(s), delaying the injectable contraceptive or the changing of the patch or vaginal ring, tearing or slipping of the condom, putting the condom on after penetration has begun or taking it off before ejaculation, etc.*

### ACTIVITY: SITUATIONS OF UNPROTECTED OR POORLY PROTECTED SEXUAL RELATIONS

#### To help students be familiar with the steps to take after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations (Aim 1)

- Tell students that they must take steps after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations. Present **situations** of **unprotected** or **poorly protected** sexual relations to allow them to learn about the steps they need to take:
  - Two partners had sexual relations and the condom slipped.
  - A boy and a girl had sexual relations without a condom. The girl realized she had forgotten to take her contraceptive pill.
  - Two partners had unplanned sexual relations. They did not have a condom and did not use contraception.
  - A young girl took a pregnancy test with help from the school nurse, and the result came back positive.
- Ask the students to identify, in each situation:
  - what they can do after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations (the steps they can take)
  - what the possible consequences are for the partners involved (e.g. feelings, steps to take, consequences of a pregnancy or an STBBI)

**NOTE:** There are different ways of working on these situations:

- presenting and discussing the situations as a class
- working in small groups
- writing the situations at the top of large poster boards displayed on the wall and having the students work in groups of 5 or 6 to write answers to proposed questions (perhaps using a stopwatch)

**Additional explanation:** If students want details about the situations (e.g. sex of the partners, sexual behaviours), explain that the goal is not to judge whether or not a situation involves risks, but to identify the steps to be taken after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations, regardless of the potential risks.

- Complete the students' answers by using the "Explanations Concerning Content" section outlined above regarding:
  - the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)
  - possible outcomes of pregnancy: abortion, continuing with the pregnancy with the intention of either becoming a parent or giving the child up for adoption
  - the impacts and responsibilities of adolescent parenthood
  - testing for STBBIs
  - the consequences of STBBIs
  - the obstacles to turning to the ECP and to STBBI/pregnancy tests (see the "Be aware of the obstacles that young people face when making use of services" heading in the "Taking Time to Reflect" section)
- Inform students of where they can receive these services and provide them with a list of accessible resources.
- Remind students that, starting at age 14, they are legally allowed to access health care in full confidentiality, meaning that their parents are not informed. However, it is preferable that they have their parents' support when they take these steps.



- Conclude this part of the activity with the following **key message**: Steps can be taken after unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations to reduce the risks of an unplanned pregnancy or STBBI.

### ACTIVITY: PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE YOUR ABILITY TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND ON STRATEGIES

#### To help students to identify the factors that influence their own ability to protect themselves (Aim 2):

- Begin the next activity with the following questions:
  - What safe sexual behaviours should you adopt to reduce the risks of STBBIs and unplanned pregnancy?  
*Answer: See the “Strategies for safe sexual behaviours and the ability to protect yourself” heading in the “Explanations Concerning Content” section above.*
  - Is it easy for young people to adopt safe sexual behaviours? Why?  
*Answer: Adopting safe sexual behaviours has its challenges. Guided by a desire for exploration, romantic feelings and pleasure in sexual relations, we sometimes forget the risks and responsibilities associated with sexual relations. Young people know the risks and know what to do but, for various reasons, either do not always protect themselves or do so inadequately.*
- Complete the answers by explaining the risk factors most often associated with adolescent behaviours (see the “Risk factors” heading in the “Explanations Concerning Content” section).
- Point out that these factors, as well as the ways of dealing with them, vary from one individual, relationship or context to another. Suggest that students reflect on those factors that influence **their own** ability to protect themselves (see questions in Appendix 1).
  - Electronic version: Ask each student to fill out an anonymous survey online (using free apps available on the Internet) or via an interactive polling system, if accessible.
  - Print version: Conduct a print survey and present the compiled results to the class.
- If the results underscore the norms of peers who **FAVOUR** adopting safe sexual behaviours (e.g. 90% of the students believe that their peers favour the use of condoms, but only 25% of students are “highly” aware of the risks of STBBIs), present the compiled results, or a portion of the results, to the class. This will enable students to recognize the influence of peer pressure and social norms.
- Lead a brief discussion to emphasize protection factors by asking students:
 

Among those identified in the questionnaire, which factor do you think is key for determining young people’s ability to protect themselves? For example, if you had to produce a slogan or a publicity campaign for young people to encourage them to protect themselves, what factor would you build on?
- If need be, complete the activity by naming the protection factors (see the “Protection factors” heading in the “Explanations Concerning Content” section).
- Conclude this part with the following **key message**: To protect yourself, you must recognize your own individual responsibilities as well as the fact that they can be shared through communication and reciprocity. You also have to deal with any potential obstacles. All of this is influenced by your personal values (give examples by referring to the “Explanations Concerning Content”).

#### To help students identify their personal strategies for adopting safe sexual behaviours (Aim 2):

- Using the following questions, ask students to define their personal strategies based on their reflection exercise on their ability to protect themselves:
 

*In light of the results I obtained about my ability to protect myself:*

  - What **elements help me** (my strengths) to adopt safe sexual behaviours? (e.g. I’m aware of the risks, I know where to get condoms)
  - What **challenges must I meet** (what I should improve) to adopt safe sexual behaviours? (e.g. I’m shy, but I’ll find ways of talking about safe sex)

- If you were your own best friend, what advice would you give yourself to prevent pregnancy and STBBIs?

## **CONCLUSION**

- Conclude with these **key messages**:
  - The ability to protect yourself depends on recognizing and owning your individual responsibilities, and sharing them with your partner.
  - Having confidence in your abilities influences your capacity to protect yourself and to deal with the obstacles to adopting safe sexual behaviours.

## APPENDIX 1

Evaluate your ability to protect yourself by indicating your level of agreement with the following statements.<sup>78</sup>

You can answer the following questions whether or not you have had sexual relations.

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Mostly agree	Completely disagree
<b>1. I am aware of the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I know that STBBIs primarily affect young people of my age; I know that I could get pregnant (or make someone pregnant); if I had sexual relations without using contraception, I believe that I could contract an STBBI if I did not use a condom.				
<b>2. I am aware of the consequences of STBBIs and pregnancy.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I think that an STBBI or a pregnancy would have negative consequences in my life; I'm not ready to be a parent; I don't want to live with the consequences of an STBBI, such as the fear of transmitting it to another person or having to tell a partner that I have one.				
<b>3. I know about STBBIs, pregnancy and how to protect myself.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I know how STBBIs are transmitted; I know that I increase my risk of STBBIs if I have several partners; I know how fertility works and how babies are conceived; I know about contraceptive methods and how they work; I know where to get condoms and how to use them; I know the sexual behaviours to adopt that carry fewer risks for STBBIs and pregnancy; I know where to get tested for STBBIs or pregnancy.				
<b>4. I believe in the effectiveness of condoms and contraception in preventing STBBIs and pregnancy.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I believe that condoms, when used correctly and at all times, are effective in preventing pregnancy and STBBIs; I believe that contraceptive methods are effective in preventing pregnancy; I believe that double protection (condoms and contraception) is the best way to prevent STBBIs and pregnancy.				
<b>5. I have positive attitudes toward condoms, contraception and safe sexual behaviours.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I believe that condoms are easy to use and to obtain, and that they have no side effects; I believe that contraceptive methods are effective and beneficial; I believe that the use of condoms and contraception does not take away from sexual pleasure; I believe that vaccination is a good method of preventing hepatitis and some types of HPV.				

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Mostly agree	Completely disagree
<b>6. I have confidence in my abilities to adopt safe sexual behaviours.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I would be able to plan my first sexual relations, and it would be easy for me to broach the subject and ask my partner to use a condom or contraception; I'm able to obtain condoms, to take one out of its wrapper during a sexual relation, to suggest using one to my partner and to put one on; I would be able to take the necessary steps, to choose and to use a method of contraception; I would be able to adopt sexual behaviours that carry fewer risks (e.g. mutual masturbation) if no means of protection were used; I would be able to consult a nurse or a doctor about my sexual health.				
<b>7. I am able to adopt safe sexual behaviours despite the obstacles.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I would be able to refuse or stop a sexual relation in the absence of contraception or a condom; I would be able to assert myself and to argue if my partner did not want to use a condom or contraception; I would be able to resist pressure from my partner to have sexual relations; I would be able to unwrap a condom and put it on even if I was very aroused; I would be able to use a condom or adopt sexual behaviours that carry fewer risks even if I had consumed alcohol or drugs; I would be able to take the necessary steps if I had unprotected or poorly protected sexual relations.				
<b>8. I believe that my parents are in favour of safe sexual behaviours.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I believe that my parents would agree that I should use condoms and contraception if I have sexual relations; I believe that my parents would be ready to help me to take the necessary steps to obtain contraception or condoms; I believe that my parents would approve of me carrying condoms with me.				
<b>9. I believe that young people my age are in favour of adopting safe sexual behaviours.</b>				
<i>Examples:</i> I believe that young people my age are in favour of using condoms and contraception; I believe that most young people my age use contraception and condoms when they have sexual relations; I think that young people my age carry condoms with them even if they are not sexually active; I believe that young people my age are aware of the risks of pregnancy and STBBIs.				

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<b>SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE</b>	Elementary 4
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Understand that the main changes associated with puberty are part of the process of growing up 2) Share your feelings about growing up	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b> <b>100 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS’ PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 8 TO 10 YEARS OLD</b>
<p><b>Learning about and appreciating their bodies are part of the developmental tasks of children and adolescents.</b></p> <p>Puberty is a stage of development<sup>1</sup> characterized by physical, emotional and social changes that prepare adolescents for reproductive and sexual functions.<sup>2</sup> These changes, visible to the people in their lives, may sometimes lead adults to consider them more socially, emotionally or cognitively mature than they actually are<sup>3</sup> and to modify the way they interact with them as well as their expectations of them.<sup>4</sup></p> <p><b>Puberty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes place with individual variations in the developmental process,<sup>5</sup> which can be shaped by factors such as personal context, sex, environment<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• is an essential step in developing romantic feelings and sexual behaviours:<sup>7</sup> the production of hormones, which influence when and how fast puberty will take place, results in an early and more intense onset of sexual interest and behaviours in some adolescents.<sup>8</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>The ability to adjust to pubertal changes depends on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when the first changes begin (young people who develop earlier or later than their peers report more negative feelings)<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• the order in which secondary sex characteristics appear (sequence) and the rate of development<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• social norms that dictate the ideals of beauty:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Boys who mature physically earlier on generally have a positive appreciation of their bodies;<sup>11</sup> however, they may also experience social pressure to achieve the perfect athletic build.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>◦ Girls who mature physically earlier more often develop a negative body image, in particular regarding the increase in body fat that often accompanies puberty.<sup>13</sup> Girls also appear to be teased more often by their peers.<sup>14</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p><b>Children 8 to 10 years old:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be starting to experience the first changes of puberty. Generally, girls begin puberty between the ages of 9 and 13, and boys, between the ages of 10 and 14.<sup>15</sup> Precocious, or early, puberty is when secondary signs of sexual maturity appear two years before the average age. In girls, precocious puberty begins at age 7 and in boys, at age 9.<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Understand that the main changes associated with puberty are part of the process of growing up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growing up: moving from childhood into adolescence</li><li>• Main physical and psychological signs of puberty</li><li>• Individual variations with respect to the timeline of changes</li></ul>	<p><b>CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH PUBERTY THAT ARE PART OF GROWING UP (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <p>Puberty leads to a number of physical and psychological changes. It is one of the main steps in human sexual development. It is the third period in life when the body grows a lot very quickly. The other two periods are the time spent in the mother's womb (pregnancy) and the first year of life.</p> <p><b>Growing up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puberty is an important stage of life for human beings: it marks the transition from childhood to adolescence.</li><li>• Entry into adolescence, between 8 and 10 years old, is also called preadolescence. It is a stage of growth at which a child's body starts to become an adult body.</li><li>• Puberty includes a series of changes that will eventually enable the person to reproduce.</li></ul> <p><b>Main physical signs (general)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth spurt (height, weight)</li><li>• Appearance of odours related to perspiration</li><li>• Appearance of pubic, underarm and leg hair</li><li>• Appearance of pimples (acne) on the face and body (back, chest)</li></ul> <p><b>Main physical signs specific to female bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of breasts, hips</li><li>• First menstruation (menarche)</li></ul> <p><b>Main physical signs specific to male bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Testicles increase in volume</li><li>• Growth of the penis (increase in size and volume)</li><li>• First ejaculation (spermarche)</li><li>• Voice changing</li></ul>	<p><b>Changes associated with puberty that are part of growing up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My brother's voice goes from deep to squeaky in the same sentence. It's so funny! But he doesn't like it when I laugh about it.</li><li>• Why do hairs start to grow at a certain age?<sup>17</sup></li><li>• What does it mean to get your period?</li><li>• I can't wait to have my growth spurt. I'm tired of being the shortest in my class.</li><li>• Sam is wondering: lately, his brother is always shutting himself in his room. Why? It's like he doesn't want to see Sam anymore.</li><li>• Why are people moody when they're growing up?</li><li>• Matthias can't wait to grow up.</li><li>• I've noticed that my cousin is different with his parents. He's more distant. Is that because of puberty?</li><li>• I've heard that women lose blood every month. Does it hurt?</li><li>• I like when my parents knock before coming into my room.</li></ul>

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

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<p>2) Share your feelings about growing up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive feelings: pride, excitement, independence</li><li>• Concerns or negative feelings: unease, embarrassment, shame</li><li>• Sharing of feelings with people you trust</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appearance of facial hair (moustache, beard)</li></ul> <p><b>Main psychological signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes in mood (e.g. mood swings, crying for no reason)</li><li>• Need to define oneself as a person (e.g. assert oneself, express one’s opinion).</li><li>• Greater need for independence (e.g. wanting to do things on one’s own)</li><li>• Greater need for privacy (e.g. undressing, going to the bathroom out of view of other people)</li><li>• Exploration of values and norms in the peer group (e.g. wanting to do the same things as one’s friends)</li><li>• Greater concern for one’s appearance and for what others think</li></ul> <p><b>Individual variations with respect to the timeline of changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Everyone develops at their own rate.</li><li>• Puberty usually begins between ages 9 and 13.</li><li>• Changes associated with puberty occur over a few years.</li><li>• Female bodies generally start puberty before male bodies.</li></ul> <p><b>FEELINGS ABOUT GROWING UP (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <p>People can have different kinds of feelings about growing up. Sometimes these feelings are positive, sometimes they’re negative, and sometimes they’re mixed. This assortment of feelings is completely natural. Learning to name and talk about them with trusted adults or peers (school staff, parents, friends) can help lessen fears and negative feelings.</p> <p><b>Positive feelings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pride in becoming stronger, in one’s muscles developing, in growing taller</li><li>• Excitement about all the new things happening</li><li>• Thrill with respect to the unknown, curiosity, wondering what one’s body will look like after it changes</li></ul>	<p><b>Feelings about growing up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I’m starting to grow hair on my arms and I smell bad when I sweat. It’s embarrassing.</li><li>• My breasts have started to grow. My mother bought me a training bra. I’m kind of proud.</li><li>• I’m already the tallest in my class. I’m not looking forward to puberty—I’m going to look like a giant!</li><li>• I’m uncomfortable talking about ejaculation and menstruation. It’s disgusting!</li><li>• I don’t understand myself anymore. Sometimes, I cry for no reason; five minutes later, I’m super happy.</li></ul>

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY**

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling of independence related to greater physical and emotional freedom (e.g. going places on one’s own, meeting up with friends at the park, making one’s own choices)</li><li>• Enthusiasm about the changes, desire to take care of one’s body</li></ul> <p><b>Concerns or negative feelings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discomfort with this different body (e.g. unequal growth of limbs, occasional pain due to bone growth)</li><li>• Unease related to bodily hygiene (e.g. menstruation, odour from perspiration)</li><li>• Disgust over bodily changes (e.g. odour from perspiration, menstruation to come)</li><li>• Embarrassment that others may be able to see bodily changes (e.g. acne pimples; nipples or spontaneous erection [penis becoming hard] visible beneath clothing)</li><li>• Shame or fear of being rejected by others because of early or late puberty</li><li>• Fear of not growing as fast as other people</li><li>• Confusion, ambivalence toward changes to come</li><li>• Dislike for one’s body (e.g. feeling that one is too fat, too tall, too thin)</li><li>• Worries or insecurities related to not having control over the imminent changes (e.g. not knowing when they will occur)</li><li>• Lack of understanding of contradictory emotions and ambivalent feelings (e.g. mood swings)</li><li>• Insecurities over having to make certain decisions (e.g. fear of making mistakes or bad choices)</li><li>• Fear of being rejected if one expresses opinions that are different from those of others</li><li>• Desire to remain a child, not wanting to become an adult too soon</li><li>• Despair in the face of all these changes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My big brother explained what puberty is. Now I have a better understanding of what’s going to happen.</li><li>• I’ve always been the smallest in my class. But I just had a growth spurt. I’m so happy!</li><li>• I’m afraid I’ll get my period at school. My big sister helped me prepare in case that happens.</li><li>• My father bought me my first deodorant. He let me choose a scent that I like. I’m proud to have my own deodorant. I feel big now.</li></ul>

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY**

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Sharing feelings with trusted people</b></p> <p>Puberty leads to many changes, feelings and questions. When children have people around them who they can talk to about their feelings, they are more likely to have an easier time going through puberty. This person may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a parent</li><li>• a family member (e.g. older brother or sister, cousin, aunt or uncle)</li><li>• a friend</li><li>• a trusted adult (e.g. teacher, special educator, counsellor, instructor, coach)</li></ul> <p>It's important for children to have someone they trust who can respond to their questions and concerns about puberty.</p>	

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### Understand different growth rates and children's different experiences of puberty

- The onset of puberty and the rate of development vary from one child to another. On average, puberty begins around age 11 for female bodies and around age 12 for male bodies, but changes associated with puberty can begin in Elementary 4, especially in female bodies.
- Some students may feel less concerned about pubertal changes than others. Addressing puberty at this age will prepare, reassure and enable them to experience this stage of their development in a more positive way.

#### Be sensitive to the diversity in children's experiences of puberty

- Every child experiences puberty in their own way. Some have many questions and concerns, while others look forward to the physical and psychological changes. These differences in students' development and experiences will colour the questions and concerns shared in the classroom.

#### Understand how much information to give about puberty

- In Elementary 4, teaching consists of a brief overview of the various changes caused by puberty. These **pubertal changes are named succinctly**. For example, it is sufficient to explain:
  - menstruation as a loss of a bit of blood from the vagina, **without** going into more detail
  - ejaculation as the liquid that comes out of the penis and which contains sperm, that is, the cells used to conceive a baby, **without** elaborating further
- Details on pubertal changes, the role of puberty and its connection to reproductive abilities will be covered in Elementary 5.

#### Understand the distinction between a person's sex, gender identity and gender expression

- Gender identity is different from sex.
  - Your **sex** refers primarily to the anatomic nature of your genitals or reproductive organs.<sup>18</sup>
  - **Gender identity** is the gender that you identify with, regardless of what appears on your birth certificate (sex assigned at birth); it is a deeply personal and intimate feeling. For this reason, only you can affirm your own identity (self-identification).<sup>19</sup>
- **Gender expression** is the way in which you **express** your gender identity to the outside world (e.g. clothing, appearance).

### REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

For information about **physical and psychological changes during puberty**, as well as the various repercussions, refer to:

- Pages 8 and 9 of the brochure [Transformations, Butterflies, Passions . . . and All Sorts of Questions](#), which can be downloaded from the [Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux](#) website, (under [Publications](#)) (accessed June 3, 2019)
- The [Caring for Kids](#) website, which provides information for parents from Canada's pediatricians, in the "Information for teens" section under the [Teen Health](#) tab, select [Growing up: Information for girls about puberty](#) and [Growing up: Information for boys about puberty](#) (accessed April 23, 2019)

- Robie H. Harris, *It's Not the Stork, A Book about Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families and Friends*, Candlewick Press, 2008 pp. 24-25-26-27, 54-55.  
<https://www.quebecreadingconnection.ca/book/it-s-not-the-stork-a-book-about>
- Robie H. Harris, *It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*, Candlewick Press, 2014.

## FOR PARENTS

Sexuality education is more effective when schools and families work together. Parents can play a complementary role in students' reflection on changes that take place during puberty and the feelings that come up. It is a good idea to inform parents about the content students will be taught concerning psychosexual development and about the complementary nature of their role as parents and that of the school in terms of sexuality education.

## BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes

### Plan the order in which the sexuality education content will be provided to Elementary 4 students

In Elementary 4, there is no specific order recommended for the content. However, considering the rate of development of children this age, it may be pertinent to address the theme of sexual growth and body image toward the end of the school year.

### Make connections between the content and other elements of the Québec Education Program

In Elementary Cycle Two, the Science and Technology program covers the sensory function of certain parts of the anatomy (skin, eyes, mouth, ears, nose). The content in this document falls under Living Things in this subject area.

## GATHER MATERIALS

- Prepare photos or images representing people at various stages of development: in the mother's uterus, newborn, early childhood, childhood, preadolescence, adolescence and adulthood.
- Set up a clothesline in the classroom with clothespins.

## ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES

### Get ready to answer students' questions

- To be better equipped to answer questions, refer to the document "Answering Student Questions" which provides keys to understanding and effectively answering students' questions. This document is produced by the Ministère and is available on Vibe.
- Prepare for students' reactions when sexual parts are named. Some students may be curious and enthusiastic, while others may be nervous or embarrassed. Be attentive; reassure children that it's natural to have these types of reactions to the material being discussed. Cultivate a climate that encourages self-expression and respect for each other's feelings.

### Approach growing up from a positive perspective

Present growing up in a positive light by explaining to students:

- that puberty is an important stage in a human being's life
- that growing up means developing as a person, making discoveries about oneself and about others
- that the changes produced will open up new possibilities (e.g. greater independence, more freedom)



**Highlight and normalize the diversity of rates of growth and associated experiences**

It's important to remind students that they are all unique, grow at their own rate and experience puberty in their own way, because at this age, both those who have started puberty and those who have not may feel isolated or different from others.

**Take early puberty into account**

Students who have already started puberty may be subject to teasing or gibes from other students, especially if the changes to their body are visible (breasts, acne, hair, etc.). Make sure these students are not targeted during activities, especially during group discussions. Remember that some students may be more mature physically than they are emotionally.

**Minimize practices where boys and girls are separated**

- This practice divides genders and places the emphasis on their differences. Moreover, a transgender child or a child who does not identify as a girl or a boy will wonder where they should go for activities where girls and boys are separated (entering the school, educational activities, etc.). There are other ways to separate children into groups. In situations where children must be separated by gender, make sure they can participate in activities according to their gender identity and gender expression.<sup>20</sup>
- Address children **using gender-neutral terms** such as “students, group, class, children” rather than “boys and girls.”
- Depending on the context, it may be necessary to explain to children, in simple language, the difference between sex and gender:<sup>21</sup> **sex** is determined by your body (sexual parts), while **gender** refers to how you feel in your head and in your heart.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Two should:

- familiarize students with the initial changes of puberty,<sup>22</sup> to allow them to become familiar with the bodily changes and new emotions that will arise as they grow up<sup>23</sup>
- take into account students who mature early, because some children who enter puberty early without being prepared will have a more negative experience of puberty<sup>24</sup>

### Key messages

- Puberty is a period of transition to adulthood. During these few years, the body gradually changes and transforms at a different rate for everyone.
- Puberty leads to physical changes (in the body) as well as psychological changes (in the mind). Some of these changes are more visible than others.
- It's possible to have positive, negative or even contradictory feelings toward growing up and the changes to come.

### BEFOREHAND

Propose an activity that involves parental collaboration.

- With a parent's help, students choose two or three photos of themselves or of a person they've seen grow up so that they can observe how they have grown.
- Invite students to identify the age shown in each photo and to name the changes they see from one photo to the next.
- These observations can lead to a discussion between the student and their parent about how they have grown since they were born (changes in their body, in their abilities, etc.).

### INTRODUCTION

- Present the two educational aims to the students:
  1. Understand that the main changes associated with puberty are part of the process of growing up.
  2. Share your feelings about growing up.
- Review the discussion students had with their parents.
  - Invite students to present their photos (2 or 3) and to explain what they learned from their discussion with their parents (changes observed in growing up).

#### *ACTIVITY: INTRODUCE THE THEME OF GROWING UP*

**To enable students to understand that the main changes associated with puberty are part of the process of growing up (Aim 1)**

- Invite students to take out their photos.
- Install a clothesline in the classroom and explain to students that it represents a person's life: from the beginning, in the mother's uterus, up to adulthood. Between these two extremities, human beings grow and develop, going through various stages.
- Ask students to present their photos and, taking turns, to state their age in the photo. Then, invite students to pin the photos on the timeline (clothesline) with a clothespin.
- Lead a discussion on growth and growing up, using the following questions:
  - What has changed since you were born? (starting to walk, toilet training, noticing how you've grown, noticing teeth coming in and hair growing, etc.)
  - What could you do on your own at age 5 (kindergarten) that you couldn't when you were 3?
  - What can you do now (on your own) that you couldn't do before? (riding a two-wheeled bike, going to a neighbour's house on your own, taking care of your personal hygiene, choosing your own clothes, etc.)
  - What has stayed the same? (eye colour, certain personality traits, needing your parents' help for certain things, etc.)
  - Have you noticed any similarities or differences in other children the same age? (differences in size, body shape, appearance, etc.)
  - What are the ages when we grow the most or when changes are most visible?
- Add photos of adolescents and adults to the clothesline.
- Identify the different stages of human development (baby, early childhood, childhood) and those that are ahead (preadolescence [preteens], adolescence, adulthood) by situating examples given during the discussion.
- Identify factors that foster healthy growth: taking care of one's body, good hygiene, healthy diet, sufficient sleep, physical activity, drinking water, asserting and respecting one's needs (review content covered in Elementary 2 under the same theme).

#### *ACTIVITY: DISCUSSION ON CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH PUBERTY*

- Ask the students:
  - "What do you know about puberty?"
  - "What word or idea do you have in mind when you hear the word 'puberty'? What do you think of?"
- Reassure students if the term "puberty" doesn't mean anything to them or if they don't know what it means. They will learn about it in the next few activities.
- Write students' answers on the board, dividing them into two categories: physical (body) and psychological (head/heart).
- Give a short presentation about puberty using PowerPoint or a video. Here is one example:

- Go to the [Niagara Region](#) website (under Health and Safety > Schools > Teaching Tools > Grade 4 Puberty) and click on [Changes in Puberty \(essential\)](#) and download the [Changes in Puberty PowerPoint Presentation](#) (accessed April 25, 2019)

When selecting a PowerPoint presentation or a video, **keep in mind the following criteria:**

- Use simple images (e.g. do not use complex diagrams or images that are overly detailed)
  - Avoid images that are too explicit and that could cause students to become unsettled or overwhelmed (e.g. real photos of adult genitalia)
  - Keep to the prescribed content (that is, a **basic overview** of pubertal changes, **without going into detail**)
- Review students' impressions and comments about the video.
  - Ask students about the changes shown in the PowerPoint presentation and in the video, should you decide to show one, and write their answers on the board, adding to the answers to the two questions at the beginning of the activity.
  - If needed, complete the list with the changes (physical and psychological) described in the "Explanations concerning content" section.
  - Go back to the clothesline and situate puberty on the timeline.

#### *ACTIVITY: DISCUSSION ON FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGES IN PUBERTY*

**To help students become aware of their feelings about growing up and enable them to share these feelings if desired (Aim 2)**

- Give each student a list of various possible feelings and invite them to identify, on their own, how they feel about puberty.
- Lead a short reflection using some of the following questions:
  - How do you feel about growing up?
  - What do you think of puberty?
  - How do you feel about what will happen during this time (or about what has already started to happen)?
  - What are some of the different feelings people might have toward puberty?
  - Are you looking forward to puberty? Are there any changes that you are eager to experience?
  - Are there any changes that you are not looking forward to?
  - Without naming anyone, do you know anyone who is already going through puberty? How do they feel about it?

## POSSIBLE OPTIONS

Here are some activities that can be suggested to students:

- Create a written production or a group painting (e.g. poster board) with the title, “For me, puberty is . . ., and it makes me feel . . .,” to describe the feelings that students have toward puberty.
- Write a letter to someone they know to explain how they feel about puberty.
- Create a work of art depicting feelings associated with puberty. Each student identifies the feeling(s) they have toward the approach of puberty (or the experience of puberty, if it has already started). Then, they express these feelings through the artistic medium of their choice (painting, collage, crafted object, sculpture).
- Choose or develop emojis illustrating various feelings related to puberty.

## CONCLUSION

Remind students that:

- Since birth, their body has been changing, growing and developing. Puberty is an important stage in human life; it prepares the transition to adulthood.
- Most adolescents experience the same changes but at different rates: some earlier than others. There are physical changes (in the body) and psychological changes (in the head and heart).
- Some changes are visible to others (e.g. height) while other changes are not (e.g. development of genitals).
- Feelings about growing up can vary greatly: everyone is unique and experiences puberty at their own rate and in their own way.
- These feelings may be positive, negative, mixed or contradictory.

Ask students to identify people they can confide in to share their feelings, questions and concerns (at school or around them).

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<b>SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE</b>	Elementary 6
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<b>Educational aim</b>	1) Discuss the importance of adopting a positive attitude toward your changing body and the diversity of body types	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b> <b>100 to 150 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 10 TO 12 YEARS OLD</b>
<p><b>Learning about and appreciating their bodies are part of the developmental tasks of children and adolescents.</b></p> <p>Puberty is a stage of development<sup>1</sup> characterized by physical, emotional and social changes that prepare adolescents for reproductive and sexual function.<sup>2</sup> These changes, visible to the people in their lives, may sometimes lead adults to consider them more socially, emotionally or cognitively mature than they actually are<sup>3</sup> and to modify the way they interact with them as well as their expectations of them.<sup>4</sup></p> <p><b>Puberty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes place with individual variations in the developmental process,<sup>5</sup> which can be shaped by factors such as personal context, sex, environment<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• is an essential step in developing romantic feelings and sexual behaviours:<sup>7</sup> the production of hormones, which influence when and how fast puberty will take place, results in an early and more intense onset of sexual interest and behaviours in some adolescents<sup>8</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>The ability to adjust to pubertal changes depends on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when the first changes begin (young people who develop earlier or later than their peers report more negative feelings)<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• the order in which secondary sex characteristics appear (sequence) and the rate of development<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• social norms that dictate the ideals of beauty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Boys who mature physically earlier on generally have a positive appreciation of their bodies;<sup>11</sup> however, they may also experience social pressure to achieve the perfect athletic build.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>○ Girls who mature physically earlier more often develop a negative body image, in particular regarding the increase in body fat that often accompanies puberty.<sup>13</sup> Girls also appear to be teased more often by their peers.<sup>14</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>At age 10 to 12:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Children</b> have generally started maturing physically.<sup>15</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Girls:</b> budding breasts are the first sign of development, followed by the appearance of pubic hair and their first menstruation (menarche), after a growth spurt (height, weight and body fat).</li> <li>○ <b>Boys:</b> testicles increase in volume (age 11 to 12), followed by the appearance of pubic hair, around age 12. The ability to ejaculate occurs at around age 13 to 14, after which the voice changes and facial hair begins to grow in.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Children</b> progress cognitively, developing a greater capacity for abstract thinking, better regulation of their behaviours and improved focus.<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>



**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY**

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Discuss the importance of adopting a positive attitude toward your changing body and the diversity of body types.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding the changes that will take place throughout puberty</li><li>• Variations in timing and pace of development</li><li>• Individual differences in body types</li><li>• Factors that determine your appearance: genes, heredity, diet, environment, lifestyle habits</li></ul>	<p><b>IMPORTANCE OF ADOPTING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE</b></p> <p>Adopting a positive attitude about one’s body contributes to self-esteem. A child’s attitude toward their body is influenced by their capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand the changes that will take place throughout puberty</li><li>• recognize that their body will develop at its own rate</li><li>• recognize the diversity of body types</li><li>• accept that some factors that determine their appearance are out of their control</li><li>• recognize that they can act on some factors that affect their appearance and improve their health</li></ul> <p><b>Understanding the changes that will take place throughout puberty</b></p> <p>When children understand and accept the bodily changes associated with puberty, and even recognize them as a good thing, they develop a more positive self-image. To accept these changes, children need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand what is happening to them (e.g. they need to have adequate information, be reassured about the changes they’re experiencing, and receive answers to their questions or concerns)</li><li>• manage these changes using the appropriate and necessary means (e.g. sanitary napkins, deodorant, hygiene products for the face)</li><li>• give themselves time to get used to the changes in their body, which will continue throughout puberty</li><li>• adjust their perceptions of their body (e.g. see their body as it is, learn to appreciate this new body, recognize its abilities, understand the reasons for pubertal changes)</li></ul>	<p><b>Importance of adopting a positive attitude</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alice knows that her body will change. She’s looking forward to it.</li><li>• Marie is proud of how much she’s grown over the past year.</li><li>• Philip’s moustache is just starting to show and it makes him feel more mature.</li><li>• My breasts have started to develop. That’s normal.</li><li>• Joshua’s voice has started to change, but not mine. We have a lot of fun fooling around with our voices when we’re together.</li></ul> <p><b>Understanding the changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emma was wondering about menstruation, especially when it will start. She talked about it with her mother and the school nurse. Now she feels reassured and knows what to do when the time comes.</li><li>• William has started to get acne and it makes him uncomfortable. But he knows that it’s a common occurrence during adolescence, and that his older brother used a cream to control it.</li><li>• Florence and Jacob, who were in Elementary 6 last year, gained weight over the summer. They were worried about going into secondary school because of what the other students would say. They both understand that these changes are part of growing</li></ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Variations in timing and pace of development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Female bodies usually begin puberty before male bodies. On average, puberty begins around age 11 for female bodies and around age 12 for male bodies. This gap in physical and cognitive development may explain differences in children’s levels of maturity.</li><li>• Hormone production associated with puberty regulates the timing and pace of the pubertal development of each person;<sup>17</sup> as a result, individuals progress through puberty at their own rate.<sup>18</sup> Every child develops at their own rate.</li></ul> <p><b>Individual differences in body types</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From an early age, children become aware that their body, and everyone else’s body, is unique. However, in a context where social norms provide and promote criteria for what is beautiful and attractive, whether explicitly or implicitly, children can feel the need to conform to these norms and demonstrate concern about their body. Social comparisons<sup>19</sup> play a greater and greater role in pre-adolescence.</li><li>• There is no perfect body. Everyone’s body is unique. When the diversity of body types is valued, it is easier to adopt a positive attitude about one’s own body.</li></ul> <p><b>Factors that determine your appearance</b> Physical appearance is determined by several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of these factors are beyond the person’s control, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Hereditary factors (e.g. genes from the parents determine a person’s eye, skin and hair colour, as well as their body type)</li></ul></li></ul>	<p>up. In the end, they both adapted to the changes and feel more comfortable in their bodies.</p> <p><b>Variations in timing and pace of development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At my age, my brother was a lot taller. But my friend Nathan is shorter than I am, and we’re just five days apart.</li><li>• I find my classmate Adrian to be a bit of a baby. I prefer to hang out with Matthew, who’s in Secondary I.</li></ul> <p><b>Individual differences in body types</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I saw on the Internet that in some countries, when a woman is heavier, she’s more attractive because she’s seen as being healthy.</li><li>• Even though I’m the same age as Marco, he’s taller and more muscular than I am, while I’m a faster skater. We each have our strengths.</li><li>• The other day during the graduation ceremony, I realized that there are many different types of bodies: the person in front of me was very tall and the person beside me was much smaller. Every person really is unique.</li></ul> <p><b>Factors that determine your appearance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In my father’s family, everyone is muscular. Maybe I’ll be like that too.</li><li>• I have blue eyes, like my mother.</li></ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ the onset and duration of puberty</li><li>● On the other hand, certain factors can be influenced by adopting healthy lifestyle habits. These are especially important at a time when the body is changing and has greater needs:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ diet (staying hydrated, eating healthy foods)</li><li>○ sleep (getting enough sleep)</li><li>○ physical activity (being active, doing sports, playing outside)</li><li>○ stress management (taking time for oneself, practising relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, mindfulness)</li><li>○ basic personal hygiene (washing hands, body and hair; brushing teeth; trimming nails)</li></ul></li><li>● A person's living environment also affects their lifestyle habits. Here are some factors that can help a person adopt healthy lifestyle habits:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ being able to cook and eat balanced meals</li><li>○ having easy access to drinking fountains</li><li>○ being able to do physical activities as a family or at school</li><li>○ having access to parks and sports facilities</li><li>○ having access to bike racks and a safe walking path for active transportation to school</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● My father has dark skin and my mother's is white. Mine is in-between.</li><li>● My cousin is the same age as me and she has already started getting her period. But not me. We're different.</li><li>● In my family, everyone has brown hair.</li><li>● I sleep eight hours a night, because I need it to be in good shape. My body is growing.</li><li>● I do various physical activities while my friend prefers relaxation activities. Both help us relieve stress, and that's good for our bodies.</li><li>● I like to be active and go outside every day. I need it to feel good.</li><li>● I shower every day now that I sweat more. My body is changing, so I have to pay more attention to my hygiene.</li></ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### Be sensitive to the diversity in growth rates and in children's experiences of puberty

- The onset of puberty and the rate of development vary from one child to another. Given that on average, puberty begins around age 11 for female bodies and around age 12 for male bodies, some students may already be experiencing pubertal changes in Elementary 6.
- Every student experiences puberty in their own way. Some have more questions and concerns, while others look forward to the psychological and physical changes and see them in a positive light. These differences in children's rates of development and experiences will colour the questions and concerns expressed in the classroom.

#### Remember that at this age, some children are dissatisfied with their body

- In Québec, 45% of 9-year-olds are dissatisfied with their figure, and by age 9, one out of three girls has already tried to lose weight.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore important to help students become aware of the factors that can affect the adoption of a positive attitude toward their body; keep in mind that their attitude toward both their own body and differences in body types is influenced by social norms.

#### Understand the distinction between a person's sex, gender identity and gender expression

- Gender identity is different from sex.
  - Your **sex** refers primarily to the anatomic nature of your genitals or reproductive organs.<sup>21</sup>
  - **Gender identity** is the gender that you identify with, regardless of what appears on your birth certificate (sex assigned at birth); it is a deeply personal and intimate feeling. For this reason, only you can affirm your own identity (self-identification).<sup>22</sup>
- **Gender expression** is the way in which you **express** your gender identity to the outside world (e.g. clothing, appearance).

#### Be aware that the arrival of puberty can be a challenge for some students whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth<sup>23</sup>

- Faced with the physical changes of puberty, especially the appearance of secondary sex characteristics, some trans youth may:
  - develop or experience an increase in feelings of aversion toward their body
  - experience discomfort or distress over the pubertal manifestations linked to their biological sex, which is in conflict with their gender identity (how they feel and define their gender)

## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

To summarize and remind students about the main **changes associated with puberty**, refer to:

- The pedagogical framework on the theme “Sexual Growth and Body Image” for Elementary 5 to highlight the main points.
- [Puberty in Guys](#) and [Puberty in Girls](#) on the [Teljeunes.com](#) website (English > All topics > Sex > Puberty in Guys/Girls) (accessed in May 2019).
- The [Kids Help Phone](#) website: search for “Puberty” (accessed in April 2019).
- The [Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada](#) website (main menu > Your Body > Puberty) (accessed in April 2019).

To understand and address **body image** with students, refer to:

- “[Positive Body Image](#)” on the [BodySense](#) website provided by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and the True Sport Foundation (under Athletes > Guys/Girls > It’s Your Body).
- The [Kids Help Phone](#) website: search for “Body Image” (accessed in April 2019).

**Note:** In Elementary 6, the concept of body image can be addressed succinctly. Content under the same theme in Secondary I delves into this issue in more detail and promotes deeper reflection on body image and the connection to norms present in the social environment.

## FOR PARENTS

Sexuality education is more effective when schools and families work together. To help parents support their children through puberty and in developing a positive self-image, invite parents to consult the following resources:

- [Mosaïk bulletin n° 10](#) produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux ([MSSS](#) > Publications > Sujets > Projet Mosaik > Bulletins > English > #10).
- [Transformations, Butterflies, Passions... and All Sorts of Questions: Parents' guide for discussing sexuality with their teens](#) ([MSSS](#) > Publications > search for “Parents’ guide”) (accessed in April 2019).

## BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes

### PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO ELEMENTARY 6 STUDENTS

This content can be offered as a complement to content under the theme “Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms” by making connections to the concepts of discrimination based on body type and respecting diversity.

### Make connections between this content and other elements of the Québec Education Program

- In Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC), under the theme “Individuals as members of society,” various avenues can be used to get students thinking about the diversity of body types, particularly by inviting them to:

- explain how members of a society have an influence on each other, with respect to how a person sees their own body and the bodies of others
- give examples of situations where the influence of a society's members has an impact on self-assertion
- explain how differences between people can be a source of enrichment or conflict
- give examples of people who are comfortable with their body
- name possible effects of prejudices, generalizations or stereotypes (discrimination, rejection, injustice, categorization, etc.)
- This content can be used with the **promotion of healthy lifestyle habits** (diet, physical activity, sleep, etc.). The document [\*Educational Success, Health and Well-Being: Effective Action in Schools\*](#) by the [\*Institut national de santé publique du Québec\*](#) includes information sheets on different subjects including healthy lifestyle habits: diet, physically active lifestyle, sleep, hygiene and oral health (accessed in April 2019).

## **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

### **Get ready to answer students' questions**

- To be better equipped to answer students' questions, refer to the document "Answering Student Questions," produced by the Ministère. It provides guidelines for answering students' questions and outlines the steps for formulating an answer: determine the type of question, validate the meaning of the question, ask the group (if applicable), and answer the question by informing, reframing, reassuring or encouraging reflection, according to student needs.

### **Be sensitive to and normalize the diversity of rates of growth and associated experiences**

- It's important to remind students that they are all unique, grow at their own rate and experience puberty in their own way. This is particularly important because children at this age are more likely to:
  - experience pubertal changes during the year
  - compare themselves to others and make judgments about the changes to their body

## **GATHER MATERIALS**

- Prepare the materials needed for the activity.
- Prepare a letter to parents (see "Refer to resources" section).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Three should:

- help students become aware of the changes that occur during puberty (children are more likely to be receptive to information when they are actually going through puberty)
- help students accept the changes that are taking place in their bodies<sup>24</sup> as this will promote a positive body image

### Key messages:

- Puberty leads to changes in the body. These occur gradually, at a different rate for everyone.
- It is easier to develop a positive attitude toward these changes when one understands and accepts them.
- Appreciating one's body is also a way of taking care of it.
- A person's appearance is determined by heredity, but it can also be influenced by factors such as environment and lifestyle habits.

### INTRODUCTION

- Review students' prior knowledge by asking them to name the various physical changes that are associated with puberty.
- Write their answers on the board. Complete any missing elements using the pedagogical framework from Elementary 5 on the same theme.
- Present the educational aim to the students: "Discuss the importance of adopting a positive attitude toward your changing body and the diversity of body types."

### PRESENTATION AND ACTIVITY

- Using slides or visual aids, present the "Explanations concerning content," making sure to cover the following aspects:
  - understanding the changes that will take place throughout puberty
  - individual variations in timing and pace of development
  - individual differences in body types
  - factors that determine your appearance: genes, heredity, diet, environment, lifestyle habits
- Propose an exercise, to be carried out in teams, where students will take on the role of experts helping young people their age. Hand out one scenario to each team. More than one team can work on the same scenario. Encourage students to find answers that are in line with **developing a positive attitude toward one's changing body and the diversity of body types.**
  - Scenario 1: A friend, the same age as you, wants to be taller. What do you tell him?
  - Scenario 2: A student your age is embarrassed about her breasts, which are starting to show. What do you tell her?



- Scenario 3: A classmate really likes a famous singer. But she’s upset because she doesn’t feel as pretty as the celebrity. What do you say to her?
- Scenario 4: A student in your class is uncomfortable about their weight compared to other students. What do you tell them?
- *Examples of the types of answers sought:* every person’s growth is unique, every person develops at their own rate, some factors are determined by our genetic make-up, human beings come in many different shapes and sizes, etc. It’s important to appreciate one’s body for what it is and what it enables one to do, to understand the physical changes that occur during puberty, to give oneself time to get used to these changes, to avoid comparing oneself to others, to take care of one’s body by accepting it and adopting healthy lifestyle habits, etc.
- Review each of the scenarios and provide any necessary clarifications, referring as needed to the “Explanations concerning content.”
- Discuss with students **the importance of adopting a positive attitude** toward one’s body and the diversity of body types. Guide students in discussing strategies for doing this, by going back to the answers given in the scenarios (for example, focusing on what one’s body can do rather than on one’s appearance, recognizing one’s qualities and talents, highlighting one’s skills, recognizing that all bodies are unique).
- Invite students to work in teams to find concrete ways to foster the **adoption of a positive attitude** toward one’s body and the diversity of body types. Various means can be used:
  - recording a video in the form of a positive ad
  - producing a slide presentation or a brochure
  - creating a poster of illustrated “tips”
  - composing a song or coming up with a slogan
- Ask the teams to present their projects each in turn. Review each project and provide any necessary clarifications.

## CONCLUSION

- End the activity by asking students to work individually to complete some of the following sentences:
  - Dear body, I like you because . . .
  - I’m proud because I have the physical ability to . . .
  - I’m skilled at . . . / I have a talent for . . .
  - I have a lot of creativity in . . .
  - I feel comfortable in my body when . . .
  - I take care of my body by . . .
  - My body is unique because . . .
- Conclude using the key messages.

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## SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE

Kindergarten

**Estimated duration of the activity**

**150 minutes**

### Educational aims

- 1) Identify the parts of the body
- 2) Give examples of what you can express and feel with your body

In kindergarten, the time devoted to the educational aims may be divided into several sessions.

### LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF CHILDREN’S PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 4-5 YEARS OLD

Children who know the parts of their body, including their sexual organs, are more likely to be proud of their bodies<sup>1</sup> and to develop a positive body image.<sup>2</sup>

**Children 4-5 years old:**

- Are aware of the sex associated with their anatomy<sup>3</sup> and begin to explore their gender identity<sup>4</sup> (feeling of belonging to a gender).
- Are curious about their body and about anatomical differences.<sup>5</sup>
- Recognize the different parts of the body and know their names and functions.
- Few children (about 10%) know the correct name for their genitals.<sup>6</sup> They notice that saying certain words related to sexuality or excretory functions causes people to react.<sup>7</sup>
- Some children start to develop a sense of modesty and to set limits, while other children expose their bodies to others (e.g. running naked in front of others, showing their private parts to other children, wanting to take a bath with others).<sup>8</sup>

## VISION OF THE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM

In order to respect the characteristics of the preschool education program, this pedagogical framework is slightly different from those developed for elementary and secondary school, in particular with respect to the section usually titled “Suggestions for the activity.” The activities proposed reflect children’s interests and questions. They are rooted in children’s everyday lives and their social, cultural and physical environments so as to foster their overall development.

The preschool education program stipulates that “Activities related to children’s concerns and interests are by nature cross-curricular. . . . They give children the opportunity to discover various means of expression and creation and to become aware of the different languages that support and construct learning. In addition, they foster the development of knowledges, behaviours and attitudes that help children do things methodically and exercise elementary forms of critical judgment of people and things.”<sup>9</sup>

As a result, the content in sexuality education offered to children in kindergarten must be integrated into everyday life in the classroom, in a context that is meaningful for five- and six-year-olds. This requires seizing the right moments, opportunities and authentic situations that give rise to a question, a concern or reflection so as to cover the content. The activities must respect the educational aim and the proposed content within a coherent context.

Here are some examples of everyday situations in children’s lives or at school that can be turned into opportunities:

- Children washing their hands (e.g. the importance of taking care of your body)
- A child who gets hurt (e.g. unpleasant sensations in your body)
- A child who returns from the bathroom without any underwear (e.g. privacy, private parts)
- A child who comes to school with new glasses (e.g. the importance of taking care of your body)

Children’s books are also a good way to introduce the content and begin a discussion with children. A list of suggested books is provided in the “Refer to resources” section. If additional books or resources are required to achieve the educational aims and to provide the content, it is important to make sure that the anatomical diagrams in these resources are adapted to the age of the children.

## BEFORE BROACHING THE SUBJECT WITH CHILDREN

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What children learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the children to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Identify the parts of the body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External parts: arms, head, buttocks, etc.</li> <li>• Internal parts: lungs, heart, stomach, brain, etc.</li> <li>• External sexual parts: vulva, breasts, penis, scrotum, testicles</li> <li>• Internal sexual parts: ovaries, uterus, vagina</li> <li>• Functions of the sexual organs: elimination, reproduction</li> <li>• Concept of private parts</li> <li>• Differences in people's bodies: shape, size, skin colour, etc.</li> <li>• Importance of taking care of your body: hygiene, body appreciation</li> </ul>	<p><b>PARTS OF THE BODY (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The human body is made up of thousands of parts (about 7500 parts in all<sup>10</sup>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ external parts (that you can see and touch) and internal parts (that are inside the body and that you can't see)</li> <li>◦ sexual parts that are used for reproduction (to conceive babies) and to eliminate waste from the body (e.g. urine)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>External and internal parts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parts are outside the body. You can see them. There are parts such as the arms, head, buttocks, legs, feet, hands, etc.</li> <li>• Some parts are inside the body. You can't see them. These are parts such as the heart, stomach, brain, intestines, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>External and internal sexual parts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parts of the body are called "sexual" parts, and you can see them: <b>vulva, breasts, penis, scrotum</b> (which contains and protects the <b>testicles</b>).</li> <li>• There are also sexual parts that you cannot see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>ovaries, uterus, vagina</b> (they are hidden, in the lower abdomen)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Functions of the sexual organs (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>penis and vulva</b> each have a tiny opening (called the urinary meatus) that is used to evacuate urine from the bladder. Their job is to eliminate certain kinds of waste from the body; in other words, they allow urine to leave the body.</li> <li>• Sexual organs such as <b>testicles, ovaries and the uterus</b> play an important role in reproduction, which is when adults make (conceive) babies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Starting in adolescence, the <b>testicles</b> produce sperm cells (spermatozoa). Sperm cells are needed to make babies.</li> <li>◦ The <b>ovaries</b> contain cells called ova. They're like tiny eggs and are needed to make</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Parts of the body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know where my heart is because I can feel it when it's beating really fast.</li> <li>• I know where my lungs are because I have asthma.</li> <li>• I have a penis and so does Daddy.</li> <li>• I have a vulva and my sister does too.</li> <li>• Testicles are fragile.</li> <li>• What's a vagina?</li> <li>• My big sister says that sometimes her breasts hurt. But I don't have any breasts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Functions of the sexual organs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are testicles for?</li> <li>• Babies come out of the vagina. My Mommy told me that when my brother was born.</li> <li>• Where does the pee come out of a girl?</li> </ul>

babies.

- o Both a sperm cell and an ovum are needed to make a baby. When the two are united, they can develop in the **uterus**, inside the body below the stomach. They develop into a fetus. As the fetus grows into a baby, the uterus stretches, a bit like when you inflate a balloon.
- In addition to the urinary meatus, the vulva has another opening which is the entrance to the vagina. The **vagina** is a canal that leads to the uterus. At birth, the baby leaves the uterus and goes through the vagina to be born.

#### **Concept of private parts**

- Sexual parts (internal and external) are private parts. They are the parts that are covered by your bathing suit: breasts, buttocks, vulva, penis and testicles.
- These are private parts that we don't show to other people. In certain situations and with certain people (e.g. parents, doctor), these parts might be seen in private, for example, when you're taking a bath at home, or when you change into your bathing suit in the locker room, or when a doctor or nurse has to examine your body.

#### **Differences in people's bodies (adapt to the language of children)**

- Every human being is unique. This means that every body is different.
  - o Some are big, some are small.
  - o Some have dark skin, some have paler skin.
  - o Some have sensitive skin, some have tough skin.
  - o Hair can be black, dark brown, light brown, red, blond, etc. It can be curly, straight, thick, thin, short, long, etc.
  - o Eyes can be blue, brown, almost black, green, etc. Some people wear glasses.
- There are many other traits that make us different from one another, making each one of us a unique human being among billions of human beings.
- Bodies have different sexual parts:
  - o Some bodies have a vulva, a vagina, ovaries and a uterus. These sexual parts are associated with the female sex.
  - o Some bodies have a penis, a scrotum and testicles. These sexual parts are associated with the male sex.
  - o Before puberty, all bodies have similar nipples. Starting in puberty, breasts develop.

#### **Concept of private parts**

- My father always tells me not to undress in the kitchen when we have visitors.
- When I go to the pool, my mother wraps a towel around me while I take off my bathing suit.
- Some boys pull down their pants when they pee. You can see their bum!
- Mommy says that my vulva is private.
- I got hit in the privates with a ball. My father explained that I had to let the doctor look at my testicles to check if I was injured.

#### **Differences in people's bodies**

- Alycia is the tallest in the class.
- Emma has curly hair, and mine is really straight.
- Alex went to the hospital to have an operation on his ears, because they were too big.
- My father's penis is bigger than mine because he's a grown-up.
- My sister and I have the same colour eyes.
- William and I are the same age, but he's shorter than I am.
- My friend has tanned skin, but my skin is white.
- I saw that Dylan has a device in his ear. It helps him hear better.
- My neighbour Thomas has small legs. He uses a wheelchair to move around.

<p>2) Give examples of what you can express and feel with your body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling: five senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing), emotions, sensations (pleasant or unpleasant).</li> <li>• Sharing your needs and wishes with others (e.g. friends, adults in your life, etc.): expressing yourself when sensations and feelings are pleasant or unpleasant; saying no and talking to an adult when you do not like a physical contact or being touched, or when you feel uncomfortable.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Importance of taking care of your body (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body needs several things to function and stay healthy: food, rest, hygiene, protection and, sometimes, healing.</li> <li>• To keep your body healthy, you have to take care of it. You can take care of your body in several ways: by maintaining good hygiene, by protecting your body from the cold or from getting hurt, by resting when you're sick, etc.</li> <li>• There are many things you can do to take care of your body: eat healthy foods, get enough rest and sleep, wash your body, brush your teeth and your hair, put on sunscreen, wear a sunhat, wear warm clothes when it's cold outside, treat your injuries, etc.</li> <li>• To prevent other people from seeing your <b>private</b> sexual parts, you wear a bathing suit, get undressed alone in your room, close the door to the bathroom, say no if someone tries to touch them, etc.</li> <li>• Taking care of your body also means liking and accepting your body. Your body is unique in the world. It enables you to do many things. You can be proud of it.</li> </ul> <p><b>WHAT YOU CAN EXPRESS AND FEEL WITH YOUR BODY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When children become aware of what their body allows them to express and feel, it is easier for them to share their needs and wishes with others.</li> <li>• It also enables them to seek help in case of need and makes them more inclined to talk to a trusted adult. Children who can recognize what their body is feeling, who can express what they feel and express their needs are better equipped to report a situation that makes them uncomfortable.</li> <li>• The body is extraordinary: it is used to feel, express and do many things.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feeling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>five senses</b> are: taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. They are useful for feeling many things. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Taste is used to savour food that you like, or makes you grimace when you eat something that you don't like. It allows you to appreciate flavours that are salty, sweet, bitter or spicy.</li> <li>◦ Touch allows your body to enjoy a warm blanket when it's cold or a hug from</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Importance of taking care of your body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I take a bath every day. I don't like it, because it means I have to stop playing.</li> <li>• When my teeth are brushed, it tastes good.</li> <li>• We often go cycling as a family. My parents say it's important to be active.</li> <li>• Sometimes I just pretend to wash, but my mother always knows!</li> <li>• This summer, I got a sunburn. It really hurt. After that, Mommy made me wear sunscreen.</li> <li>• My neighbour broke his arm. The doctor put a cast on it so that it can heal.</li> <li>• My parents say that eating vegetables is good for you.</li> <li>• I don't like cutting my nails, but my father says you have to cut them every now and then.</li> <li>• When I go boating with Grandpa, I have to wear a life jacket.</li> </ul> <p><b>What you can express and feel with your body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I eat a blueberry, it tastes sweet.</li> <li>• I like my milk cold, not hot.</li> <li>• I don't feel well when I'm sick. I hate having a stomach ache.</li> <li>• I like it when Mommy cuddles up with me at night to read me a story.</li> <li>• It tickles when an ant crawls on my arm. I like it. But my brother hates it.</li> <li>• I'm happy when I see Daddy arrive at the daycare to pick me up.</li> <li>• I don't like having sticky hands when my mother gives me mango for my snack.</li> <li>• I like lying in the snow and looking up at the sky.</li> <li>• I like it when Grandpa takes me in his arms.</li> <li>• I don't like it when my mother untangles my hair. It</li> </ul>
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	<p>someone you like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Smell allows you to notice comforting smells such as your favourite food being prepared, but also to protect yourself (e.g. recognizing the smell of smoke or a skunk).</li> <li>o Sight enables you to judge distances and avoid obstacles when you move about, but also to admire beautiful landscapes and look at the people around you.</li> <li>o Hearing enables you to listen to music, to have a conversation with your friends and to hear the siren of a fire truck.</li> <li>• <b>Emotions</b> are the body's reactions to express what we are experiencing (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear). They can arise at any time, without warning. Our emotions are visible through our expressions and gestures, and can be heard in our tone of voice. Our body reacts to emotions (e.g. tears in our eyes when we're sad), sometimes with gestures that we can't control (e.g. fear makes us jump).</li> <li>• <b>Emotions</b> cause us to act. They enable us to react properly to the situations we face (e.g. fear has a protective function: when there's danger, fear causes us to react and to run away).</li> <li>• <b>Emotions</b> can produce reactions in our body. Emotions can vary in intensity (from light to intense). The five main emotions and the reactions they produce are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fear: I get out of breath, my pulse accelerates, my knees tremble, I shiver, etc.</li> <li>o Anger: my features become tense, my cheeks turn red, my fists clench, my voice gets louder, etc.</li> <li>o Joy: I talk fast, I jump, I smile, my heart beats faster, etc.</li> <li>o Sadness: I cry, my throat tightens, I curl up, etc.</li> <li>o Disgust: I grimace, I move away, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sometimes the <b>sensations</b> in your body are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <b>pleasant</b>: receiving a hug from someone you like, inhaling a comforting smell, tasting something sweet, feeling relaxed after a physical activity, hearing your parents sing, seeing your cat run toward you to play, etc.</li> <li>o <b>unpleasant</b>: feeling pain from an injury, being pushed, having your hair pulled, having a rock in your shoe, smelling a skunk, seeing scary pictures, hearing a sound that's too loud, tasting a piece of fruit that's gone bad, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>hurts!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My father washed my hair with a new shampoo. It smells nice!</li> <li>• I went swimming this afternoon, because my mother came to get me at lunchtime. I was really happy because it was too hot at school.</li> <li>• There was a spider on my foot. My sister screamed, because she doesn't like spiders.</li> <li>• I fell down in the schoolyard. I got hurt and my knee is all scraped.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Sharing your needs and wishes with others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your body feels many things. Some sensations are pleasant and some are unpleasant.</li><li>• You have a right to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ express pleasant sensations and feelings</li><li>◦ express unpleasant sensations and feelings</li><li>◦ say no to a touch or physical contact that you don't like</li><li>◦ talk to an adult if you feel uncomfortable or when you feel the need</li><li>◦ ask your questions</li><li>◦ have your privacy respected (going to the bathroom alone, not changing in front of other people, refusing a hug, etc.)</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Sharing your needs and wishes with others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Samuel knows that he can go see Ms. Martin if he's feeling upset about something.</li><li>• I told Jacob that I don't like it when he holds my hand in line.</li><li>• When I'm sad, I talk to my father. He listens. I feel better after.</li><li>• I told my mother that I don't like my new shoes because they hurt my feet.</li><li>• I asked Ms. West if I could go wash my hands, because they were all sticky.</li><li>• I told Ms. Reeve that I like rest time after lunch.</li><li>• When I was sick, I asked my grandma to rock me.</li><li>• Thomas always wants to hug me. I don't like it. I want him to stop.</li><li>• Noah sticks his head under the stalls in the bathroom to see people when they're on the toilet. I asked him to stop, but he keeps doing it. I told Ms. Tabor about it.</li></ul>
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## BEFORE BROACHING THE SUBJECT WITH CHILDREN

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with children

#### Place this content in the context of children's psychosexual development

- At this age, children are naturally curious about the body's sexual parts, their functions, and differences between bodies.
- As children learn about social norms, they develop a greater concern for modesty, which helps them set limits (e.g. closing the bathroom door so that others can't see them). It is important to respect this need for privacy.

#### Understand the importance of using the correct terms for sexual parts of the body to help children develop an appreciation of their body<sup>11</sup> and a positive body image

- Using the correct terms to talk about body parts with children (including sex organs) allows them to be proud of their body.<sup>12</sup>
- Using the correct terms to refer to sexual parts is the foundation for future sexuality education<sup>13</sup> and appears to have a positive impact on children's attitudes toward their own sexuality.<sup>14</sup>

#### Be aware of how this content can help identify and prevent sexual assault involving children

- Knowing their body, using the correct terminology to talk about it, and recognizing pleasant or unpleasant sensations helps prevent sexual assault<sup>15</sup> while broadening the vocabulary that children can use to ask questions about sexuality.<sup>16</sup>
- Children who lack knowledge about sexuality are more vulnerable to situations of sexual assault.<sup>17</sup> Knowledge of the names for the sexual parts facilitates their reporting of sexual assault,<sup>18</sup> because children are able to describe inappropriate actions using the right words. When children do not know the correct terms for sexual parts, they have a harder time making themselves understood and getting positive support.<sup>19</sup>
- Children have to know that sexual parts are private and that they can refuse any contact that makes them uncomfortable: saying no, screaming, running away, looking for help and talking to an adult are self-defence strategies that will be taught in Elementary 1 under the theme of preventing sexual assault. They can also be presented to children in kindergarten.
- However, everything does not hinge upon children's ability to say no to assault and report it: the people in the children's lives (adults in the school, parents and family) must protect them and provide a safe environment. Among other things, children should have a safe space where they can speak freely. It is important for children to be able to count on the helpful attitudes of parents, adults and professionals who can provide support and understanding, regardless of when the incident is reported.
- One study showed that aggressors avoid children who know the correct terms for sexual body parts because these children are more likely to have been educated about personal safety and sexuality.<sup>20</sup>

#### Understand the distinction between a person's sex, gender identity and gender expression

- Gender identity is different from sex.
  - A person's **sex** refers primarily to the anatomical nature of a person's genitals or reproductive organs.<sup>21</sup>
  - The **sex assigned at birth** is based on the doctor's observation of the baby's genitals. The doctor ticks either M (male) or F (female) on the birth certificate. The doctor's decision becomes the person's legal **sex assignment**.<sup>22</sup>
  - **Gender identity** is the gender that a person identifies with, regardless of what appears on the birth certificate (sex assigned at birth); it is a deeply personal and intimate feeling. For this reason, only the person can affirm their own identity (self-identification).<sup>23</sup>
- **Gender expression** is the way in which a person **expresses** their gender identity to the outside world (e.g. clothing, appearance).

- “Children may begin to explore their **gender identity** between the ages of 3 and 7. This is part of a natural process of self-determination and gender affirmation. This is the stage when children may first question why their **gender assigned at birth** differs from the **gender identity** they feel. They may feel ashamed of these feelings and try to hide or ignore them.”<sup>24</sup>

For information on how teachers should approach this issue, see the section “Adopt appropriate attitudes” under the heading “Be prepared.”

## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

Here are some **recommended books** to use with the children. If these titles are not available, choose books that:

- show different types of bodies
- show images that are appropriate for children’s psychosocial development (e.g. no hairy or adult sex organs)
- do not convey stereotypes
- use the correct terms for body parts (avoid colloquial terms such as *pecker*, *buns*)

### About the human body

- To identify the parts of the body (Aim 1) and to give examples of what you can express and feel with your body (Aim 2), refer to the suggested books, questions and activities from the “Sexual Growth and Body Image” [book web](#) on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website (under K/ELA > Kindergarten and ELA Book Webs > Kindergarten and Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Education Book Web Kindergarten – Sexual Growth and Body Image):
  - [Healthy Kids](#) by Maya Ajmera, Charlesbridge, 2013.
  - [My Body](#) by Andrea Pinnington, Scholastic, 2012.
  - [I Touch](#) by Patrick George, PatrickGeorge, 2013.
  - [Happy](#) by Mies van Hout, Lemniscaat, 2012.
- Other books about the human body:
  - [It’s Not the Stork](#) by Robie H. Harris, Candlewick Press, 2008, pp. 18-19.
  - [Amazing You!](#) by Gail Saltz, Dutton Children’s Books, 2005.

### About personal hygiene

- [Whiffy Wilson: The Wolf Who Wouldn’t Wash](#) by Caryl Hart, Hachette, 2012.
- [It’s Useful to Have a Duck](#) by Isol, Groundwood Books, 2009.
- [King Bidgood’s in the Bathtub](#) by Audrey Wood, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1985.

### About how to voice needs and wants

- [Love Makes a Family](#) by Sophie Beer, Dial Books, 2018.
- [Poor Louie](#) by Tony Fucile, Candlewick, 2017.

**FOR PARENTS**

- Sexuality education is more effective when there is collaboration between the school and the family. Parents have many opportunities to help their children use the right words and can continue the discussion about human bodies, how to take care of them and how to express feelings. It is a good idea to inform parents about the content being covered in class and the words children are being taught to use to name body parts.
- Invite the students to tell their parents about the activities carried out in class about the human body.
- Resources for parents include the children’s books listed above, as well as the following:
  - [Mosaïk: Promoting Healthy and Responsible Sexuality Bulletin #1 “Girls’ and boys’ bodies”](#) on the [Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux](#) website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mosaik > Project Mozaïk – Le Bulletin > English)
  - [Mosaïk: Promoting Healthy and Responsible Sexuality Capsule #2 “How do I answer questions about sex?”](#) on the [Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux](#) website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mosaik > Project Mozaïk – La Capsule > English)
  - [How to talk about sexuality with your child](#) on the [Naître et grandir](#) website by the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon is designed for parents (under Understanding psychosocial development)

**BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes**

**PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED IN KINDERGARTEN**

- This content can be presented **before** content under the theme “Pregnancy and Birth” because it will allow children to learn about the sexual organs involved in reproduction (e.g. ovaries, uterus, testicles).

**MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE CONTENT**

Depending on the activities chosen, various competencies from the preschool education program will be developed:

Competency 1: To perform sensorimotor actions effectively in different contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To broaden his/her repertoire of actions (to pay attention to his/her sensory and bodily reactions)</li><li>• To recognize ways to ensure his/her well-being</li></ul>
Competency 2: To affirm his/her personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To increasingly meet his/her physical, cognitive, emotional and social needs</li><li>• To share his/her tastes, interests, feelings and emotions</li><li>• To show autonomy (to make choices on the basis of himself/herself and the environment)</li><li>• To develop self-confidence</li></ul>
Competency 3: To interact harmoniously with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To show interest in others (to recognize their physical, social and cultural characteristics; to recognize his/her differences from and similarities to others)</li></ul>

Competency 4: To communicate using the resources of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To show interest in communication (to start and maintain a conversation; to adhere to the subject of a conversation)</li> <li>• To understand a message (to express his/her understanding of information received)</li> <li>• To produce a message (to organize his/her ideas; to use appropriate vocabulary)</li> </ul>
Competency 5: To construct his/her understanding of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To exercise thinking in a variety of contexts (to observe, explore, ask questions, make and test predictions)</li> <li>• To organize information (to express what he/she knows; to seek, select and exchange information)</li> <li>• To describe his/her learnings</li> </ul>
Competency 6: To complete an activity or project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To become involved in the project or activity, drawing on his/her resources</li> <li>• To show tenacity in carrying out the project or activity</li> </ul>

#### GATHER MATERIALS

- Prepare the materials needed for the activity (relevant picture books, anatomical diagrams, etc.). **Criteria for choosing visual aids:**
  - Use simple illustrations (e.g. do not use complex diagrams or images that are overly detailed)
  - Avoid images that are too explicit and that could cause children to become unsettled or overwhelmed (e.g. real photos of adult genitalia, hairiness, etc.)
  - Keep to the prescribed content, that is, the anatomical structures presented in the content above.

#### ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES

- **Be attentive to children’s reactions.** Some children may be curious and enthusiastic, while others may be nervous or embarrassed. Be attentive; reassure children that it’s natural to have these types of reactions to the material being discussed. Cultivate a climate that encourages self-expression and respect for each other’s feelings.
- **Use the correct terms.** Some children may use popular terms to refer to sexual parts (e.g. wiener). If these terms are used, make sure to clarify the information and review the correct terms, as well as the importance of using them. Along the same lines, avoid asking children to list all the terms they know for naming sexual parts: this could normalize their use and broaden the children’s vocabulary of popular words, which the children will be tempted to repeat (to provoke laughter or a reaction). If a child uses one of these terms, simply reformulate what they said, using the appropriate term.
- As much as possible, **minimize practices where boys and girls are separated.** This practice divides genders and places the emphasis on their differences. Moreover, a transgender child or a child who does not identify as a girl or a boy will wonder where they should go for activities where girls and boys are separated (entering the school, educational or recreational activities, etc.). There are other ways to form groups of children (e.g. children born from January to June and children born from July to December; those who ate cereal for breakfast and those who ate toast). In situations where children must be separated by gender, make sure they can participate in activities according to their gender identity and gender expression.<sup>25</sup>
- Address children **using gender-neutral terms** such as “students, group, class, children” rather than “boys and girls.”
- Depending on the context, it may be necessary to explain to children, in simple language, the difference between biological sex and gender:<sup>26</sup> your **sex** is determined by your body (sexual parts), while your **gender** refers to how you feel in your head and your heart (feeling like a girl, a boy, in-between, etc.).

## BROACHING THE SUBJECT WITH CHILDREN

Talking about body parts and sexual organs:

- allows children to satisfy their natural curiosity about their bodies and anatomical differences<sup>27</sup>
- teaches children the appropriate vocabulary for asking questions about sexuality<sup>28</sup>
- equips children to identify inappropriate touching (when children use the anatomically correct labels, including the correct terms to refer to sexual parts, they are able to make themselves better understood if they need to report a sexual assault)<sup>29</sup>

### Key messages for children

- The human body is made up of many parts.
- Some body parts are sexual and visible, such as the buttocks, the penis, the scrotum (which contains and protects the testicles), the vulva and the breasts.
- Some body parts are sexual and not visible, such as the ovaries, the uterus and the vagina.
- These sexual parts are private (personal) because we don't show them to other people.
- Every body is unique and different from other bodies.
- Your body enables you to feel and express many things.
- Your body has needs. It is important to listen to and take care of your body.

### EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS FOR ACHIEVING THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS

- A child's question about the human body, differences between bodies, etc.
- Reading a book on the topic (see the "Refer to resources" section for examples)
- Observing or hearing a situation during free play that is related to the content
- Applying learning from an activity about the five senses or about the body and how to take care of it (e.g. visit from a dental hygienist or a nurse who talks about hand-washing)
- Everyday situations or observations (e.g. a child who doesn't like to wash their hands, curiosity about other children's bodies)

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR IDENTIFYING THE PARTS OF THE BODY (Aim 1)

- Lead a discussion with the children using these questions:
  - Name different parts of the body that are outside your body (visible) and inside your body (not visible).
  - What are these different body parts for? (include sexual parts so as to present the human body as a whole)
  - How can we take care of our body?
  - Why is it important to take care of our body?

- Use anatomical charts, illustrations, picture books and posters to identify:
  - parts of the body (e.g. heart, buttocks, lungs) that are inside and outside the body
  - sexual parts:
    - external (visible): vulva, breasts, penis, scrotum (which contains the testicles)
    - internal (not visible): ovaries, uterus, vagina
  - sexual parts associated with the female sex and the male sex
- Refer to the “Explanations concerning content” section to:
  - describe the parts of the body and explain their functions (elimination and reproduction)
  - explain the concept of private parts
  - highlight the uniqueness of each body and the differences between bodies (height, hair and skin colour, eye shape)
- Have children brainstorm ideas of what they can do to take care of their body to keep it “happy.” You can write down their ideas and place them in a bag.
- Have children come up one at a time or in small groups to draw an idea from the bag and then act it out for others to guess.

#### *SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR GIVING EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU CAN EXPRESS AND FEEL WITH YOUR BODY (Aim 2)*

##### **To help children give examples of what they can express or feel with their body**

- Using a book (see the “Refer to resources” section), present the content indicated under “Explanations concerning content”: the five senses, emotions, feelings and sensations that are pleasant/unpleasant.
- Explore ways of expressing certain feelings and needs to various people, and complete the activity (see the section “Examples from the lives of children”) with symbolic play.
- Make an analogy between the body and an object (e.g. a car) to illustrate what the body needs to “work” well.
- Draw children’s awareness to what the body can feel, for example:
  - During a relaxation session in the classroom: This allows your body to rest and is a way of taking some time for yourself.
  - After a physical activity session outside: This makes you feel relaxed afterward, to warm up after being cold, to feel your lungs full of fresh air, etc.
  - By asking the children: What makes you feel good? Not so good?

##### **To have children talk about sharing their needs and wishes with others**

- When something makes you happy, who do you share your happiness with? How do you do this? (other emotions besides happiness can be used as examples)
- What can you do if you are uncomfortable about something?
- Who can you talk to if you experience something unpleasant (e.g. an unpleasant touch, an injury, sadness)?



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25. Adapted from: Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation, 2017, *Mesures d'ouverture et de soutien envers les jeunes trans et les jeunes non binaires, Guide pour les établissements d'enseignement*, <http://www.colloquehomophobie.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Brochure-Jeunes-Trans-Web.pdf>, accessed in September 2018.
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27. MELS, 2008; MELS, 2003; Arcand et al., 1998, cited in Agence GIM, 2011.
28. Wurtele et al., 1992; Wurtele, 1993.
29. Kenny and Wurtele, 2008; Boyle and Lutzker, 2005; Croteau et al., 1998; Wurtele and Owens, 1997; Elliot, Browne and Kilcoyne, 1995; Wurtele, 1993; Wurtele et al., 1992.

<b>SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE</b>	Secondary I
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Reflect on the advantages of having a positive body image 2) Understand how certain norms can influence body image	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b> <b>225 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS AT 12 YEARS OLD</b>
<p><b>Body image plays a significant role for adolescents as they go through many changes.</b>          Puberty destabilizes body image to some extent during a period when adolescents are preoccupied with what they wish to project (fashion, peer affiliation, attitudes).<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Adjustment to pubertal changes depends on a number of factors.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescents who go through gradual changes at more or less the same time as their peers are more likely to adapt to these changes better than adolescents who go through changes quickly and separately from their peers.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Peer pressure (conversations about appearance, comparisons), media and other social pressures can create dissatisfaction with one's own body.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• As adolescents mature over time, they are more capable of bringing their beliefs into harmony with those of the significant people around them.<sup>4</sup></li> </ul> <p>A negative body image is associated with feelings of depression, eating disorders and low self-esteem, especially among adolescent girls.<sup>5</sup></p>	<p><b>At 12 years old:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adolescents</b> have generally started maturing physically.<sup>6</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Girls:</b> budding breasts are the first sign of development, followed by the appearance of pubic hair and their first menstruation (menarche), after a growth spurt (height, weight and body fat).</li> <li>○ <b>Boys:</b> increase in the size of testicles (11 to 12 years old), followed by the appearance of pubic hair, around age 12. The ability to ejaculate occurs at around 13 to 14 years of age, after which the voice changes and facial hair begins to grow in.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Adolescents</b> progress cognitively, developing a greater capacity for abstract thinking, better regulation of their behaviours and improved focus.<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Reflect on the advantages of having a positive body image</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings about your own body</li> <li>• Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating your own body</li> <li>• Influence of body perception on the expression of sexuality</li> <li>• Advantages of having a positive body image</li> </ul>	<p><b>Body image</b>            Body image refers to one's feelings, attitudes and perceptions toward one's body and physical appearance.<sup>8</sup> These perceptions are developed through social relationships. Thus, body image is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>thoughts, values and personal feelings:</b> thoughts, attitudes and feelings that a person experiences about their own body</li> <li>• <b>messages and attitudes conveyed by others:</b> messages, attitudes and behaviours that those around the person (friends, parents, extended family, coach, etc.) have expressed regarding the person's body since childhood (compliments, criticisms, teasing, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>criteria and messages about the body and beauty that are conveyed by society:</b> types of bodies shown in the media (ads, Internet, magazines, videos, video games, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Body image (in adolescents' own words)</b>            Body image is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the way you see and think of your body and the way you believe others see you</li> <li>• the feelings you have about your body</li> <li>• all the thoughts you experience about your body: these thoughts are based on your personal experience and the attitudes and behaviours of people around you and in society with respect to the body and physical appearance</li> </ul> <p><b>Feelings about one's own body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescents' bodies change during <b>puberty</b>: some adolescents have positive feelings toward their growth and these changes, while others have difficulty adjusting and are more preoccupied by them.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some adolescents may have positive feelings about their body: pride, self-confidence, desire to reveal themselves, well-being, respect, appreciation, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Feelings about one's own body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People often say I have my mom's eyes. My mom's eyes are beautiful, so I'm happy when people tell me that.</li> <li>• I'm happy to grow and to see my body change, but I don't like sweating when I play sports. That never used to happen before.</li> </ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Others may have negative feelings about their body: embarrassment, shame, discomfort, extreme modesty, disgust, contempt, inferiority, distress, isolation, etc.</li> <li>● Adolescence is therefore a critical period for body image, which can be positively or negatively influenced or, at the very least, destabilized, by these changes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating one’s own body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Depending on what they think of their body, adolescents may have different attitudes and behaviours toward it.</li> <li>● <b>Appreciating one’s own body means:</b><sup>9</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>having an accurate perception</b> of their body and <b>accepting</b> its abilities and characteristics</li> <li>○ <b>being confident about their body</b> and its capabilities</li> <li>○ <b>treating their body with kindness</b> (i.e. taking care of themselves, choosing healthy foods, eating according to their appetite, accepting that their weight may vary)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Having a negative body image means that a person:<sup>10</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ believes that what they look like determines who they are as a person</li> <li>○ has constant negative thoughts about their body and constantly compares themselves to others</li> <li>○ has a distorted perception of their body, in that they see parts of their body unlike they really are</li> <li>○ is obsessed with trying to change their actual body shape/size to measure up to family, social, or media ideals</li> <li>○ is convinced that only other people are attractive and that their body’s shape/size is a sign of personal failure</li> <li>○ feels ashamed, self-conscious, and anxious about their body</li> <li>○ feels uncomfortable and awkward in their body</li> </ul> </li> <li>● There is a difference between a person adopting behaviours to appreciate their body more and adopting behaviours that put their body down, such as an excessive preoccupation with their appearance to the detriment of their health and safety (i.e. trying to hide or change their body).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I have dark hair growing on my arms. I don’t like it. It’s embarrassing!</li> </ul> <p><b>Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating one’s own body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I’ve been playing soccer ever since I was a little girl. My calves and thighs are very muscular. When I wear a dress, I find it looks ugly, so I stopped wearing them. My parents asked me why I stopped wearing dresses . . . I don’t know if I can tell them the real reason.</li> <li>● Someone asked me if I think I’m handsome. What a question! But after thinking about it, I decided that I’m not so bad. But I don’t feel comfortable saying that . . . I don’t want to seem pretentious.</li> <li>● If I could, there are two things about my body that I’d change: my ears and my toes. But I know that you can’t really change them . . .</li> <li>● Coralie told me that I’m lucky to play basketball because it keeps you from getting fat. I found it a surprising thing to say because that’s not why I play basketball!</li> <li>● I’m not into sports. Lately, I also sweat a lot. I think about it every time I have gym class.</li> </ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
	<p><b>Influence of body perception on the expression of sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body plays an important role in the <b>expression of sexuality</b>. It is used to see and to communicate (facial expression, look, posture, gestures, attitude), to touch (caress, hug), to hear (sweet words, breathing) and to smell (body odour, perfume).</li> <li>• The body is a <b>communication tool</b> for entering into relationships with others (verbal and non-verbal language) and expressing affection (family, friends, lovers). The body conveys emotions (joy, sadness, anger, fear) and feelings.</li> <li>• The body enables a person <b>to feel</b> pleasant sensations, such as when it comes to the romantic and sexual awakening that manifests itself in puberty: heart pounding, stomach in knots, butterflies in the stomach, being attracted to someone, feelings of affection, kisses, etc.</li> <li>• In a seduction context, the body plays an important role in sending out the first signals of interest (e.g. holding someone’s gaze, smiling) to give the other person hints.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advantages of having a positive body image</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a positive body image has a favourable impact on the adolescent’s sexuality, and on the sexuality of the adult they will become.</li> <li>• A positive body image has a favourable impact on a person’s attitudes, feelings and behaviours toward their body, and on a person’s interpersonal and romantic relationships. Having a positive body image: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ engenders healthy self-esteem and psychological well-being, and has a positive influence on interpersonal relationships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Influence of body perception on the expression of sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have rolls of fat. I can’t wear certain kinds of clothes. When you have a body like mine, you have to hide it.</li> <li>• “Boys do care about what they look like because they wanna get a girlfriend . . . if you’re gonna look ugly, don’t dress tidy, then you’re not gonna get anyone when you’re older.”<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• “As part of her physical education course, 13-year-old Delphine has to go to the swimming pool for the swimming activity. Delphine is very stressed by the idea of putting on a swimsuit in front of the other students in her class. She finds her breasts are too small compared to those of the other girls in her class, and she is afraid that her classmates will make fun of her. She is especially scared that her boyfriend, Pierre-Luc, with whom she’s being going out for a little while, will not find her pretty enough and will drop her. How can she be helped?.”<sup>15</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Advantages of having a positive body image</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My friend Charlie doesn’t think she’s pretty. She doesn’t dare approach others. But I take the risk anyway, even though I consider myself less pretty than she is. I wonder why we react so differently.</li> <li>• What’s important is the size of your heart, not of your jeans.<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• Last year I broke my leg. For a long time I couldn’t move around much. I couldn’t wait to get my cast</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>2) Understand how certain norms can influence body image</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards and messages about the body from the people in your life (peers, family), society and the media</li> <li>Influence of these standards and messages on people's body image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduces the influence of unrealistic images projected by some media: creates a "filter" that makes people question some of these images while letting positive influences get through<sup>11</sup></li> <li>A person's body perception influences their expression of sexuality in various ways. A positive body perception: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gives a person self-confidence to approach others, to show their interest in another person, to consider themselves as a potential partner</li> <li>enables a person to more easily accept changes associated with puberty, including those related to romantic and sexual awakening, and to appreciate them</li> <li>has a positive effect on the development and consolidation of identity</li> <li>enables a person to appreciate and experience sensations related to affectionate and sexual contact in a positive way (when they are preoccupied with their flaws and hang-ups, it is more difficult to live in the moment and to appreciate what they are feeling)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Norms that can affect body image</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A norm is a rule of conduct adopted by a majority in a society or group of people (friends, students at school, teammates in a sports league, etc.). It dictates what a person can and cannot <b>do</b>, and what a person can and cannot <b>be</b>. Norms reflect values. Some norms are formal (e.g. laws) and others are informal (e.g. rules of courtesy). They are conveyed by people and the media. People who do not conform to these norms may have to face consequences (mockery, rejection, etc.).</li> <li>Norms for physical beauty concern various aspects of the body: weight, skin colour, size and shape of certain parts of the body, height, build, clothing, makeup, jewellery, tattoos, hairstyle, hair removal, tanning, piercing, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Influence of these norms and messages on people's body image</b> <i>From others (peers, family)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As adolescents become gradually aware of the transformations in their body, they must accept and adjust to them. During this adjustment period, adolescents often compare their own changing body to the bodies of others, particularly in terms of appearance and rate of growth.</li> </ul>	<p>off. Now I really appreciate being able to move around, be in shape and do what I want.</p> <p><b>Influence of norms and messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the beginning of class, the girls were talking about their crushes on guys in the higher grades. They were saying, "Did you see his hair, his pecs?" etc. It's hard for a guy like me to hear that. I'm small and I still look like a little kid.</li> <li>I want to have a well-toned, athletic body. If you don't have a well-toned body, you look like a girl or like you're gay!<sup>17</sup></li> <li>"If you've got friends who are like quite big in build you want to be the same as them. Although you might not be able to do anything about it, it's on your conscience all the time. You want to be that sort of size."<sup>18</sup></li> <li>Sometimes, other people say mean things just to hurt you . . . but they're not necessarily true. What's important is that I like myself. I'm confident</li> </ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The psychological transformations of puberty may cause adolescents to become more concerned about their appearance and the opinion of others.</li> <li>• Certain experiences with the people around them can have a lasting effect on adolescents’ body image. Implicit messages conveyed in daily life can have a positive or negative impact on their body image. In this respect, every environment is different and messages about the following aspects may vary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ relationship to food, eating habits and weight</li> <li>○ positive or negative comments on weight, appearance, body type, etc.</li> <li>○ importance granted to beauty and aesthetics</li> <li>○ attitudes toward physical activity, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Relationships with peers can subtly or explicitly affect adolescents’ body image.<sup>12</sup> The desire for acceptance and recognition and the need to belong are important for adolescents at this stage in their lives.</li> <li>• For some adolescents involved in a sport or discipline, their body image may be influenced by certain norms specific to this field. Some adolescents may also feel pressure due to certain norms in sports or disciplines where they are judged on aesthetics (e.g. figure skating, synchronized swimming, gymnastics, dance) or for which a person’s style or clothing seem important (e.g. snowboarding, tennis).</li> </ul> <p><i>From society and the media (magazines, movies, TV shows, social media)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In societies and among groups of people, there are norms for physical beauty. These norms evolve over time and vary across cultures.</li> <li>• Some representations in society and the media are more common: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Women: white and thin; full lips; smooth, shiny hair; an ample chest; tanned, blemish-free skin (no hairs, stretch marks, cellulite or pimples); etc.</li> <li>○ Men: tall and athletic; muscular legs, arms and chests; tanned, blemish-free skin (no pimples or hair on their torso); full, thick hair; etc.<sup>13</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adolescents who do not meet the norms conveyed by society and the media may develop negative feelings toward their body and their appearance.</li> <li>• Exposure to more diversified representations can help people accept their body and its particular characteristics more easily.</li> </ul>	<p>and I don’t listen to what other people might say to make me feel bad.<sup>19</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honestly, I don’t pay much attention to what people say about beauty, fashion or looks. It doesn’t matter and it doesn’t influence me. I have my own style and I’m happy that way.</li> <li>• I’m tall for a girl, taller than most boys my age. I don’t think I’ll ever have a boyfriend who’s taller than me . . . I feel like it makes me less attractive. I don’t dare approach boys who are shorter than me, even if I like them.</li> <li>• “I don’t like to walk past guys because I just don’t like people talking about you. I just feel that when I walk past people, they are going to talk about me or they will judge me.”<sup>20</sup></li> <li>• “I’ve always had a hard time accepting my body, especially my tummy and my thighs. But I was able to ignore my flaws until the day when Jessica, one of my best friends, made a negative comment about my body in front of the whole class. A bunch of people started to laugh. I nearly died of embarrassment. Ever since then, I’m afraid of people laughing at me.”<sup>21</sup></li> <li>• “It might be a little harder, like, without someone to support you. If you have, like, friends that understand you, it’s a lot easier to kind of be a little different . . . ’cause you know that group of friends that always support you. It just helps to, like, talk about things and how you feel . . . ”<sup>22</sup></li> </ul>



## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### CONSIDER YOUR OWN REPRESENTATIONS OF BODY IMAGE AND SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

As an adult who interacts with adolescents, you are a role model. For this reason, it can be useful to reflect on the following aspects:

- What are your own beliefs about beauty, appearance, body shapes, etc.?
- What is your view of how social norms about the body (beauty ideals, concerns related to weight or appearance, etc.) affect people?
- What positive social norms can you use to support students in their search for role models?
- Are you aware of the developmental challenges associated with puberty when it comes to body image?
- How can you help students develop a positive body image?

#### UNDERSTAND THE LINK BETWEEN PUBERTY AND BODY IMAGE

- Body image is particularly important during adolescence. Young people experience a number of changes that affect how they view their body. Adolescents experience these changes in unique ways, in particular because the onset of puberty and the rate of development vary from one person to another. These differences in development and experience are likely to colour students' questions and the concerns they share in class.
- For some adolescents, puberty will have a positive effect on their body image. They will be satisfied with their appearance and enthusiastic about the idea of growing up. This is the case for about 51% of girls and boys, who say they are satisfied with their appearance.<sup>23</sup> Others will have a much harder time going through these changes. They may have feelings of dissatisfaction or anger, or psychological difficulties such as reduced self-esteem and well-being. Worries about their appearance can also lead to feelings of inferiority.
- Some young people may have contradictory or fluctuating feelings about their body.
- Adolescents face the developmental task of accepting and adapting to the transformations taking place in their body. They:
  - have to accept that their child body is giving way to an adolescent one, and they wonder what their body will look like when these changes are complete
  - compare their body to the bodies of others, in particular in terms of its appearance and rate of growth
  - adjust their perception of themselves and of their body as their body changes
- The psychological transformations of puberty can lead adolescents to worry more about their appearance, a greater desire for modesty and privacy (e.g. not wanting their parents to see them naked or to come into their room), and an increased concern for what others think.

#### BE AWARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEVEL OF BODY SATISFACTION AND ITS EFFECTS

- According to the *Québec Health Survey of High School Students* (QSHSS 2010-2011), approximately half of high school students (49%) were dissatisfied with their body image; they would like to be either thinner (33%), particularly girls, or heavier (16%), particularly boys.<sup>24</sup>
- While girls tend to drop physical activities because they are dissatisfied with their bodies, boys tend to increase their level of physical activity because they want to develop their muscle mass.
- According to the *Québec Health Survey of High School Students* (QSHSS 2010-2011), proportionally, more girls are underweight while more boys have excess weight. Adolescents with excess body fat experience more discrimination from their peers and display lower feelings of satisfaction toward life in general.



## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

For information on **body image issues**

- On the [MediaSmarts](#) website, in the “Digital & Media Literacy” section, under “Media Issues,” choose “[Body Image](#)” to find out more on various topics related to body image.

For **activities related to body image, beauty, etc.**

- On the [MediaSmarts](#) website, download the “[Put Your Best Face Forward](#)” lesson kit (PDF):  
[http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/lesson-plans/lesson\\_put\\_your\\_best\\_face\\_forward\\_0.pdf](http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/lesson-plans/lesson_put_your_best_face_forward_0.pdf)

For information on **weight stigma (norms and peer pressure)**

### For parents

Whether they are aware of it or not, parents have an influence on adolescents’ attitudes and behaviours regarding their body. By paying special attention to the messages and values they convey to their children (e.g. modelling acceptance of their own body, adopting healthy lifestyle habits, not commenting on people’s physical appearance), parents can play a key role in helping adolescents develop a positive body image. To support their efforts, in addition to the content offered in the classroom, the following documentation can be suggested:

- On the [MediaSmarts](#) website, the tip sheet “[Talking to Kids about Media and Body Image](#)” (4 pages, PDF):  
[http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/tip-sheet/tipsheet\\_media\\_effects\\_on\\_body\\_image.pdf](http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/tip-sheet/tipsheet_media_effects_on_body_image.pdf)

### For teachers

- From the Association pour la santé publique du Québec (AS PQ) website, the document entitled « Weight-Related Problems in Quebec – A Call for Action »:  
<http://www.aspq.org/uploads/pdf/4cd975e0a6b3011-a-call-for-action.pdf>

### For adolescents

- From the Association pour la santé publique du Québec (AS PQ) website, a comic strip on healthy lifestyle choices called “What’s Up Jennifer »:  
<http://www.aspq.org/uploads/pdf/4cd97b420346c17-wath-is-up-jennifer.pdf>

## **BE PREPARED: gather and create materials, adopt appropriate attitudes**

### **PLAN THE ORDER FOR OFFERING SECONDARY I CONTENT IN SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

- Content on body image can be presented **after** the themes “Comprehensive View of Sexuality” and “Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms.” These two themes provide an introduction to the various aspects of sexuality and an awareness of the role of puberty in students’ lives.
- Content on body image can be presented **before** the theme “Emotional and Romantic Life” so that students can think about how they see themselves before reflecting on their relationships with others.

### **GATHER MATERIALS**

- Collect magazines for the collage; ask students to bring in appropriate magazines or pictures.
- Find videos on body image that can be used to launch or conclude the discussion, in keeping with the educational aim.

### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

#### **Promote diverse body shapes and models of beauty, and intervene in situations of appearance-based stigma**

- Every person is unique. It’s important to value the diversity of body shapes by emphasizing that:
  - there is an infinite variety of bodies and rates of development
  - differences throughout history and across cultures show that beauty can take many forms
  - there is richness in diversity
- Intervene or call on a member of the school’s complementary educational services team when a situation arises (e.g. a student being mocked or excluded because of their appearance).

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Secondary I should:

- take into account the delayed onset of puberty in some young people: age 13 for girls and age 14 for boys<sup>25</sup>
- support adolescents in developing a positive body image

## Key messages

- During puberty, an adolescent’s body image is affected because their body undergoes many changes within a short period of time.
- Some people feel positive toward these changes; others less so. It varies from one person to another.
- Messages from other people, peers and the media can affect a person’s perception and appreciation of their own body.
- Having a positive body image helps a person to be comfortable in the expression of their sexuality.
- Every person is unique. There are as many body shapes and models of beauty as there are individuals. There is richness in diversity.

## INTRODUCTION

- Present the educational aims.
- To introduce the topic, lead a **short group discussion** using the following questions:
  - Why is your body important in life, in general?
  - Why is your body important in terms of sexuality, in particular?
  - Why is it important to like your body?
  - What makes it easier to like your body in adolescence? Why?
  - What makes it harder to like your body in adolescence? Why?

Give students some information on the importance of the body in sexuality by referring to the “Explanations concerning content” section under the heading “Influence of body perception on the expression of sexuality.”

- Explain to students that:
  - How you think and feel about your body as an adolescent can be affected during puberty because of the many changes that take place within a short period of time.
  - Some adolescents will have positive feelings toward these changes, while others will have mixed feelings. It varies from one person to another.

#### ACTIVITY: BENEFITS OF HAVING A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

##### Reflect on the advantages of having a positive body image (Aim 1):

- To introduce the activity on body image, launch students' **reflection** using the following questions:
  - What is body image?
  - How is it developed?
  - What influences it?
- Using the section "Explanations concerning content" and elements contributed by the students:
  - Complete the definition of body image.
  - Explain how body image is formed.
  - Summarize the factors that seem to influence body image (these ideas can serve as a starting point for Aim 2).
- To identify attitudes and behaviours associated with a positive body image, ask students to **complete the following**: *People who feel comfortable with their body . . .*
  - What are they like? How do they appear to others?
  - What do they do?
  - What do they think of their body? How do they feel about their body?
  - What do they say about their body? How do they describe it?
  - How do they treat their body?
  - In your opinion, what are the benefits of having a positive body image?

##### VARIATIONS:

- Large-group discussion with answers noted on the board
- Individual reflection in which students write their answers on a piece of paper
- Answers noted individually on sticky notes, which students then place on a giant figure at the front of the class (group production)
- Giant figure drawn on a large piece of cardboard, where students write their answers
- Complete the answers given by the students using the headings "Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating one's own body" and "Advantages of having a positive body image" in the "Explanations concerning content" section.
- To identify elements that show how body perception can influence the expression of sexuality, refer to this heading in the "Examples from the lives of adolescents" section. These examples can be read aloud or added to the visual on manifestations of body image produced in the activity below.

- Ask students how a person's appreciation or lack of appreciation for their body can affect the expression of their sexuality. Then, briefly explain this influence using the headings "Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating one's own body" and "Influence of body perception on the expression of sexuality" in the "Explanations concerning content" section.
- Highlight the following key messages:
  - During puberty, an adolescent's body image is affected because their body undergoes many changes within a short period of time.
  - Some people feel positive toward these changes; others less so. It varies from one person to another.
- Present the video "[Bodies: Different Shapes and Sizes: All Beautiful!](#)" found on the Amaze.org website in the "Puberty" section.
- Present the video "[Ce qui a de la valeur se trouve à l'intérieur!](#)" produced by the Centre Circuit (Centre d'intervention en prévention et en réadaptation cardiovasculaire pour toute la famille) of CHU Sainte-Justine explaining that a person's worth is not determined by what they look like. (French only)
- Conclude this section with the following **message**:  
When you have a positive body image, you are better able to filter the messages you receive. We will explore these messages in the next activity.

#### *ACTIVITY: HOW NORMS INFLUENCE BODY IMAGE*

##### **Understand HOW certain norms can influence body image (Aim 2):**

- Explain to students that people in their lives, society and the media send various messages about the body and beauty that can influence their appreciation of their body. Propose taking an inventory of these messages in order to understand HOW these messages can influence a person's body image.
- To do this, have students **make a collage** entitled "The ideal body would be . . ." using photos they find on the Internet or cut out from magazines. They can "cut up" the body into separate parts: hair, legs, smile, eyes, arms, breasts, torso, stomach, etc.
- Post their productions and analyze them to identify messages about the body that are conveyed by society and in the media, by asking the following questions:
  - What do you notice?
  - What characteristics are associated with the ideal body?
  - Are the ideal bodies presented similar or different?
  - What are the similarities and differences between the ideal female body and the ideal male body?
  - Etc.
- Referring to the "Explanations concerning content" section, explain to students the concept of a "norm."
- Discuss the norms that exist among the people in their lives (peers, family) and the ways in which they are different from or similar to those conveyed in society and in the media:
  - What messages about the ideal body are conveyed by the people around you (parents, brother/sister, extended family)? Among your friends?
  - How are messages conveyed in the media similar to or different from those conveyed by the people around you (family, friends, acquaintances)?

- Lead a **discussion** to identify how these norms can influence people, by asking the following questions:
  - To what degree do these norms influence people?
  - How do these norms influence adolescents? (*Highlight the importance of puberty and the changes it entails, and the additional challenge of adolescence in developing a positive body image.*)
  - What are the characteristics of norms that have a positive influence on body image?
  - Why are some people less influenced than others by the norms conveyed by the people around them, society and the media?
  - In your opinion, what norms have the most influence: those set by the people around us, by the media or by society? Why?
- Complete the answers provided by the students using the heading “Influence of these norms and messages on people’s body image” in the “Explanations concerning content” section. The elements presented can also be supported by the “Examples from the lives of adolescents” section.
- Present the *Québec Charter for a Healthy and Diverse Body Image*, produced with in order to counter the negative effects of certain representations of male and female bodies:
  - Present the components of this charter: [http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/Stereotypes/Charte\\_8.5X11\\_CHIC.pdf](http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/Stereotypes/Charte_8.5X11_CHIC.pdf) (in French)
- Have students write down three things they like about their body or to explain why they appreciate their body. These papers can then be deposited in a box, posted on the wall, kept for themselves or used to create a classroom mural.

## CONCLUSION

- Ask students to summarize what they’ve learned from these activities. They can formulate a short message in the form of a sentence to be posted on social media or they can write it on a sticky note for posting on the classroom wall.
- Conclude the activity with the following **key messages**:
  - During puberty, an adolescent’s body image is affected because their body undergoes many changes within a short period of time.
  - Some people feel positive toward these changes; others less so. It varies from one person to another.
  - Messages from other people, peers and the media can affect a person’s perception and appreciation of their own body.
  - Having a positive body image helps a person to be comfortable in the expression of their sexuality.
  - Every person is unique. There are as many body shapes and models of beauty as there are individuals. There is richness in diversity.

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<b>PREGNANCY AND BIRTH</b>	Kindergarten
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Explain the steps involved in making a baby 2) Name ways of welcoming a baby into a family	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b> <b>150 minutes</b> In kindergarten, the time spent achieving the educational aims can be divided into different time periods.
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT PREGNANCY AND BIRTH WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF CHILDREN’S PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 4 TO 5 YEARS OLD</b>
Without accurate knowledge of pregnancy and birth, children will invent their own explanation, often based on myths. <sup>1</sup>	<b>Kindergarten students:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are in a stage of development in which they are curious about sexual functions<sup>2</sup> and where babies come from<sup>3</sup></li> <li>are able to understand concepts related to the phenomenon of pregnancy and of birth<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>



## VISION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN

There are a few differences between this pedagogical framework and the frameworks developed for the elementary and secondary levels. The “Broaching the subject with children” section differs so that it is better aligned with the characteristics of the preschool education program. In preschool education, the suggested activities reflect children’s interests and questions. They are rooted in children’s everyday lives and their social, cultural and physical environments to foster their overall development.

The preschool education program stipulates that “[a]ctivities related to children’s concerns and interests are by nature cross-curricular. . . . They give children the opportunity to discover various means of expression and creation and to become aware of the different languages that support and construct learning. In addition, they foster the development of knowledges, behaviours and attitudes that help children do things methodically and exercise elementary forms of critical judgment of people and things.”<sup>5</sup>

As a result, the content in sexuality education offered to children in kindergarten must be integrated into everyday life in the classroom, in a context that is meaningful for five- and six-year-olds. This requires seizing the right moments, opportunities and authentic situations that give rise to a question, a concern or reflection so as to cover the content. The activities must respect the educational aim and the proposed content within a coherent context.

Some examples of real-life situations of children or in the classroom that can be capitalized on:

- a student’s expectant mother
- a student who has recently welcomed a little brother or little sister into the family
- a photo of a newborn suckling at their mother’s breast
- questions from children about childbirth, how babies are made, etc.
- situation seen or heard in connection with the subject (e.g. a child explaining they were adopted)

Picture books are also a good way to approach the proposed content and prompt discussion with the students. A list of suggested books relating to the content can be found in the “Broaching the subject with children” section. Additional books and activities are also listed should the proposed books or classroom interactions require further resources to achieve the educational aims and their content.

## BEFORE BROACHING THE SUBJECT WITH CHILDREN

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Explain the steps involved in making a baby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union of an egg and a sperm (the two cells needed for a fetus to develop) and implantation in the uterus, multiple pregnancy</li> <li>• Pregnancy: changes that take place in the mother's body, development of the fetus</li> <li>• Childbirth and place of birth</li> </ul>	<p><b>THE STEPS IN MAKING A BABY (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childbirth is when a baby emerges from their mother's uterus, either through the vagina or a small opening in the abdomen (Caesarean).</li> <li>• Childbirth takes place after nine months of pregnancy during which the baby grows and gets bigger. After nine months, the baby is ready to live outside their mother's body.</li> <li>• Every child, adopted or not, was carried by a mother and grew inside her uterus.</li> </ul> <p><b>Union of an egg cell and a sperm cell and implantation in the uterus</b></p> <p><i>The two cells needed for a fetus to develop</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cell is the basic structural and functional unit of life.<sup>6</sup> Our body is composed of millions of cells.</li> <li>• Two cells are at the basis of fetal development: an egg (female cell) and a sperm (male cell) are needed to conceive a baby.</li> <li>• The egg cell and the sperm cell unite and become a fetus. This is called fertilization.</li> <li>• Once inside the uterus, the fetus develops and grows to become a baby.</li> </ul> <p><i>Multiple pregnancy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is possible for two egg cells to be fertilized by two sperm cells, forming two fetuses. These two babies are called fraternal twins: they can be of opposite sex and not resemble each other.</li> <li>• It is also possible for one egg cell, fertilized by one sperm cell, to divide into two fetuses. These two babies are called identical twins and will be of the same sex.</li> <li>• It is also even possible for a mother to have three or more babies in her uterus (triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets). This is less common.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Union of an egg cell and a sperm cell</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know how babies are made. The parents love each other and give each other hugs. The daddy's sperm cell meets the mommy's egg cell. Then the baby grows in the mommy's tummy. The baby comes out when it's ready.</li> <li>• Why do we need an egg cell and a sperm cell to make a baby?</li> <li>• What is a sperm cell? Where does it come from?</li> <li>• Do twins always look the same?</li> <li>• How did the baby get into the mommy's tummy?</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Pregnancy</b></p> <p>During pregnancy, the mother’s body fulfills the needs of the fetus (e.g. nourishment, safety). After birth, the family will take care of the baby’s needs. To meet the needs of the fetus and the baby, the mother’s body must change. The family also needs to prepare.</p> <p><i>Changes that take place in the mother’s body</i></p> <p>The mother’s body changes during pregnancy. All of these changes occur to help the fetus grow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the beginning of pregnancy, mothers are sometimes tired, because it takes a lot of energy to make a baby. Some mothers may also have nausea (upset stomach, urge to vomit).</li><li>• The uterus adapts to the growing body, which makes the mother’s abdomen swell.</li><li>• The mother’s breasts also change to produce the milk she needs to feed the baby.</li></ul> <p><i>Development of the fetus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pregnancy lasts for nine months. It is divided into three periods of 12 weeks (three trimesters each lasting about three months) during which the fetus grows and develops.</li><li>• The umbilical cord supplies the baby with food and air.</li><li>• Major changes occur during each trimester.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ First trimester: The fetus develops all the parts that will make up its body: head, arms, legs, heart, etc.</li><li>○ Second trimester: The fetus starts to move. You can feel it when you place your hand on the mother’s abdomen. It hears sounds and perceives light.</li><li>○ Third trimester: Several internal organs continue to form (such as the lungs) to prepare the baby for birth.</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Pregnancy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is it true that mommies have milk in their breasts so they can feed babies?</li><li>• Does the baby’s heart beat inside the mommy’s tummy? Can I hear it?</li><li>• Mommy says that she had three miscarriages before she had me. What’s a miscarriage?</li><li>• My aunt is expecting a baby. She told me I could sing to her baby because it can hear me.</li><li>• “Mommy, what was I like when I didn’t exist?”<sup>7</sup></li></ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>2) Name ways of welcoming a baby into a family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for the baby's arrival</li> <li>• Needs of a newborn (eating, sleeping, affection, etc.)</li> <li>• Different family models: nuclear families, single parents, same-sex parents, adoptive parents, blended families</li> <li>• Welcoming a baby: at birth or at the time of adoption</li> </ul>	<p><b>Childbirth and place of birth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childbirth is when the baby is born, emerging from the mother's body to be welcomed into the outside world.</li> <li>• The other parent, and sometimes other family members, also participate in the birth (e.g. supporting the mother, taking care of the baby, etc.).</li> <li>• Childbirth can happen in two different ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vaginal birth: The baby emerges from the mother's vagina.</li> <li>○ Caesarean birth: The baby emerges from the mother's abdomen. The doctor makes a small opening in the mother's abdomen so that the baby can come out.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When the baby comes out of their mother, their umbilical cord is cut so that they can breathe on their own and be fed.</li> <li>• Babies can be born in different places: in a hospital, in a birthing centre or at home.</li> <li>• In these places, various professionals such as doctors, nurses, midwives and doulas, among others, help the parents during the birth of their baby. They see to the welfare and safety of both the parents and the baby.</li> </ul> <p><b>WELCOMING A BABY INTO A FAMILY</b>  There are many ways of welcoming a baby into a family.</p> <p><b>Preparing for the baby's arrival</b>  To welcome and take care of the baby, families prepare to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make a place for the baby in the family: setting up a nursery, a crib, etc.</li> <li>• meet the baby's needs: buying clothes in the proper size, diapers, a car seat for safe travel by car, toys, stuffed toys, etc.</li> <li>• accommodate the baby: finding a name, preparing for the birth, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Childbirth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A newborn baby isn't pretty. It's all wrinkled.</li> <li>• My dad said that I was born by Caesarean at the hospital. What does that mean?</li> <li>• I was born in a special birthing centre, but it wasn't a hospital.</li> <li>• Mommy says I came out so fast that the doctor caught me like a little football!</li> <li>• What's the "unbuildable" (umbilical) cord?</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparing for the baby's arrival</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My dad took out all my baby clothes last week. One of his friends is going to have a baby and he's going to give him all my old clothes.</li> <li>• I'm going to have a little cousin. We went to buy him pyjamas so that he isn't naked when he leaves the hospital.</li> <li>• We picked a name for my little sister who'll be here soon. I can't wait.</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Needs of a newborn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like all children, newborns need care. They must be fed, washed, helped to go to sleep, held in our arms, given lots of love, have their diapers changed, etc.</li> <li>Newborns cannot meet their needs alone: they need their family to take care of them. Therefore, parents, older brothers, older sisters, aunts, uncles and grandparents can take care of babies. Sometimes parents need help from other people (e.g. friends, neighbours) to care for their newborn.</li> </ul> <p><b>Different family models</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are different kinds of families. Newborns can be welcomed into a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nuclear family: A mother, a father, and one or more children</li> <li>Single-parent family: One parent (mom or dad) living with one or more children</li> <li>Same-sex parent family: Two parents of the same sex (two moms or two dads) living with one or more children</li> <li>Adoptive family: One or both adoptive parents living with the child or children they have adopted (A foster family is also an example of a family in which the parents foster or adopt a child to take care of them.)</li> <li>Blended family: Various scenarios are possible, such as a child's father living with another child's mother, two fathers having met when they each already had two children, a father and a mother who had children from previous relationships decide to have another child together, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>No matter their makeup, all families have adults who care about and take care of the children.</li> </ul> <p><b>Welcoming a baby</b> There are different ways of welcoming a baby into a family.</p> <p><i>At birth</i> To welcome a baby into the family at birth, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give the baby a first name and the family's last name</li> <li>bring the baby home</li> </ul>	<p><b>Needs of a newborn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My little brother takes up all my parents' time. My grandma came to pick me up to sleep over at her house for a few days.</li> <li>My mother is always giving milk to my little sister.</li> <li>Babies cry a lot, even at night. I can't wait until he starts talking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Different family models</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I live with my mom and my dad, but Rose lives with her two moms.</li> <li>There's no mommy at Leo's house. He only lives with his dad.</li> <li>I was born in Korea, but now I live here. My parents adopted me, they picked me.</li> <li>We went to welcome my brother at the airport when he was two. He came here on a plane.</li> <li>Maeve was surprised to learn that Charles' sister was adopted. She doesn't know what that means.</li> <li>My friend has two daddies. She calls them "Daddy" and "Papa." And her grandfathers are, "Grampa" and "Bubby." It's funny!</li> </ul> <p><b>Welcoming a baby</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My brother came home yesterday. All he does is cry and sleep.</li> <li>I like rocking my sister in my arms. She smells good.</li> <li>Daddy explained that a new baby needs a lot of things at home, like a bed, toys, a pacifier, really small clothes, but most of all, lots of hugs.</li> <li>"Mommy, what was I called when I was a baby?"<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• introduce the baby to others: family, friends, etc.</li><li>• might organize a party or some other event to welcome the baby into the family and celebrate their arrival (ritual, party, celebration, visit from loved ones and friends in our home, etc.)</li><li>• take care of the baby</li><li>• tell the baby we love them and are happy they are with us</li><li>• share with the baby: our parents' attention, toys, clothing, etc.</li><li>• take the time to learn to get to know the baby and to discover who they are, their personality, etc.</li></ul> <p><i>At the time of adoption</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some people choose to adopt a child. They therefore choose to welcome into their family a baby who was already born. This child grew inside a mother's uterus, but, for the baby's welfare, is entrusted into the care of another family who is better able to meet their needs, take care of them and love them.</li><li>• A child is welcomed into their adoptive family in the same way as a child born into the family.</li></ul>	

## BEFORE BROACHING THE SUBJECT WITH CHILDREN

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### Understand how far to take the discussion about pregnancy and childbirth

- Children of kindergarten age seek answers about the biological origins of children, **not** explanations of sexual relations.<sup>9</sup> According to UNESCO,<sup>10</sup> children of this age need to know that:
  - a pregnancy begins when an egg and sperm unite and implant in the uterus
  - pregnancy generally lasts for 40 weeks (9 months) and a woman's body undergoes changes
  - many different kinds of families exist around the world
  - family members have different needs and roles (e.g. taking care of each other and meeting their needs)
- Giving simple answers to children's questions about sexuality lays the groundwork for healthy, open communication on the subject. This strategy also prevents misinformation.<sup>11</sup>

#### Be sensitive to the children's diverse knowledge and experience of pregnancy

- Some children's knowledge of pregnancy might be limited, while that of others might be greater. Children might ask more specific questions about miscarriages, perinatal death (stillbirth, death of a twin during pregnancy, etc.). It is therefore essential to be prepared to answer that these are, in fact, possibilities that can affect parents and the family (sadness, anger, etc.), and that they occur when the fetus or the baby has an illness or an anomaly.

#### Be aware of family diversity and the richness of such diversity

- It is important to present different types of families (adoptive parents, same-sex parents, blended families, etc.) in all pedagogical interventions (examples given, scenarios, stories, etc.), so that all students feel recognized.

### REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

#### To become familiar with how children view conception, refer to:

- the video "[Parents Explain the Birds and the Bees](#)," Season 1, Episode 3 of the "Parents Explain" series produced by [Cut](#) and available on Youtube

#### To become familiar with how to explain conception, pregnancy and birth to children, refer to:

- the [images of fetal development](#) from weeks 1 to 40, available on the [Naître et Grandir](#) website (under Grossesse > Le développement du fœtus en images)
- the book *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg (NY, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2013)

#### To explain and illustrate family diversity and explain the similarities between families, refer to:

- the following documents available on the [LGBT Family Coalition](#) website (under Tools & Courses > Tools and Resources for Professionals Working with Youth and Families > Classroom Activities: Preschool – Elementary):
  - [Responding Simply to Children's Questions](#) (accessed March 18, 2019)

- *Family Diversity: It's All About Love* poster (Contact the LGBT Family Coalition for an English poster. A [French version](#) is also available on the Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation [website](#) [under Ressources documentaires > Matériel pédagogique].) (accessed March 18, 2019)

**For pedagogical approaches to family diversity, refer to:**

- [Otis and Alice: A Family With Two Moms?](#), a resource guide to be used with the book *Otis and Alice* and available on the [LGBT Family Coalition](#) website (under Tools & Courses > Tools and Resources for Professionals Working with Youth and Families > Classroom Activities: Preschool – Elementary) (accessed March 18, 2019)

**For parents**

- Sexuality education is better consolidated when there is collaboration between the school and families. It is therefore recommended that parents be informed of the activity carried out with the children as well as the words used to talk about pregnancy and birth. Discussing this theme in class is the perfect opportunity for parents to talk with their children about how they were born and how their family took care of them, and to answer their questions.
- To support parents in doing so, suggest that they consult *The Capsule* No. 2, “[How Do I Answer Questions About Sex?](#)” produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and available on its [website](#) (Publications > Sujets > Projet Mosaik > La Capsule > English > No. 2) (accessed March 18, 2019).

**BE PREPARED: gather and create materials, adopt appropriate attitudes**

**PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED IN KINDERGARTEN**

It will be easier for children to talk about this content if they have learned about the different parts of the body. For example, explaining that the fetus grows inside the uterus will help them to better understand the stages of pregnancy and birth.

**MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMPETENCIES OF THE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Depending on the activities proposed to the children, you can call on some of the program competencies:

Competency 2: To affirm his/her personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To increasingly meet his/her physical, cognitive, emotional and social needs</li><li>• To share his/her tastes, interests, feelings and emotions</li><li>• To show autonomy (to make choices on the basis of himself/herself and the environment)</li><li>• To develop self-confidence</li></ul>
Competency 3: To interact harmoniously with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To show interest in others (to recognize their physical, social and cultural characteristics; to recognize his/her differences from and similarities to others)</li></ul>
Competency 4: To communicate using the resources of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To show interest in communication (to adhere to the subject of a conversation; to start and maintain a conversation)</li><li>• To understand a message (to express his/her understanding of information received)</li><li>• To produce a message (to organize his/her ideas; to use appropriate vocabulary)</li></ul>
Competency 5: To construct his/her understanding of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To exercise thinking in a variety of contexts (to observe, explore . . . ; to ask questions . . . ; to make and test predictions)</li><li>• To organize information (to express what he/she knows; to seek, select and exchange information)</li><li>• To describe his/her learnings</li></ul>



### **GATHER MATERIALS**

- Prepare the materials required for the activity (relevant books or picture books). **Criteria to keep in mind when choosing visual elements:**
  - Present simple visuals (e.g. do not present diagrams that are too complex or images that are too detailed).
  - Avoid visual elements that are overly explicit and could cause children to react (e.g. real photos of adult genitalia, videos of childbirth, etc.).
  - Keep to the elements of content provided (e.g. union of an egg cell and a sperm cell, **but not** sexual relations; implantation in the uterus; changes in the mother's body during pregnancy, etc.).

### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

- **Be attentive to the children's reactions**

Some children may react with curiosity and enthusiasm, others with nervousness mixed with embarrassment. Be attentive and reassure children that their reactions to the content being discussed are natural. Create an atmosphere that allows everyone to express their feelings and respect the feelings of others.
- **Use the appropriate words**

It is possible that some children will use informal language when talking about the sexual parts of the body (e.g. willy, hooaha). If they use these terms, take the opportunity to reframe the information, explaining the accurate terms and the importance of using them.

## BROACHING THE SUBJECT WITH CHILDREN

### Key messages for children

- Human beings have cells inside their bodies that allow them to conceive a baby.
- Every human being comes from the union of two cells: an egg and a sperm.
- When a woman is pregnant, the fetus grows inside her uterus.
- Some people may choose to adopt a child.
- There are many family models, all made up of adults who care about and take care of children.

### EXAMPLES OF CONTEXTS THAT FOSTER THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS

- Children’s questions about childbirth, how babies are made, etc.
- Reading on the subject (for examples, see the book web for suggested picture books below)
- Situation experienced or witnessed in connection with the subject (e.g. a child explains that they were adopted)
- Observations or situations in everyday life (e.g. a child who announces their mother is pregnant, a pregnant teacher, a birth in a child’s family, etc.)

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

To explain the steps involved in making a baby (**Aim 1**) and name ways of welcoming a baby into a family (**Aim 2**), refer to the suggested books, questions and activities from the “Pregnancy and Birth” [book web](#) on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website (under K/ELA > Kindergarten and ELA Book Webs > Kindergarten and Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Education Book Web Kindergarten – Pregnancy and Birth).

Based on readings from the selected picture books, the following questions can be explored with the children:

**What stages of conception, pregnancy and childbirth are presented in the books? Are these stages explained in the same way?**

*The stages of conception*

- In the book *Where Do Babies Come From?*: the stages of conception

*The stages of pregnancy*

In the books:

- *Where Do Babies Come From?*: the stages of conception
- *Hello in There! A Big Sister’s Book of Waiting*: the stages of fetal development in the uterus

*The stages of childbirth (birth, location of birth, feelings experienced during birth)*

In the books:

- *Where Do Babies Come From?*: childbirth
- *Hello in There! A Big Sister's Book of Waiting*: anticipation of a new baby

*The needs of the newborn*

In the books:

- *Little Rabbit's New Baby*: the many needs of newborns, especially triplets
- *Little Miss, Big Sis*: how a big sister can help with the new baby's needs

**What family models are depicted? How are they different or similar?**

In the books:

- *Peter's Chair*: including Peter in preparing for the new baby
- *Little Miss, Big Sis*: the bond between siblings
- *Little Rabbit's New Baby*: help from the grandmother
- *Theo's Mood*: help from the grandmother

**What feelings are experienced when a child is born?**

In the books:

- *Little Rabbit's New Baby*: the brother and parents' feelings upon the arrival of the three babies
- *Peter's Chair*: the older brother's feelings about the new baby
- *Theo's Mood*: the brother's many conflicting feelings in welcoming a new baby

**How is the baby welcomed?**

In the books:

- *Little Rabbit's New Baby*: discovering what babies need
- *Peter's Chair*: handing down of items from Peter to the baby
- *Little Miss, Big Sis*: the many things the older sister can do to help the baby as it grows
- *Hello in There! A Big Sister's Book of Waiting*: the things the older sister can do while waiting; anticipation of things they can do together

**OTHER PICTURE BOOKS RELATING TO THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS:**

**The steps of conception, pregnancy and childbirth**

- *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg (NY, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2013)
- *What's in There?* by Robie H. Harries (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2013)

**Childbirth, steps in making a baby**

- *What's in There?* by Robie H. Harries (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2013)
- *Welcome to the Family* by Mary Hoffman (London, UK: Lincoln Children's Books, 2014)

**Different family models**

- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson (NY, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2005)
- *Otis & Alice* by Ariane Bertouille (Toronto, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2013)
- *Welcome to the Family* by Mary Hoffman (London, UK: Lincoln Children's Books, 2014)
- *Poor Louie* by Tony Fucile (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2017)
- *The Family Book* by Todd Parr (NY, NY: Little Brown Books, 2010)
- *Love Makes a Family* by Sophie Beer (NY, NY: Dial Books, 2018)

**EXAMPLES OF ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- Share your birth story using a photo of yourself taken in the first days of your life and explain how you were welcomed into your family.
- Illustrate your family (drawing, collage) and describe your family to your classmates.
- Illustrate (drawing, collage) various family models (nuclear families, single-parent families, blended families, adoptive parents, same-sex parent families, etc.).

## REFERENCES

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3. Caron and Ahlgrim, 2012; Wurtele and Kenny, “Normative Sexuality Development in Childhood: Implications for Development Guidance and Prevention of Childhood Sexual Abuse,” *Counseling and Human Development* 43 No. 9 (May 2011): 1-24.
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<b>COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF SEXUALITY</b>	Elementary 6
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<b>Educational aim</b>	1) Become aware that sexuality is experienced and expressed through five dimensions	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b> <b>100 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF SEXUALITY WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 10 TO 12 YEARS OLD</b>
<p><b>Sexuality encompasses, but is not limited to, genitality and sexual behaviour.<sup>1</sup></b></p> <p><i>It comprises a number of dimensions<sup>2</sup> (e.g. biological,<sup>3</sup> affective,<sup>4</sup> interpersonal,<sup>5</sup> social,<sup>6</sup> psychological,<sup>7</sup> cultural,<sup>8</sup> ethical,<sup>9</sup> moral,<sup>10</sup> physical,<sup>11</sup> mental,<sup>12</sup> emotional<sup>13</sup> and economic<sup>14</sup>) that are expressed and experienced in different ways depending on a person's age and level of development.<sup>15</sup></i></p> <p>Sexuality is present right from birth. It is natural and develops throughout our lives, through the different stages involved in the overall development of children, adolescents and adults.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>Students in elementary school have access to different sources of information about sexuality (e.g. peers, family, the media).<sup>17</sup> The information conveyed is sometimes contradictory,<sup>18</sup> sometimes inaccurate<sup>19</sup> and most often related to the genital aspect of sexuality. Children and adolescents therefore need sexuality education that presents them with a positive view<sup>20</sup> of sexuality in all its dimensions.<sup>21</sup></p>	<p><b>Children 10 to 12 years old:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>start to gradually experience sexual attraction.<sup>22</sup> Some are more curious about sexuality, begin puberty, and experience their first romantic feelings and sexual interest, while others will go through this phase in secondary school.</li> </ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Become aware that sexuality is experienced and expressed through five dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological dimension: puberty, ability to reproduce</li> <li>• Psychoaffective dimension: feelings and emotions, romantic awakening, body image, need for independence</li> <li>• Socio-cultural dimension: norms, rules for living together, expectations, stereotypes</li> <li>• Interpersonal dimension: interpersonal relationships, communication, mutuality</li> <li>• Moral dimension: values, beliefs, choices</li> </ul>	<p><b>SEXUALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexuality is expressed throughout one’s life. It is a core aspect of a person’s identity, relationships with others, self-fulfillment and well-being. It is not limited to genitality and should not be reduced to sexual behaviour. Sexuality revolves around emotions and interpersonal relationships: the attitudes, values and feelings that a person experiences about themselves and others. Sexuality develops from knowledge, ways of thinking and various concepts, which are demonstrated through a variety of behaviours.<sup>23</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Sexuality and its dimensions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexuality comprises a number of dimensions: biological, psychoaffective, socio-cultural, interpersonal and moral. Sexuality is therefore composed of identity, the roles one adopts and self-expression (affection, friendship and love).<sup>24</sup></li> <li>• The dimensions of sexuality are interrelated. A person’s decisions, actions and life situations are often linked to more than one dimension. For example, feelings often guide actions. Social norms about sexuality also model how a person expresses themselves according to what they feel is acceptable or unacceptable.</li> </ul> <p><i>Biological dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The biological dimension concerns the sex assigned at birth (male/female), the body’s physiological responses, the body’s ability to reproduce, the physical changes (puberty) that are starting or have already started to occur, etc.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• This dimension also concerns body appreciation and whether or not a person is comfortable with their body.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• For students of this age, the biological dimension is significant because of puberty and the associated physical changes<sup>27</sup> that occur at this time.</li> </ul>	<p>*Some examples relate to more than one dimension of sexuality. The examples are associated with their “primary” dimension. Other “secondary” dimensions are sometimes indicated between parentheses.</p> <p><i>Biological dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My breasts have developed. I still feel a little embarrassed about putting on a bathing suit in front of other people. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>• My friend Jenny is getting her period. When will I get mine?</li> <li>• Sometimes, I get erections. I feel uncomfortable when it happens: I’m afraid that other people will notice. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>• I’ve noticed that my skin and hair are oilier than they used to be. Is that normal?</li> <li>• I’ve been having whitish discharge in my underwear. My mom gave me some panty liners and said it means that I’m going to get my first period soon.</li> <li>• When do girls stop growing? I’m already pretty tall compared to my friends.</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><i>Psychoaffective dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This dimension concerns feelings and emotions (friendship, love, attraction, romantic awakening), gender identity, sexual orientation and body image, among other things. It also refers to the way in which a person's feelings are expressed in their relationships with others.<sup>28</sup></li> <li>• During puberty, the psychoaffective dimension also affects the need for independence. At this age, there is a marked, growing need to distinguish oneself from others, to distance oneself a bit from one's parents and to expand one's social circle. Students of this age need social approval from their peers to maintain their self-image and self-esteem. Friends, the sense of belonging to a group and peer group references become increasingly important and contribute to the consolidation of one's identity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Socio-cultural dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way a person perceives themselves as an individual and how they perceive sexuality is shaped by their background, family and cultural values, and life experiences. This influences how they interact with others.<sup>29</sup></li> <li>• The socio-cultural dimension refers to norms, rules, laws, stereotypes and the expectations of others (family, friends, adults) and of society, in terms of how a person experiences and expresses their sexuality. It also dictates limits, whether real or assumed.<sup>30</sup></li> <li>• The models and messages presented in the media about sexuality and their influence on people are also part of this dimension. For students of this age, the socio-cultural dimension has a special connotation as they seek to define themselves as individuals. Their models (peers, family, extended group of family and friends, public figures) influence their tastes, style of dress, attitudes and behaviours. Thus, they have an effect on how students consolidate their identity.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Psychoaffective dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do our tastes change during puberty? (biological)</li> <li>• Why do parents make love if they don't want any more children? (moral)</li> <li>• I'm a girl. So why am I embarrassed to tell my female friend that I like her? (interpersonal)</li> <li>• I think I'm in love with Massimo. I get this funny feeling when I think about him. (interpersonal)</li> <li>• Ethan and Miley hold hands in the schoolyard. I think they're in love.</li> <li>• I want my parents to give me more freedom. I'm not a baby anymore.</li> <li>• I don't know if it's normal, but I'm not interested in girls.</li> </ul> <p><i>Socio-cultural dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think girls who skateboard are cool.</li> <li>• My parents don't want me to have a boyfriend until I'm 15. They say that before that, I'm too young. (moral)</li> <li>• There's this show on TV where a guy is presented with a bunch of girls, and he's supposed to choose one. That's weird, right? (moral)</li> <li>• Girls in music videos wear sexy clothes. We can't dress like that at school. (moral)</li> <li>• My aunts say that boys like to be active. I'm a girl and I like to be active, too.</li> <li>• Why are all the popular celebrities thin and beautiful? Do I have any chance of being popular one day even if I don't look like them? (biological)</li> </ul>



<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><i>Interpersonal dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interpersonal dimension of sexuality refers to emotional relationships with others and the skills they require (communicating, establishing meaningful relationships, negotiating and solving conflicts, etc.).</li> <li>• Students of this age continue to develop their social skills through their relationships with their peers and they sometimes experience their first romantic relationships. Their interpersonal circle broadens and becomes more complex. Family continues to be an important point of reference. Many students express the desire to have their own social network. School, friends and social groups (extracurricular activities, sports teams) help children of this age to explore new interpersonal realities and to become involved in increasingly meaningful emotional relationships.</li> </ul> <p><i>Moral dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This dimension is associated with the beliefs, principles and values that guide attitudes and behaviour with regard to sexuality. Respect, equality and openness to others influence the consolidation of one's identity, relationships with others and expression of sexuality. For students of this age, concern about understanding what is and is not appropriate in experiencing and expressing their sexuality is important.<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>	<p><i>Interpersonal dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I like Emily's group of friends. I'd like to hang out with them. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>• I think Tristan is really nice. He's cute, too. I'm too embarrassed to tell him I like him. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>• My friends and I are having a sleepover at my mom's house on Friday. I can't wait.</li> <li>• Two girls in my class have boyfriends.</li> <li>• My best friend hasn't spoken to me since we argued last Friday. It makes me really sad. I wish we'd make up. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>• There's a boy on my soccer team who I'd never spoken to much. Lately, I've gotten to know him better, and I think we could become friends. He's really funny. (psychoaffective)</li> </ul> <p><i>Moral dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it okay to masturbate or not? (socio-cultural, biological, psychoaffective)</li> <li>• At what age can you have a boyfriend or girlfriend? (interpersonal)</li> <li>• My parents won't let me invite a girl to sleep over. But they're okay with me inviting boys. I don't get it! (interpersonal, psychoaffective)</li> <li>• I heard my parents talking about divorce. It makes me really sad. Why do adults get married and promise to love each other forever if it's not true? (psychoaffective)</li> <li>• My cousin has already had three boyfriends since the beginning of the year. I heard my grandmother say</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
		that's way too many for a young girl. How many boyfriends are you allowed to have? (socio-cultural)

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND SEXUALITY AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

- Sexuality is a core aspect of identity. Sexuality is not associated with a specific age; however, the way it is experienced varies by age and each child develops and experiences their sexuality at their own pace.<sup>32</sup> Diversity is therefore a fundamental characteristic of sexuality.<sup>33</sup>
- Sexuality, viewed as a whole, is composed of several interrelated dimensions that influence children’s attitudes and behaviours.<sup>34</sup>
- “Desaulniers (2001) emphasizes that sexuality is a dimension of the person that affects their body, their identity, their interpersonal relationships and their social life. Human sexuality is not limited to its anatomical aspects and its purpose is not just reproduction. From this perspective, sexuality education is about supporting and guiding” a person’s overall development.<sup>35</sup> [Translation]
- Sexuality education helps young people to prepare for life in general, but more specifically, it helps prepare them to build and maintain satisfying relationships, contributes to the positive development of their personality and helps them to develop their ability to make their own decisions.<sup>36</sup>

#### CLARIFY THE VISION OF SEXUALITY AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROPOSED IN THE CONTENT

- **Sexuality is comprehensive.** It is experienced in the mind, the heart and the body. It has several dimensions: biological, psychoaffective, socio-cultural, interpersonal and moral.<sup>37</sup>
- **Sexuality plays a positive role in life.** It is a source of self-fulfillment, pleasure, encounters, appreciation of life, etc.
- **Sexuality is human potential.** Sexuality begins at birth (sexual being). This potential is a life-long human force.
- **Sexuality provokes curiosity.** Curiosity about sexuality is part of the human experience and is manifested all through life, regardless of age.
- **Sexuality education contributes to a person’s personal and social development.** It is a process of understanding, integrating and searching for meaning.<sup>38</sup>

#### BE AWARE THAT STUDENTS SEE A VARIETY OF REPRESENTATIONS OF SEXUALITY

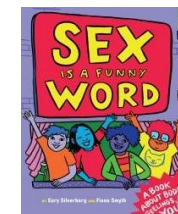
- Sexuality is present in the social environment and in the media. This means that children are exposed to images or messages related to sexuality on a regular basis (e.g. ads showing couples embracing, advertisements that make references to sexuality or sexual life to sell a product), which often go well beyond the biological dimension.
- Some of these images or messages present an accurate, diverse vision of sexuality that can help children develop their own representation of sexuality. For example, seeing images of people walking hand in hand, sitting next to a pregnant woman in a waiting room, or watching a film in which two characters fall in love are situations and images that enable children to gradually construct a comprehensive vision and understanding of sexuality.
- However, in the context in which sexualized images are increasingly prevalent in the media, many children have already been exposed to sexually explicit content depicting adult sexuality (e.g. music videos in which sexual actions are acted out, nudity, pornography, etc.). In the event that a child brings up such images, it is important to explain that they represent adult sexuality that is not appropriate for the child’s age.

## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

Books appropriate for Elementary 6 students that explain and illustrate the different dimensions of sexuality and that can be used in the classroom:

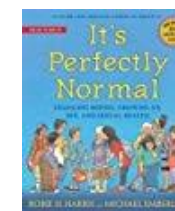
***Sex Is a Funny Word***, by Cory Silverberg (NY, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2015).

This book explores different kinds of sexuality and gender identification, with an emphasis on positive acceptance of one's body. Relevant pages or chapters can easily be selected for use with student groups.



***It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health***, by Robie H. Harris (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2015).

This book is about puberty and sexual health, updated and accessible to kids. Relevant pages or chapters can easily be selected for use with student groups.



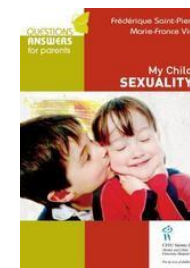
### For parents

Sexuality education is better consolidated and more effective when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process on cultivating a comprehensive view of sexuality at school. Strategies that help to support the role of parents include informing parents in advance of the sexuality education content to be addressed during the school year and, after teaching a theme, sending them a brief message inviting them to further discuss with their children the topics that have been covered in the classroom.

You can invite parents to consult the following links:

- The [capsules](#) for **elementary school** available on the Ministère de la santé et Services sociaux [website](#) as part of the Mosaïk project (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > La Capsule – Impliquer les parents dans l'éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English):
  - No. 1 – [Getting involved in your child's sex education: you can do it!](#)
  - No. 2 – [How do I answer questions about sex?](#)
- The [bulletin](#) for **elementary school** available on the Ministère de la santé et Services sociaux [website](#) as part of the Mosaïk project (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > Le Bulletin – Impliquer les parents dans l'éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English):
  - No. 9 – [Puberty](#)
- The guide produced by the Ministère de la santé et des Services sociaux, entitled [Transformations, Butterflies, Passions... and All Sorts of Questions](#), available on its [website](#)
  - This guide is intended to equip parents to help their children reflect on sexuality and therefore have more meaningful discussions with them.

- *My Child's Sexuality: Questions and Answers for Parents*, by Frédérique St-Pierre and Marie-France Viau (Montréal, Collection du CHU Sainte-Justine pour les parents, 2008)
- *Asking About Sex and Growing Up: A Question-and-Answer Book for Kids*, by Joanna Cole (Harper Collins , 2009)  
This book offers information to preteens about sex and puberty in an accessible question-and-answer format. Relevant pages or chapters can easily be selected for use with student groups.



## BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes

### PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO ELEMENTARY 6 STUDENTS

- Content under the theme “Comprehensive View of Sexuality” can serve as an introduction to sexuality education content for the year. This theme introduces the various dimensions of sexuality and provides an understanding of how sexuality is experienced and expressed through these dimensions.

### OBSERVE THE CONTENT PROGRESSION FOR THE THEME “COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF SEXUALITY” IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- In **Elementary 1**, students were led to understand sexuality based on three major components: understanding that sexuality occurs in the mind, the body and the heart.
- In **Elementary 3**, students were led to become aware that there are different aspects to sexuality, without exploring each dimension in detail. This content enables students to become aware of how sexuality is expressed around them.
- The content of the theme “Comprehensive View of Sexuality” in **Elementary 6** aims to help students to become familiar with the dimensions of sexuality. The educational aim involves a greater degree of complexity in terms of understanding these dimensions.

### PREPARE THE MATERIALS FOR THE ACTIVITY

- Prepare the required materials:
  - Print copies of the two appendices for each student.
- Plan communication with parents.

### **PLAN THE CONTEXT FOR THE ACTIVITY**

- To ensure a classroom atmosphere conducive to discussion and in which all students have a place to ask questions, it is suggested that you lay out class rules to help the discussion on sexuality run smoothly. For inspiration when establishing rules for classroom discussion, you can consult pages 39-40 of the document [Sex Education in the Context of Education Reform](#) produced by the Ministère.

### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

- Keep in mind that talking about sexuality is embarrassing for some students. Most do not yet engage in any sexual behaviours with a partner, and some may feel that the content doesn't concern them. It is therefore important to clearly explain the educational aim, which states that, throughout one's life, sexuality is experienced and expressed through various dimensions.
- Respect each student's pace of development and experience, as these will differ from one student to another. Some children may feel more affected or concerned by a topic, regardless of their experience.
- Let the students know that their feelings toward sexuality education are normal and invite them to share these feelings with a trusted adult, if they wish to do so.
- Listen carefully to what the students say. Their answers or comments could be hiding discomfort or questions that should be revisited when addressing the topic at a later time.

### **BE OPEN TO ANSWERING STUDENTS' QUESTIONS**

- Children's questions about sexuality often concern birth, the parts of the body, gender roles and gender stereotypes. Giving honest and simple answers to their questions has a dual impact: it legitimizes their concerns and helps them to find answers, while also enabling and validating the open discussion of sexuality.
- The fact that adults answer children's questions
  - encourages children to turn to a trusted adult to find the answers and support they need
  - increases the chances of seeing children benefit from accurate information that is appropriate for their level of development
- To be better equipped to answer the students' questions, refer to the guidelines provided in the document *Answering Student Questions*. The document emphasizes the importance of limiting answers to the questions that are asked to avoid getting ahead of the children's level of development. The document also outlines four steps to formulating an answer: determine the type of question, validate the meaning of the question, ask the group and answer by informing, reframing, reassuring or encouraging reflection.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in elementary education should:

- emphasize the positive role that sexuality plays in our lives<sup>39</sup> and not focus only on the “risks” associated with it or on prevention<sup>40</sup>
- prepare students for the content that will be covered under other themes in sexuality education
- establish a climate of trust that is conducive to sharing and discussing

### Key messages

- Sexuality is experienced and expressed through five distinct yet interrelated dimensions. Recognizing them helps develop a more comprehensive view of sexuality.
- Being aware of the dimensions of sexuality gives people a greater understanding of how sexuality is experienced and expressed.

### INTRODUCTION

- To introduce the activity, ask students to explain, in their own words, what sexuality is.
- Invite them to refer to what they learned about sexuality in previous years.
- Review the students’ prior knowledge related to the theme "Comprehensive View of Sexuality" based on the following key messages:
  - Sexuality is present at birth and is expressed all throughout life.
  - Sexuality occurs in your body (your birth, the parts of your body, your five senses), your heart (your feelings, your emotions) and your mind (the questions you ask yourself about sexuality, the way you perceive yourself, how you compare yourself with others and when you are proud of the person you are).
  - Sexuality is expressed around us: in our personal environment (family, friends, peers) and society, including the media (newspapers, Internet, advertisements). The personal environment and the media convey different messages and different images about sexuality.
- Name the other sexuality education content that will be presented in Elementary 6.
- Present the educational aim to the students.
- Present sexuality and its dimensions using the “Explanations concerning content” section.
- Hand out the diagram on the dimensions of sexuality (Appendix 1) as a visual aid for the presentation.
- Use a few examples from the “Examples from the lives of children” section at the beginning of this document (1 or 2 per dimension) or come up with new examples to ensure greater understanding. The other examples can be used in the next activity.

#### *ACTIVITY: Questionnaire on the dimensions of sexuality*

- Present the questionnaire on the five dimensions of sexuality (Appendix 2) and distribute copies to the students.
- Have students work in teams to read, reflect on and discuss each example they've been given in order to identify the corresponding dimension or dimensions. Specify that some examples can be associated with more than one dimension; in such cases, they should check more than one box on the questionnaire.
- Once students have completed the exercise, ask them to come up with their own examples for each dimension.
- Review the exercise with the whole group to share the answers and highlight the reasons behind each answer.
- Use this exchange to reassure students, answer their questions, normalize the diversity of their experiences and develop their critical thinking.

#### *CONCLUSION*

- At the end, ask students to summarize what they've learned, in their own words.
- Conclude with the following **key messages**:
  - Sexuality is experienced and expressed through five distinct yet interrelated dimensions. Recognizing them helps develop a more comprehensive vision of sexuality.
  - Being aware of the dimensions of sexuality gives people a greater understanding of how sexuality is experienced and expressed.



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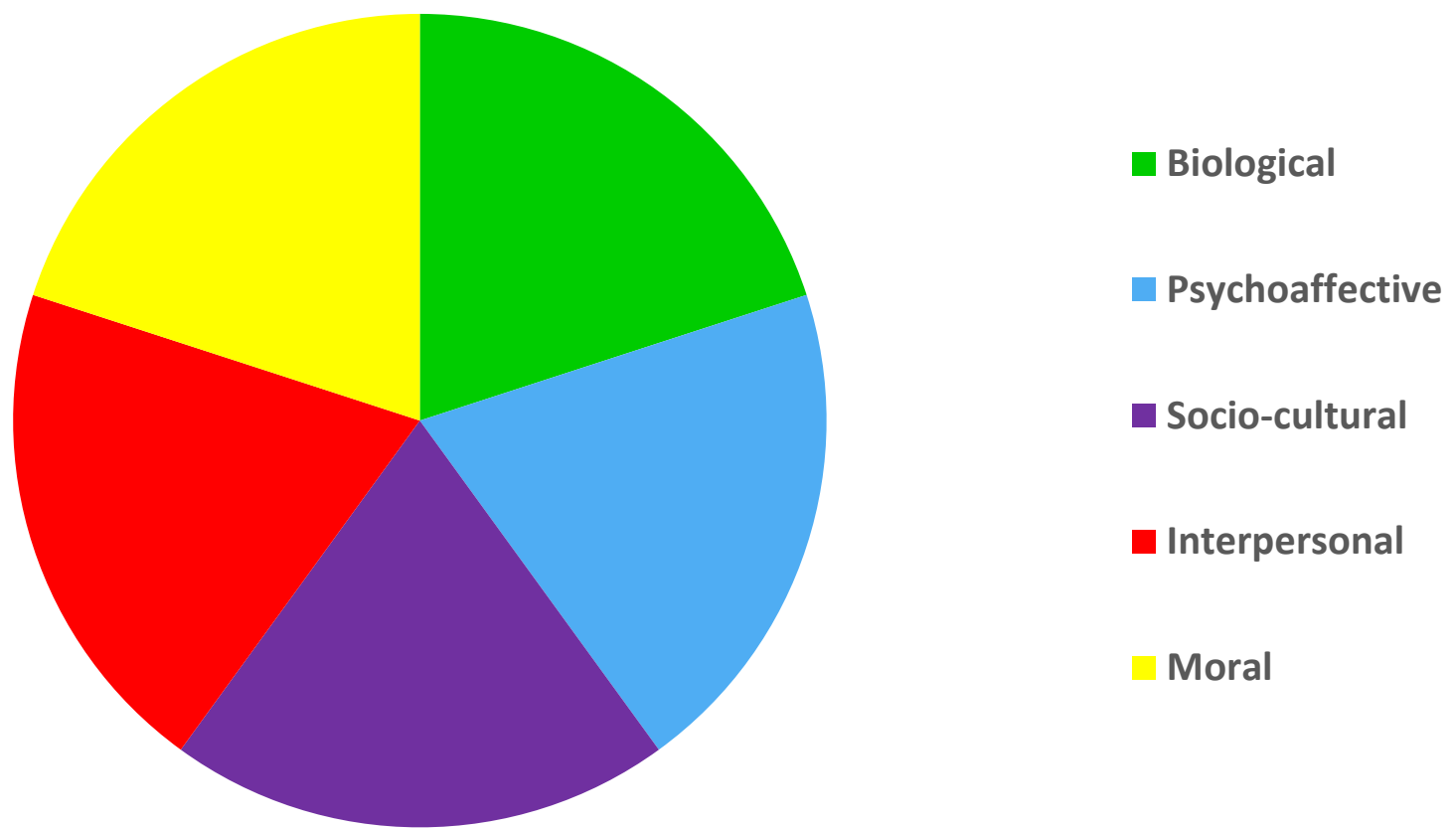
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Dimensions of sexuality



## APPENDIX 2: Dimensions of sexuality

	Examples	Biological	Psychoaffective	Socio-cultural	Interpersonal	Moral
1.	My friend Jenny is getting her period. When will I get mine?					
2.	Girls in music videos wear sexy clothes. We can't dress like that at school.					
3.	I think Tristan is really nice. He's cute, too. I'm too embarrassed to tell him I like him.					
4.	I've been having whitish discharge in my underwear. My mother gave me some panty liners and said it means that I'm going to get my first period soon.					
5.	My parents won't let me invite a girl to sleep over. But they're okay with me inviting boys. I don't get it!					
6.	I don't know if it's normal, but I'm not interested in girls.					
7.	My aunts say that boys like to be active. I'm a girl and I like to be active too.					
8.	Will I eventually have to kiss someone with my tongue, like in the movies? I don't want to, I find it kind of disgusting.					
9.	I think girls who skateboard are cool.					
10.	I heard my parents talking about divorce. It makes me really sad. Why do adults get married and promise to love each other forever if it's not true?					
11.	Why do our tastes change during puberty?					
12.	At what age can you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?					
13.	My friends and I are having a sleepover at my mom's house on Friday. I can't wait.					
14.	I think I'm in love with Massimo. I get this funny feeling when I think about him.					

	Examples	Biological	Psychoaffective	Socio-cultural	Interpersonal	Moral
15.	I like Emily's group of friends. I'd like to hang out with them.					
16.	Why do parents make love if they don't want any more children?					
17.	Sometimes, I get erections. I feel uncomfortable when it happens: I'm afraid that other people will notice.					
18.	My best friend hasn't spoken to me since we argued last Friday. It makes me very sad. I wish we'd make up.					
19.	My parents don't want me to have a boyfriend until I'm 15. They say that before that, I'm too young.					
20.	There's a boy on my soccer team who I'd never spoken to much. Lately I've gotten to know him better, and I think we could become friends. He's really funny.					
22.	Why are all the popular celebrities thin and beautiful? Do I have any chance of being popular one day even if I don't look like them?					
23.	My cousin has already had three boyfriends since the beginning of the year. I heard my grandmother say that's way too many for a young girl. How many boyfriends are you allowed to have?					
24.	When do girls stop growing? I'm already pretty tall compared to my friends.					
25.	My breasts have developed. I still feel a little embarrassed about putting on a bathing suit in front of other people.					
26.	Is it okay to masturbate or not?					
27.	There's this show on TV where a guy is presented with a bunch of girls, and he's supposed to choose one. That's weird, right?					
28.	Two girls in my class have boyfriends.					
29.	I've noticed that my skin and hair are oilier than they used to be. Is that normal?					
30.	I want my parents to give me more freedom. I'm not a baby anymore.					

**APPENDIX 3: Dimensions of sexuality**

	Examples	Biological	Psychoaffective	Socio-cultural	Interpersonal	Moral
1.	My friend Jenny is getting her period. When will I get mine?	x				
2.	Girls in music videos wear sexy clothes. We can't dress like that at school.			x		x
3.	I think Tristan is really nice. He's cute, too. I'm too embarrassed to tell him I like him.		x		x	
4.	I've been having whitish discharge in my underwear. My mother gave me some panty liners and said it means that I'm going to get my first period soon.	x				
5.	My parents won't let me invite a girl to sleep over. But they're okay with me inviting boys. I don't get it!		x		x	x
6.	I don't know if it's normal, but I'm not interested in girls.		x			
7.	My aunts say that boys like to be active. I'm a girl and I like to be active too.			x		
8.	Will I eventually have to kiss someone with my tongue, like in the movies? I don't want to, I find it kind of disgusting.	x	x	x		x
9.	I think girls who skateboard are cool.			x		
10.	I heard my parents talking about divorce. It makes me really sad. Why do adults get married and promise to love each other forever if it's not true?		x			x
11.	Why do our tastes change during puberty?	x	x			
12.	At what age can you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?				x	x
13.	My friends and I are having a sleepover at my mom's house on Friday. I can't wait.				x	
14.	I think I'm in love with Massimo. I get this funny feeling when I think about him.	x	x			

	Examples	Biological	Psychoaffective	Socio-cultural	Interpersonal	Moral
15.	I like Emily's group of friends. I'd like to hang out with them.		x		x	
16.	Why do parents make love if they don't want any more children?		x			x
17.	Sometimes, I get erections. I feel uncomfortable when it happens: I'm afraid that other people will notice.	x	x			
18.	My best friend hasn't spoken to me since we argued last Friday. It makes me very sad. I wish we'd make up.		x		x	
19.	My parents don't want me to have a boyfriend until I'm 15. They say that before that, I'm too young.			x		x
20.	There's a boy on my soccer team who I'd never spoken to much. Lately I've gotten to know him better, and I think we could become friends. He's really funny.		x		x	
22.	Why are all the popular celebrities thin and beautiful? Do I have any chance of being popular one day even if I don't look like them?	x		x		
23.	My cousin has already had three boyfriends since the beginning of the year. I heard my grandmother say that's way too many for a young girl. How many boyfriends are you allowed to have?			x		x
24.	When do girls stop growing? I'm already pretty tall compared to my friends.	x				
25.	My breasts have developed. I still feel a little embarrassed about putting on a bathing suit in front of other people.	x	x			
26.	Is it okay to masturbate or not?	x	x	x		x
27.	There's this show on TV where a guy is presented with a bunch of girls, and he's supposed to choose one. That's weird, right?			x		x
28.	Two girls in my class have boyfriends.				x	
29.	I've noticed that my skin and hair are oilier than they used to be. Is that normal?	x				
30.	I want my parents to give me more freedom. I'm not a baby anymore.		x			

## COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF SEXUALITY

Secondary I

### Educational aim

- 1) Become aware that during adolescence, you will gradually adopt new roles and behaviours related to your sexuality and increasingly make your own decisions

Estimated duration of the activity

150 minutes

### LEARNING ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF SEXUALITY WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS 12 TO 13 YEARS OLD

Secondary school students experience numerous changes in the area of sexuality. They:<sup>1</sup>

- consolidate their gender identity<sup>2</sup>
- become aware of their sexual orientation
- engage in emotional and romantic relationships<sup>3</sup>
- progressively experiment with sexual behaviours<sup>4</sup>
- develop their capacity for emotional and sexual intimacy<sup>5</sup>

These experiences are sources of learning, but they can also induce students to question themselves<sup>6</sup> when they are exposed to different sources of contradictory information.<sup>7</sup>

#### Adolescents 12 to 14 years old:<sup>8</sup>

- are starting or going through puberty
- want to be accepted by others
- are consolidating their gender identity
- may be experiencing romantic awakening
- begin to gradually experience sexual awakening, which means that some adolescents are more curious about sexuality and ask more questions
- experience a stronger desire to be close to their peers, whether in the context of friendship or of romantic relationships

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Become aware that during adolescence, you will gradually adopt new roles and behaviours related to your sexuality and increasingly make your own decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexuality and its dimensions: biological, psychoaffective, socio-cultural, interpersonal and moral</li> <li>Construction of a vision and personal choices: wishes, needs, limits and the ability to consider those of others, whether or not to follow various gender stereotypes and social norms, strategies for finding information and help</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexuality is expressed throughout one’s life. It is a core aspect of a person’s identity, relationships with others, self-fulfillment and well-being. It is not limited to genitality and should not be reduced to sexual behaviour. Sexuality revolves around emotions and interpersonal relationships: the attitudes, values and feelings experienced about oneself and others. Sexuality develops from knowledge, ways of thinking and various concepts, which are demonstrated through a variety of behaviours.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Sexuality and its dimensions</b></p> <p>Sexuality comprises a number of dimensions. The students covered these concepts in Elementary 6. This content serves as a review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexuality comprises a number of dimensions: biological, psychoaffective, socio-cultural, interpersonal and moral. Sexuality is therefore composed of identity, the roles one assumes and self-expression (affection, friendship and love).<sup>10</sup></li> <li>The dimensions of sexuality are interrelated. A person’s decisions, actions and life situations are often linked to more than one dimension. For example, feelings often guide actions. Social norms about sexuality also model how people express themselves according to what they feel is acceptable or unacceptable.</li> </ul> <p><i>Biological dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The biological dimension concerns the sex assigned at birth, the body’s physiological responses (erection, lubrication, ejaculation), the body’s ability to reproduce (production of egg cells and sperm cells) and the physical changes associated with puberty that are starting or have already begun.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dimensions of sexuality</b></p> <p><i>*Some examples relate to more than one dimension of sexuality. The examples are associated with their “primary” dimension. Other “secondary” dimensions are sometimes indicated between parentheses.</i></p> <p><i>Biological</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last night, I wet the sheets. I think this is called a wet dream. How can I stop this from happening again? It’s embarrassing. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>I’ve started to get pubic hair. Would it be better if I got rid of it?</li> <li>Sometimes, I wake up feeling sad or angry. I don’t understand what makes me feel this way. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>I think my penis is too small. How old do I have to be before it gets bigger?</li> </ul>



<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><i>Psychoaffective dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This dimension concerns feelings and emotions (friendship, love, attraction, romantic awakening), gender identity, sexual orientation and body image, among other things. It also refers to the way in which a person’s feelings are expressed in relationships with others.</li> <li>• In adolescence, there is a marked need to distinguish oneself from others, to distance oneself a bit from one’s parents and to expand one’s social circle. Friends and peer group references are also important and contribute to the consolidation of one’s identity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Socio-cultural dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way people perceive themselves as individuals and how they perceive sexuality is shaped by their background, family and cultural values, and life experiences. This influences how they interact with others.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• The socio-cultural dimension refers to norms, rules, laws, stereotypes and the expectations of others (family, friends, adults) and of society, in terms of how people experience and express their sexuality.</li> <li>• The models and messages presented in the media about sexuality and their influence on people are also part of this dimension. During adolescence, the socio-cultural dimension has a special connotation. Adolescents’ models (peers, family, extended group of family and friends, public figures) influence their tastes, style of dress, attitudes and behaviours. Thus, they have an effect on how students consolidate their identity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Interpersonal dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interpersonal dimension of sexuality refers to emotional relationships with others and the skills they require: communicating, establishing meaningful relationships, negotiating and solving conflicts, etc.</li> <li>• Family continues to be an important point of reference. Many students express the desire to have their own social network. School, friends and social groups (extracurricular activities, sports teams) help adolescents to explore new interpersonal realities and to become involved in increasingly meaningful emotional relationships.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Psychoaffective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think I’m in love with my best friend. Should I tell him? (interpersonal)</li> <li>• I get jealous when my friends make new friends. (interpersonal)</li> <li>• I think about Charles all the time. He’s really cute and so funny. I wish he were my boyfriend. (interpersonal)</li> <li>• A girl friend told me that she was in love with me. The problem is that I like someone else. I’m afraid she’ll be hurt if I tell her.</li> </ul> <p><i>Socio-cultural</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the couples I know have split up. What’s the point of being in a couple?</li> <li>• My parents told me that I should wait until I’m married to have sex. I’m not sure I agree. (moral)</li> <li>• My mother told me that it’s up to boys to ask girls out, not the other way around.</li> <li>• I was sure that when my older brother came out, my family and his friends would turn their backs on him. In the end, everything turned out fine. (psychoaffective)</li> </ul> <p><i>Interpersonal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My parents want us to go on a family vacation, but I’d rather stay here with my friends and my girlfriend.</li> <li>• My girlfriend wants us to touch each other. I want to, but I’m afraid that I won’t know what to do. It’s embarrassing. (psychoaffective)</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><i>Moral dimension</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This dimension is associated with the beliefs, principles and values that guide attitudes and behaviour with regard to sexuality. Respect, equality and openness to others influence the consolidation of one's identity, relationships with others and expression of sexuality. For students of this age, concern about understanding what is and is not appropriate in experiencing and expressing their sexuality is important.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Construction of a vision and personal choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adolescents must be increasingly aware of who they are so as to take on new roles, adopt new behaviours and make decisions that meet their needs. However, being yourself and having self-respect, in addition to gaining acceptance in a group, is a challenge during adolescence.</li> <li>The norm established in the peer group and the sense of belonging to a group are important factors that affect many aspects of adolescents' behaviour.<sup>13</sup> Peer approval contributes to maintaining their self-image and self-esteem.</li> <li>New feelings specific to early adolescence (e.g. wanting to have more control over their own life, feeling misunderstood by the people around them who see them as a child) also influence the new roles that adolescents take on and the new behaviours they</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My friend and I are both in love with the same person. I'm afraid this will ruin our friendship. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>For now, I don't really want a boyfriend.</li> </ul> <p><i>Moral</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think you should be in love with someone before you kiss them. (psychoaffective, socio-cultural)</li> <li>My father makes homophobic jokes, and it makes me feel ashamed of him. I don't understand what he thinks is funny about homosexuality. (psychoaffective)</li> <li>Is it okay to masturbate? Or should I not do it? (socio-cultural)</li> <li>I get the impression that it's not okay for girls to like sexuality, but that it is okay for boys. I think that's ridiculous. (socio-cultural)</li> <li>After how many months of dating is it okay to have sex? (socio-cultural)</li> </ul> <p><b>Construction of a vision and personal choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is my first time in a relationship. I'm embarrassed that other people know that.</li> <li>I found a website where you can ask questions and get answers from professionals.</li> <li>Mia wants me to tell my mom that <i>her</i> mom will be at the party tonight, but that's not true. I don't know what to do. I want to go to Mia's party, but if my mom found out . . .</li> <li>The other day, I was looking up puberty on the Internet because I don't think I'm growing fast</li> </ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p>adopt. Adolescents want to develop their own identity and distance themselves from adults, but they still need to feel a sense of security and support for these aspects to develop as they should.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To construct their own view of sexuality and make their own choices, adolescents need:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ to be clear about their own wishes, needs and boundaries regarding sexuality and to develop their ability to consider those of other people</li><li>○ to reflect on whether or not to adopt various gender stereotypes and norms</li><li>○ to develop various strategies for searching for information, seeking help, etc.</li></ul></li><li>• During adolescence, gradually becoming more independent leads to making new decisions. Acquiring the skills to make well-informed decisions that foster self-fulfillment and self-respect requires practice.</li></ul>	<p>enough. I found a lot of information. So much that now I'm a bit confused. How do you know what's true and what isn't?</p>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### REMEMBER YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE AS AN ADOLESCENT

- To deepen your understanding of the new roles and behaviours associated with adolescent sexuality, recall your own changes and the decisions you made when you were an adolescent. Call up your own memories about:
  - jokes that you didn't understand at the time, but that you understood later
  - how you felt about the changes taking place in your body during puberty
  - the role your friends and family played and their influence on your sexuality
  - your first romantic and sexual experiences
  - what you did not know and what would have been useful for you to know about sexuality at that age
  - your resources for obtaining information or advice about adolescent sexuality

#### TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND SEXUALITY AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS

- Sexuality is a core aspect of identity. Sexuality is not associated with a specific age; however, the way it is experienced varies by age and all adolescents develop and experience their sexuality at their own pace.<sup>14</sup> Diversity is therefore a fundamental characteristic of sexuality.<sup>15</sup>
- Sexuality, viewed as a whole, is composed of several interrelated dimensions that influence adolescents' decisions and critical thinking.<sup>16</sup>
- "Desaulniers (2001) emphasizes that sexuality is a dimension of the person that affects their body, their identity, their interpersonal relationships and their social life. Human sexuality is not limited to its anatomical aspects and its purpose is not just reproduction. From this perspective, sexuality education is about supporting and guiding" a person's overall development.<sup>17</sup>  
[Translation]
- Sexuality education helps young people to prepare for life in general, but more specifically, it helps prepare them to build and maintain satisfying relationships, contributes to the positive development of their personality and helps them to develop their ability to make their own decisions.<sup>18</sup>

#### CLARIFY THE VISION OF SEXUALITY AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROPOSED IN THE CONTENT

- **Sexuality is comprehensive.** It is experienced in the mind, the heart and the body. It has several dimensions: biological, psychoaffective, socio-cultural, interpersonal and moral.
- **Sexuality plays a positive role in life.** It is a source of self-fulfillment, pleasure, encounters, appreciation of life, etc.
- **Sexuality is human potential.** Sexuality begins at birth (sexual being). This potential is a life-long human force.
- **Sexuality provokes curiosity.** Curiosity about sexuality is part of the human experience and is manifested all through life, regardless of age.
- **Sexuality education contributes to a person's personal and social development.** It is a process of understanding, integrating and searching for meaning with regard to one's sexuality.<sup>19</sup>

## BE FAMILIAR WITH THE ROLE OF PUBERTY

The physical and psychological changes associated with puberty gradually lead a child through adolescence to adulthood. They contribute to the development and consolidation of identity, particularly gender identity.

- The following physical **changes** are associated with puberty:
  - **growth**: increase in height and weight, and changes in body shape (broadening of the shoulders, development of muscles through the effect of male hormones [testosterone], rounding of the hips and narrowing of the waist through the effect of female hormones [estrogen, progesterone]).
  - **growth of body hair**: pubis, underarms, legs, chest, face, etc.
  - **development of breasts**, sometimes also in boys (but which later stabilizes)
  - **voice changes**, especially in boys
  - increased **perspiration** and associated odour
  - glandular secretions that make **the skin oilier** and that may cause pimples and acne, particularly on the face, back and chest
  - **development of the genitals**: the penis grows in length and girth; the testicles and the scrotum gain volume; the labia minora increase in size and may extend beyond the labia majora; the skin of the genitals may become darker
  - **start of fertility**: production of sperm cells and egg cells, ejaculation, whitish vaginal discharge associated with the menstrual cycle, menstruation
  - **physical signs of sexual awakening related to hormones**: more frequent erections and vaginal lubrication (signs of sexual arousal), dreams, nocturnal emissions
- Adolescents gradually become aware of the changes in their body and must adapt to them. These changes influence their identity. Adolescents therefore:
  - have to accept that their **child's body** is turning into an adolescent's body
  - wonder what their body will look once these changes are complete
  - **compare their body to the bodies of others**, especially in terms of their appearance and growth rate
  - adjust their **perception of themselves and their body** as their body changes
- The **psychological** changes associated with puberty may result in:
  - a greater concern for their appearance
  - a greater need for modesty and intimacy (e.g. no longer wanting their parents to see them naked or enter their bedroom)
  - fluctuating emotions and mood swings (e.g. going from laughter to tears)
  - a greater need for autonomy and independence
  - a questioning of authority
  - a greater concern for the judgement and opinions of others
- The **psychological** changes associated with puberty influence identity because they lead adolescents, who are distancing themselves from their parents, to define what they want to be and who they are. Puberty also allows them to access a new social standing as adolescents and as adults, as well as new responsibilities.

## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

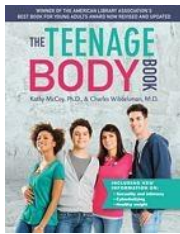
Books intended for adolescents that cover a wide range of subjects that are important to them:



***Asking About Sex and Growing Up: A Question-and-Answer Book for Kids***, by Joanna Cole (NY, NY: HarperCollins, 2009).

This book offers information to preteens about sex and puberty in an accessible question-and-answer format.

Relevant pages or chapters can easily be selected for use with student groups.



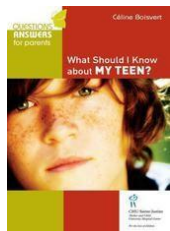
***The Teenage Body Book***, by Kathy McCoy and Charles Wibbelsman (Hobart, NY: Hatherleigh Press, 2016).

This book covers teenage nutrition, health, fitness, emotions and sexuality, and has been updated for the 21st century to include cyberbullying, sexting and new attitudes about genders.

### For parents

Sexuality education is better consolidated and more effective when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process on cultivating a comprehensive view of sexuality at school. You can encourage parents to consult the following links:

- The [capsules](#) for **secondary school** available on the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux [website](#) as part of the Mosaïk project (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > La Capsule > Impliquer les parents dans l'éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English):
  - No. 4 – [Getting Involved in Your Child's Sex Education: You Can Do It!](#)
  - No. 11 – [How Do You Answer Questions About Sex?](#)
  - No. 12 – [Resources on Sexuality for Children and Parents](#)
- The guide produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, entitled [Transformations, Butterflies, Passions . . . and All Sorts of Questions. Parents' Guide for Discussing Sexuality With Their Teens](#), available on its [website](#).



***What Should I Know About My Teen?*** by Céline Boisvert (Montréal: Éditions du CHU Sainte-Justine, 2009).

- The “[Sex](#)” section of the [Tel-jeunes](#) website (under All Topics > Sex)
- “[A Parent's Guide to Surviving the Teen Years](#),” an article reviewed by Steven Dowshen, MD, and available on the [KidsHealth](#) website (under For Parents > Growth and Development)

## **BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes**

### **PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO SECONDARY I STUDENTS**

- Content under the theme “Comprehensive View of Sexuality” can serve as an introduction to sexuality education content for the year. This theme introduces students to the various dimensions of sexuality, helps them to become aware of the impacts of entering adolescence and enables them to make independent decisions.

### **PLAN THE CONTEXT FOR THE ACTIVITY**

- To ensure a classroom atmosphere conducive to discussion and in which all students have a place to ask questions, it is suggested that you lay out class rules to help the discussion on sexuality run smoothly. For inspiration when establishing rules for classroom discussion, you can consult pages 39–40 of the document [Sex Education in the Context of Education Reform](#) produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur.

### **BE OPEN TO ANSWERING STUDENTS' QUESTIONS**

- Young people's questions about sexuality often concern romantic awakening, attraction, seduction, gender roles and gender stereotypes. Giving honest and simple answers to their questions has a dual impact: it legitimizes their concerns and helps them to find answers, while also enabling and validating the open discussion of sexuality.
- The fact that adults answer adolescents' questions:
  - encourages them to turn to a trusted adult to find the answers and support they need
  - increases the chances of seeing adolescents benefit from accurate information that is appropriate for their level of development
- To be better equipped to answer the students' questions, refer to the guidelines provided in the document *Answering Students' Questions* produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. The document emphasizes the importance of limiting answers to the questions that are asked to avoid getting ahead of the adolescents' level of development. The document also outlines four steps to formulating an answer: determine the type of question, validate the meaning of the question, ask the group and answer by informing, reframing, reassuring or encouraging reflection.

### **PREPARE THE MATERIALS FOR THE ACTIVITY**

- Print copies of the documents that are useful for the activity.
- Plan communication with parents.

### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

- Keep in mind that talking about sexuality and the changes that occur during adolescence is embarrassing for some students. Most do not yet engage in any sexual behaviours with a partner, and some may feel that the content doesn't concern them. It is therefore important to thoroughly explain the main part of the educational aim which is to become aware of the effects that entering adolescence will have on one's future sexuality.
- Respect each student's pace of development and experience, as these will differ from one student to another. Some young people may feel more affected by or concerned by a topic, regardless of their experience.
- Let the students know that their feelings toward sexuality education are normal and invite them to share these feelings with a trusted adult, if they wish to do so.
- Listen carefully to what the students say. Their answers or comments could be hiding discomfort or questions that should be revisited when addressing the topic at a later time.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken with secondary school students should:

- be consistent with that taken at the elementary level, where students begin to develop a positive, comprehensive view of sexuality
- emphasize the positive role that sexuality plays in our lives<sup>20</sup> and not focus only on the “risks” associated with it or on prevention<sup>21</sup>
- help young people face the challenges posed by their sexuality

### Key messages

- Sexuality, viewed as a whole, is influenced by the interaction of several dimensions that have an impact on roles and behaviours.
- To make decisions that meet their needs, adolescents have to understand themselves and make choices that reflect self-respect. However, understanding themselves and having self-respect, in addition to winning acceptance from their peers, is a real challenge during adolescence.
- To make decisions that foster self-fulfillment and that meet their desires and their needs, adolescents need to give themselves time to reflect so that they can think critically about the behaviours and the attitudes to adopt. Guidance, support and help with these processes can be beneficial to them.

### INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the “Comprehensive View of Sexuality” theme by presenting the educational aim in your own words.
- If the atmosphere is conducive, ask the students to brainstorm about **sex** and **sexuality** to distinguish between the two concepts. To summarize the two concepts: sex is the acts we carry out, while sexuality is more comprehensive; it is about who we are.
- Complete the definition of sexuality based on the information in the “Explanations concerning content” section, under the heading “Sexuality.”
- Review the five dimensions of sexuality covered in Elementary 6, referring to the information in the “Explanations concerning content” section, under the heading “Sexuality and its dimensions.”
- Present to the students two or three examples for each dimension of sexuality from the “Examples from the lives of adolescents” section. The other examples can serve as further illustration or as inspiration for the next activity.

### ACTIVITY: *Examples of the dimensions of sexuality*

- Ask the students to reflect on further examples. An example briefly describes what adolescents experience in connection with sexuality, illustrates the changes that occur during adolescence, and explains the students’ concerns or their questions. The students can draw on their experience, that of their friends or what they know about sexuality during adolescence as a whole.



- Divide the students into teams and assign them a dimension of sexuality. More than one team can work on the same dimension. Appoint one person per team to write down the examples and one to act as spokesperson.
- Hand out Appendix 1 to each team and ask the students to come up with new examples linked to the dimension of sexuality they were assigned and to write them down on this sheet.
- Review with the class and invite each team to share their examples.
- Discuss with the students the various roles and behaviours in connection with adolescent sexuality and ask them to identify other dimensions that can be linked to the examples. Take advantage of each example to reassure students, answer their questions, normalize the diversity of their experiences and develop their critical thinking.
- If necessary, suggest examples from the “Examples from the lives of adolescents” section and ask the students to discuss them and to associate them with one or more dimension. Here are a few questions that can feed the discussion:
  - Which dimensions are also presented in this example?
  - How would you answer the adolescent? What would you say to them?
  - Do all adolescents react the same way and what could influence their behaviours?
- At the end of the activity, help the students to gain awareness of the many new roles and behaviours associated with sexuality that are established in adolescence. Coming to terms with these changes through the various dimensions of their sexuality allows them to better understand themselves and therefore be better prepared to make informed decisions that are in line with their needs.
- Have the students ask their parents how they experienced the changes to various roles, behaviours and decision-making in adolescence. The students who wish to share their parents’ answers with their classmates will be invited to do so next class.
- Conclude the activity with the following **key message**: Sexuality, viewed as a whole, is influenced by the interaction of several dimensions that have an impact on roles and behaviours, including making decisions. Making decisions is an ability people develop over time and that requires reflection and practice. This issue will be further explored in part two of the activity.

#### *ACTIVITY: Decision-making*

- Ask the students to share with the class their parents’ experience of when they were adolescents. Remind the students that everyone goes through these changes and must learn to come to terms with them to be better able to assert and understand themselves.
- Propose the *Decision-making* activity to the students (using the scenarios). The goal is for them to develop their ability to reflect when making decisions in order to meet their needs and respect their own choices.
- Divide the students into teams and assign them a scenario (Appendix 2). The number of teams may vary, but if it exceeds the number of scenarios (five), more than one team can work on the same scenario. Appoint one person per team to write down the team reflections and one to act as spokesperson.
- Give each team a copy of Appendix 3 and of their scenario. The students should put themselves in the shoes of the person featured in the scenario and ask a variety of questions before coming

to a decision. Team members can formulate their answers based on the scenario or on their own reflections.

- Ask the students to share with the class their scenario, the reflections that helped them make a decision and the difficulties they encountered within their team when making this decision. Specify that decisions can vary from one person to another, depending on the influence of each dimension of sexuality.
- Ask the other students to contribute further thoughts when necessary.
- Conclude the activity using the following **key message**: To make decisions that meet their needs, adolescents have to understand themselves and make choices that reflect self-respect. However, understanding themselves and having self-respect, in addition to winning acceptance from their peers, is a real challenge during adolescence.
- Another suggested avenue for reflection draws its inspiration from the concept of **I-D-E-A-L**<sup>22</sup> problem-solving to optimize the decision-making process.
  - **I**dentify the problem
  - **D**escribe all the ways you might solve the problem
  - **E**valuate all the possible solutions
  - **A**ct on one of the solutions and try it out
  - **L**earn if your solution solved the problem effectively

**ACTIVITY: Seeking help**

- To introduce the last activity, draw on the information in the “Explanations concerning content” section, under the heading “Construction of a vision and personal choices.”
- Ask the students to make a list of the resources that could provide them with information or advice to help them make decisions about sexuality. If necessary, use examples of the resources below to aid reflection.

Personal resources	School resources	Outside resources
Parents	Professionals	Healthcare network
Family	School personnel	Community organization
Trusted adult	Teachers	Website
Friends	Nurse	Helpline

- Suggested criteria for evaluating the reliability of information sources:
  - Professional resource?
  - Knowledge in the field of sexuality?
  - Recognized source in this field?
  - Trusted source?

- Confidentiality?
  - Conflict of interest? (pharmaceutical company or business that wants to sell a product; romantic advice from a friend who is secretly in love with you, etc.)
  - Conflict of values? (different values, religion, beliefs, etc.)
  - Openness and respect?
  - Clarity of the information received?
  - Objectivity of the information? (advice from a parent who refuses to allow their adolescent to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend; advice about an unplanned pregnancy from an anti-abortion organization)
  - Current information? (information about contraceptive methods from the 1980s, etc.)
  - Source concerned with sexuality as a whole? (several dimensions or only one?)
- Remind the students that:
    - it is important to validate the information they receive and to use critical thinking<sup>23</sup>
    - making decisions is an ability that they can develop over time and with practice
    - it is natural to need help with making certain decisions, even if you are no longer a child
  - Conclude the activity by recalling the following **key message**: To make decisions that foster self-fulfillment and that meet their desires and their needs, adolescents need to give themselves time to reflect so that they can think critically about the behaviours and the attitudes to adopt. Guidance, support and help with these processes can be beneficial to them.

## CONCLUSION

Conclude the activity by reminding the students that:

- adolescence involves new roles and behaviours related to sexuality that will require making new decisions.
- to make decisions that meet their needs in terms of sexuality and foster their self-fulfillment, adolescents must learn to better understand themselves and to assert their identity. This can be challenging in adolescence because several dimensions can influence sexuality. Adolescents must learn to exercise control over the changes that occur, become gradually independent and resist various sources of outside pressure.<sup>24</sup>
- although adolescents want to develop their own identity and distance themselves from adults, they still need to feel secure and supported in order to thrive.<sup>25</sup>
- guidance from a trusted person when making new decisions is beneficial for adolescents.

**APPENDIX 1**

**DIMENSION OF SEXUALITY**

**EXAMPLE 1**

**EXAMPLE 2**

**EXAMPLE 3**

## APPENDIX 2

### Scenario 1

You accepted a friend's invitation to go to a party. Later in the day, you hear rumours that there won't be any adults at the party, and that some older teens sometimes encourage others to make out at these parties. Your friend is seriously looking forward to going, because he really wants to kiss someone who will also be at the party. You're embarrassed about changing your mind, since your friend will be disappointed, but you don't want to kiss other people. What do you do?

### Scenario 2

You don't think that you've ever been in love with anyone before, but all your friends already seem to have been. You don't like feeling different from everyone else, and no one knows that you've never felt that way for another person. You wonder whether you should have a romantic relationship just so that you can be like your friends. What do you do?

### Scenario 3

You confided in your best friend that you've never kissed anyone on the mouth before, and she spilled your secret to the other students. Now, your friends are teasing you, and it makes you feel very uncomfortable. You're also angry with your best friend because she betrayed your trust. What do you do?

### Scenario 4

You're secretly in love with a student in Elementary 6 and this person has asked you out. You really want to say yes, but you know that your friends don't like this person. And you're also embarrassed because the person is younger than you. You also wonder what your parents would think. What do you do?

### Scenario 5

You just bought a pair of ripped jeans even though your parents told you not to. You put them on right away, and someone insults you on the street, saying your jeans show too much skin. You're not sure that you'll be allowed to wear them at school. Now, you're starting to doubt your purchase. What are you going to do?

## APPENDIX 3: Decision-making

**Scenario: # \_\_\_\_.**

What are your needs, desires and wishes? What are those of other people?

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What are your boundaries in terms of your sexuality and the sexuality of other people?

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What could influence your choice?

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Which dimensions of sexuality could influence your decision?

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In light of your reflection, what decision would you make? Explain what you are basing your decision on.

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<b>EMOTIONAL AND ROMANTIC LIFE</b>	Elementary 4
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Discuss your representations of love and friendship 2) Understand how certain attitudes and behaviours can influence interpersonal relationships	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b>  <b>240 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT EMOTIONAL AND ROMANTIC LIFE WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 8 TO 11 YEARS OLD</b>
<p>Peer relationships contribute to the development of self-esteem<sup>1</sup> and provide emotional and social support.<sup>2</sup> Relationships based on reciprocity and mutuality<sup>3</sup> allow children to express their feelings, to define themselves,<sup>4</sup> to develop their capacity for intimacy and to manage conflicts.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Most of the social skills acquired by forming ties of friendship are needed to develop romantic relationships<sup>6</sup> and are an indicator of the quality of future romantic relationships.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>Between 6 and 12 years of age, children's interactions with peers diversify and become more complex.<sup>8</sup> Children of this age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognize the importance of trust in friendships,<sup>9</sup> value getting along with peers and become increasingly concerned with peer acceptance.<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• develop their capacity for mutual assistance and cooperation<sup>11</sup> as well as their ability to regulate their emotions around their peers.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• experiment with new forms of aggression related to bullying and victimization.<sup>13</sup> These verbal and psychological aggressions (insults, exclusion, threats, rumours) gradually replace the direct physical aggression of early childhood.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• mostly interact with peers of the same gender,<sup>15</sup> but open up to different types of friendships as they move toward adolescence.</li> </ul> <p>In spite of their ability to have romantic feelings for a peer,<sup>16</sup> it is not until puberty that these feelings are accompanied by an attraction that leads to interaction with a potential partner.<sup>17</sup></p>	<p>Almost all children and preadolescents have crushes or romantic feelings toward a peer.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>Half of children who are 8 to 11 years of age report having a boyfriend or a girlfriend.<sup>19</sup> Contrary to adolescents, it is often a case of unrequited love that can be attributed to the limitations of their cognitive development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some mistakenly interpret the friendship of a peer as a romantic feeling and report this relationship as romantic involvement.<sup>20</sup></li> <li>• Others may believe that having these romantic feelings is enough to be considered as being involved in a romantic relationship.</li> </ul>



# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

LEARNING CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING LEARNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
1) Discuss your representations of love and friendship <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Definitions and perceptions of friendship and love</li><li>• Characteristics of a friend and the importance of friendships</li><li>• Differences between camaraderie, friendship, love, attraction</li></ul>	<p><b>REPRESENTATIONS OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A representation is an image, a set of ideas or a set of beliefs.</li><li>• Children’s representations of love and friendship are built on the messages and images conveyed in their surroundings (family, peers and media) and on their experiences of love and friendship.</li></ul> <p><b>Definitions and perceptions of friendship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Friendship is a bond based on mutual trust restricted to a few individuals.<sup>21</sup> It is mutual affection that excludes physical and sexual attraction. At any age, friendship fulfills the same roles: the pleasure of getting together, the sharing of confidences and the assurance of being able to count on someone for help.<sup>22</sup></li><li>• Friends are not chosen at random:<sup>23</sup> the basis of friendship is shaped by areas of shared interest. This encourages individuals to participate in activities and meet people with common interests. Choosing your friends well enhances the benefits of the friendship bond.<sup>24</sup></li><li>• Children’s representations of friendship are conveyed:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ through words:<sup>25</sup> trust, pleasure, protection, closeness, comfort, getting together to play, enjoying sharing confidences and material goods, appreciating the same games, mutual assistance, etc.</li><li>○ through images: a handshake, a hug, a greeting, etc.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Definitions and perceptions of love</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Love is an emotional feeling that you have for another person and that can be felt toward several people at the same time. Love comes in different forms. You can love a friend, a cousin, a parent, etc., without being in love with them. For example, loving your brother and being in love with another person are two different forms of love.</li><li>• Children’s representations of love are conveyed in several ways:<sup>26</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ through words: intimacy, attachment, beauty, trust, etc.</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Definitions and perceptions of friendship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My friend Thomas and I like to build snow forts.</li><li>• My best female friend has just moved away. Will we stay friends?</li><li>• I can’t be friends with Philemon, because we don’t like the same activities.</li><li>• I don’t like being around people who always want to argue.</li><li>• A friend is someone I always hang around with, like in the schoolyard at recess. And if we argue, it’s someone I’ll try and figure things out for. It’s someone I don’t like to see get hurt.<sup>40</sup></li><li>• A friend is someone who likes the same things as me and who likes the same friends. It’s someone who understands what I want to say before I say it.<sup>41</sup></li></ul> <p><b>Definitions and perceptions of love</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When I’m in a stressful situation and my father winks at me, it makes me feel like he’s with me and he loves me. He comforts me.</li><li>• If a guy plays with a girl, it’s because he loves her.</li><li>• I’m in love with Yoan, but he doesn’t know. I’ve only talked about him to Juliette, my best friend.</li><li>• Only adults can be in love.</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ through images: heart, cupid, heart-shaped eyes, kisses on the mouth, holding hands, romantic landscapes (blue sky full of birds), etc.</li> <li>• For children, being in love:<sup>27</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ means the person occupies their thoughts</li> <li>○ is the feeling that this person is special to them</li> <li>○ is the impression of loving this person differently than they do their friends or parents, and that this person is “a bit more” than just a friend</li> <li>○ is a feeling of nervousness or anxiety when near this person (e.g. being clumsy, forgetting words, laughing for no reason) and physical reactions in response to thinking or being in the presence of the person (e.g. butterflies in the stomach, knot in the stomach, blushing)</li> <li>○ is a desire for the other person to notice and show interest in them</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For children of this age, having a romantic partner may be reflected in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the person they love <b>not necessarily being aware of their feelings</b><sup>28</sup></li> <li>○ this love not necessarily being <b>reciprocated</b> (unrequited)<sup>29</sup></li> <li>○ it possibly remaining a <b>secret</b> that others are not aware of (intimate, private)<sup>30</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Characteristics of a friend and the importance of friendships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship is important for children, because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ provides them with support and comfort</li> <li>○ allows them to express their feelings and feel understood</li> <li>○ allows them to experience closeness and intimacy<sup>31</sup></li> <li>○ allows them to socialize and have fun</li> <li>○ allows them to develop new skills, such as asserting themselves, cooperating, negotiating and managing conflicts</li> <li>○ allows them to question their own ideas and to argue<sup>32</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Characteristics of a friend or a friendship:<sup>33</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is possible to have many friends or just a few friends, different kinds of friends, friends who are younger or older than us, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julia is my friend and I love her, but not like a girlfriend!</li> <li>• I’m in love with the actor from my favourite TV show. He’s so handsome!</li> <li>• Being in love is imagining we have a radar in our heart that tells us where the other person is, writing him letters without ever sending them, thinking about calling him but not having the courage to dial his number, waiting for hours under his window wondering what he’s doing, writing his name in the snow.<sup>42</sup> [Translation]</li> <li>• I’ve never been in love! And I don’t think I want it to happen to me, because afterwards, people get really weird.<sup>43</sup> [Translation]</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Friends spend time together and get to know each other.</li><li>○ Friends respect and appreciate each other.</li><li>○ Friends can be angry with each other, while continuing to be friends.</li><li>○ Friends can have disagreements and can forgive each other.</li><li>○ Friends share feelings and confidences, and help each other.</li></ul> <p><b>Differences between camaraderie, friendship, love and attraction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Camaraderie</b> is the sharing of specific events that are restricted to specific stages in one's life (being in the same class, taking part in the same sports or extracurricular activity). Classmates and teammates come together based on a common interest. Contrary to friendship and love, camaraderie involves getting along with each other, but not necessarily with a desire to share everything. We do not necessarily choose our classmates and teammates, whereas we do choose our friends.</li><li>● For 9- to 10-year-old children, <b>friendship and love</b> have some points in common: feelings of attachment, closeness, trust, mutual support and mutual assistance. Children conceptualize love more in terms of friendship than adults do. For children, friendship and love can blend together: friendship can evolve into love and love can lead to friendship.<sup>34</sup></li><li>● However, children are able to differentiate between love and friendship.<sup>35</sup> These differences are tied to a relationship with a person rather than to the characteristics of that person:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Friendship</b> is an affiliation with others, camaraderie and the sharing of activities. Friendship is less intimate and emotional than love.</li><li>○ <b>Love</b> is described more as intense emotions, physical closeness with another person and a level of intimacy (e.g. secret, protected from other people, trust in one's parent about a difficult experience).</li></ul></li><li>● <b>Attraction</b> is an intense emotion. It is like a magnet that makes a person stand out from the rest and makes us feel physical sensations: butterflies in the stomach, anxiety or nervousness. For children around the ages of 9 or 10, it is not a matter of "sexual desire or attraction," because this only develops with the onset of puberty. However, attraction may</li></ul>	<p><b>Differences between camaraderie, friendship, love, attraction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● I have different kinds of friends: some at hockey, others at my school daycare, some I play video games with and others who are my cousins.</li><li>● I'd be willing to share a friend with someone, but I'd never share my girlfriend!</li><li>● My best friend is the one person I share everything with, even my secrets. With the other girls, it's different. I don't tell them everything.</li><li>● I love Pablo, my dog. A lot. Sometimes, I think I love him more than my parents.</li><li>● My mother says that her friends' kids are my friends, too. I don't agree, because I didn't choose them.</li><li>● Is an imaginary friend really a friend?</li></ul>

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<p>2) Understand how certain attitudes and behaviours can influence interpersonal relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviours that make it easier to get along with one another: acceptance of diversity, concern for others, empathy, commitment, responsibility, respect, mutual assistance, communication, dealing with misunderstandings and conflicts</li> <li>• Behaviours that make it harder to get along with one another: rumours, bullying, jealousy, control</li> <li>• Aspirations for your interpersonal relationships</li> </ul>	<p>truly exist; it is physical and psychological (e.g. feeling attracted to the beauty of a movie star or a singer), without being sexual. At this age, modesty may lead some children to feel uncomfortable or shy about the first instances of physical attraction.</p> <p><b>WHAT INFLUENCES INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <p>Relationships with other people are influenced by attitudes and behaviours that make it easier or harder to get along with others.</p> <p><b>Behaviours that make it easier to get along with one another</b></p> <p>Getting along with one another means that children have a rapport, can agree with one another, share a common understanding and are in sync.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain attitudes and behaviours promote getting along with one another: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ accepting tastes and opinions that are different from our own (acceptance of diversity)</li> <li>○ understanding other people’s viewpoints and taking them into account (respect and concern for others)</li> <li>○ identifying, expressing and dealing with our emotions (dealing with emotions and communication)</li> <li>○ recognizing the emotions and needs of other people (empathy, concern for others)</li> <li>○ recognizing that our actions can impact others (responsibility)</li> <li>○ communicating clearly and being an active listener (communication)</li> <li>○ helping others (mutual assistance)</li> <li>○ identifying alternative solutions to violence (e.g. asking for help, determining and practising non-violent solutions)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Appropriate conflict management and constructive negotiations<sup>36</sup> make it easier for people to get along with one another.</li> <li>• Conflicts between children 9 to 10 years old often take the form of a dispute that begins with a behaviour or an attitude undermining their ability to get along with each other (e.g. disagreement, rivalry, frustration, jealousy). For children between the ages of 7 and 12 who</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behaviours that make it easier to get along with one another</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mika has difficulty running. That doesn’t stop her from playing with us for most of our games. (acceptance of diversity)</li> <li>• Rosalie fell into the water. I lent her my spare shorts so she could wear dry clothes for the rest of the day. (concern for others)</li> <li>• Alexis was crying in the schoolyard. I went to see him to try to help. I don’t like to see my friends sad. (empathy)</li> <li>• Marjorie has trouble with math. Sarah says she’ll help her. (commitment/mutual assistance)</li> <li>• Melody and I just had an argument. I’m going to talk to her about it at recess. It was my fault and I want us to be friends again. (communication/responsibility)</li> <li>• I wanted to yell at him to leave me alone, but I decided to stay calm and tell him that I don’t like it when someone pulls off my tuque. (respect)</li> </ul>

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	<p>experience a conflict, a manipulation process called “fairweather cooperation” can be used to convince a friend to share their opinion.<sup>37</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is no magic formula for solving conflicts. It is possible to learn how to effectively deal with conflict in order to maintain stronger interpersonal relationships. Sometimes, people expect others to take the first steps to resolving a conflict. When we disagree with someone, we need to talk to that person, because the situation may have been the result of a misunderstanding<sup>38</sup> that could actually be relatively easy to resolve.</li><li>• Depending on the situation, a problem-solving process can be undertaken. The major steps in problem solving are:<sup>39</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ calming down</li><li>○ talking about the situation (identifying facts)</li><li>○ identifying potential solutions</li><li>○ choosing a solution that satisfies both parties</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Behaviours that make it harder to get along with one another</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certain attitudes and behaviours can make it harder to get along with one another and can be a source of conflict:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ making negative or inappropriate comments (e.g. calling the other person useless or an idiot)</li><li>○ reacting impulsively or inadequately (e.g. due to poor social skills or reacting inappropriately or hurtfully when angry)</li><li>○ betraying a confidence (e.g. repeating a secret or revealing intimate information to others)</li><li>○ starting a rumour (e.g. saying things about a child that may denigrate or harm them)</li><li>○ displaying possessiveness, controlling behaviours and even jealousy (e.g. difficulty accepting that your friend is interested in other people, spends time with others or chooses to do group work with someone else)</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Behaviours that make it harder to get along with one another</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amir tells everyone that I love Sasha. (rumour)</li><li>• Emmy is my best friend. I don’t like it when she plays with Carly and chooses her to work with for group work. (possessiveness)</li><li>• Edward always wants to make all the decisions: what we play, when, with whom and how. I’m fed up with it. (control)</li><li>• Justin says bad words and calls other people names. He thinks he’s being funny! Adam also thinks Justin is funny and laughs along with him. I’m disappointed in Adam. (negative comments about others)</li><li>• Anna and I lied to Mahi. We didn’t tell her that we were going to get together on Saturday to make bracelets. (exclusion)</li><li>• I like playing hockey in the schoolyard with the boys, but I also like walking and talking with the other girls. The guys won’t let me play with them because I’m a girl, and the girls don’t like me anymore. Why is it so complicated? (stereotype)</li><li>• Dahlia wanted to know if I liked Hugh. I told her my secret. But then she went and told Hugh’s best friend. I feel betrayed! I will never, ever tell her another secret. (betraying a confidence)</li><li>• Alyssa, Charlie and Emma refused to let me work with them on the group science project. They said the team already had too many people. (exclusion)</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ excluding or rejecting others (e.g. being excluded from a game on the pretext that you aren't good enough, not being invited to a birthday party because you refused to loan something, not being chosen for a team)</li><li>○ competing (e.g. competing with other children for attention or popularity, wanting exclusive friendship with another child by trying to attract attention)</li><li>○ etc.</li></ul> <p><b>Aspirations for your interpersonal relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To have positive interpersonal relationships, children must be able to identify what they want out of these relationships and what is important to them in their emotional life. The following aspects enable them to explore their aspirations:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ importance and place of friendship and camaraderie in their lives</li><li>○ importance and place of love in their lives:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ love of their parents and family</li><li>▪ love of their friends</li><li>▪ love of the people around them</li><li>▪ romantic love</li></ul></li><li>○ types of relationships desired</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ludovic always chooses the teams in the schoolyard. Whether we're playing basketball, soccer, hockey or football, he always keeps the best players on his team and makes up another team of losers. He always wins and laughs at the losers. I'm really fed up! (exclusion, rejection)</li><li>• Romy promised Alexis that she'd tell him which girl in their class loves who if he told her which boy loves who. She feels really bad because she reacted too quickly. She didn't want to do that! (impulsiveness)</li><li>• Lily-Rose is my best friend. It really breaks my heart when she goes over to play at Julia's house. And when I see her laughing with Kelly-Ann, it feels like my heart stops. I'm scared that she likes her more than me, and that she won't be my friend anymore. (jealousy)</li></ul> <p><b>Aspirations for your interpersonal relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Even though Emmet and Luke laugh at me for it, I like going to play at Lorenzo's house on the weekend. We play baseball in his crescent, swim and, sometimes, play cards.</li><li>• Emily has been my friend since daycare. I'd like to be friends with her forever!</li><li>• Karim likes to ski, and I like tobogganing. I'd like for him to come tobogganing with me once in a while.</li><li>• I'd wish my brother was nicer to me. He's always teasing me. I get offended easily, and it's as though he likes making me angry.</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ what they feel and experience in these relationships</li><li>○ what these relationships bring them</li><li>○ what they appreciate about these relationships</li><li>○ what they find difficult about them</li><li>○ what they would like to change</li><li>○ how they see the future or the evolution of their relationships</li><li>○ etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I adore my cousin. I'd like to see her more often, but she lives too far away. When we do see each other, time flies by way too quickly.</li></ul>



## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### UNDERSTAND THE CONTENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROSOCIAL SKILLS AND OTHER GUIDELINES AND MEASURES THAT SHAPE LIFE AT SCHOOL

Around the age of 8, friendship is most often reserved for peers of the same gender. This is known as the homosocial phase.

- As children age, they make more friends. These friends influence them and play an important role in their development.<sup>44</sup>
- Since friendships differ from parental relationships, they enable children to acquire skills such as the ability to enter into relationships with others, commit to close and intimate relationships, and manage conflicts.
- Children who have and keep friends are more sociable, feel less isolated, are more altruistic and have more confidence.<sup>45</sup> “Popular” children, or those who have more successful relationships with their peers, usually have better social skills.<sup>46</sup> This reinforces the importance of developing prosocial behaviours such as those that foster positive interpersonal relationships. Preventing behaviours and attitudes that make it harder to get along makes room for behaviours and attitudes that make it easier. The development of these social skills will be necessary to adopt healthy relationships throughout their lifetime.<sup>47</sup>
- These behaviours are useful both in childhood and later, in adolescence, when experiencing their first romantic relationships. The development of such skills will help to prevent violence in romantic relationships.

#### BE AWARE THAT GENDER STEREOTYPES CAN DETRACT FROM POSITIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BECAUSE THEY:

- limit children’s choices by dictating what they can and cannot do (e.g. girls can’t play soccer with boys during recess)
- mean that certain children are ridiculed or rejected because they do not conform to or they behave differently from stereotypes (e.g. a group of boys refuses to let another boy play football with them because he is less athletically inclined)
- limit everyone’s expression of personality and ability to act on personal preferences (e.g. girls won’t let a boy sign up for cooking or dance classes at the school daycare)

#### KEEP IN MIND THAT, FOR SOME CHILDREN, REPRESENTATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP OR LOVE ARE NOT NECESSARILY POSITIVE

- For some children, who are experiencing difficulties in their families or with their peers, love or friendship can be a source of sadness, suffering or concern. These children might also have greater difficulty entering into relationships and building ties with others. The activity might be of even greater use to these students, as they need to develop the skills required to make friends and form positive interpersonal relationships.
- If you know that the activity might be difficult for certain students, it might be worthwhile speaking with them individually and making help and support resources available (e.g. meeting with a special education teacher). Addressing this content can be an opportunity to better support them.

#### TAKE CHILDREN’S ROMANTIC FEELINGS AND CONCERNS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP SERIOUSLY

- Children do not have the same representations of love and friendships as adults do, and their experience is different. However, their feelings are intense, sincere and important. They must be taken seriously, and should not be trivialized or ridiculed. Attention must also be given to the conflicts that love and friendship can create, since they can overwhelm students and decrease their attention in the classroom.



## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

For further exploration of the **concepts of love and friendship**, refer to:

- the article “[Children’s Growing Friendships](#),” by Eileen Kennedy-Moore (February 26, 2012), on the [Psychology Today](#) website
- the article “L’amitié entre filles de 9 à 11 ans: entre affinités individuelles et enjeux statutaires,” by Dominique Golay and Dominique Malatesta, in *SociologieS*, specifically paragraphs 42 to 49, available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/4089> (French only, but an English abstract is available: “Friendship Between Girls: Between Individual Affinities and Statutory Issues”)
- a short video entitled “[The Friendship Soup Recipe](#)” by [The NED Show](#)

To read **questions from children about love and friendship**, refer to:

- the “[Friends and Family](#)” section on the Tel-Jeunes website ([www.teljeunes.com/tel-jeunes/en](http://www.teljeunes.com/tel-jeunes/en), under All Topics > Friends and Family)

For **pedagogical strategies in connection with conflict management**, read:

- the “[Friends and Family](#)” section on the Tel-Jeunes website ([www.teljeunes.com/tel-jeunes/en](http://www.teljeunes.com/tel-jeunes/en), under All Topics > Friends and Family)
- “[Best practices of non-violent conflict resolution in and out of schools: Some examples](#),” produced by UNESCO

For **books useful for learning activities with students**, consult:

- the [book web](#) on sexuality education themes for Elementary Cycle Two, Year Two available on the Québec Reading Connection website (<https://www.quebecreadingconnection.ca/>, under ELA > Book Webs > Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Book Web Elementary 4) to achieve educational aims in the classroom:
  - Gillmor, Don. *Yuck, a Love Story*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2000.
  - Hughes, Susan. *Earth to Audrey*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2007.
  - Ludwig, Trudy. *Just Kidding*. NY, NY: Penguin Random House, 2006.
  - Queen Rania. *The Sandwich Swap*. NY, NY: Disney-Hyperion, 2010.
  - Steig, William. *Amos & Boris*. NY, NY: Macmillan, 2009.
  - Woodson, Jacqueline. *The Other Side*. NY, NY: Penguin Random House, 2011.

**Books that may replace** those from the book web that are not available in your school library:

- *Paul Meets Bernadette* by Rosy Lamb (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2013)
- *The Hug* by David Grossman (London, UK: Overlook Duckworth, 2010)
- *Sorry* by Trudy Ludwig (Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 2006)
- *Olga and the Smelly Things From Nowhere* by Elise Gravel (Toronto, ON: Harper Collins, 2017)

Additional titles are also available on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website: use the advanced search engine with the keywords “love” and “friendship” for Elementary 4.

**For parents:**

Sexuality education is better consolidated when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can complement the role of the school in the reflection process about friendship and love in the interpersonal relationships that influence students. It is recommended that parents be informed of the content covered with students.

- Relationships within the family (parents and siblings) influence one's ability to make friends. Suggest to parents that they use situations of conflict between brothers and sisters to teach important social skills, including conflict resolution.<sup>48</sup>
- To foster positive verbal communication, parents can the section of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur website on [fighting bullying and violence in the schools](#).

**BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes****Make connections between this content and other elements of the Québec Education Program**

- The proposed activity in this pedagogical framework allows you to carry out learning activities in sexuality education and in English Language Arts. It includes the avenues required to integrate the English Language Arts competencies (to read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts; to write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts, to represent her/his literacy in different media, to use language to communicate and learn), reading strategies and response process.

**Make connections between this content and other content in sexuality education for Elementary 4**

- The content on friendship, love and interpersonal relationships can be offered **in close connection** with the content of the theme "Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms," which deals with harmonious and egalitarian relationships.

**Gather materials**

- Useful books for the activity:
  - Choose titles from among the books suggested in the book web, books from your library or the additional reading suggestions that deal with the concepts of friendship, love and a variety of behaviours adopted in interpersonal relationships.
  - The number of books to use is a personal choice. A reading period is to be devoted to each of the chosen books. To fully explore the theme, vary the examples and discussion topics, and effectively share the books, it is recommended that three or more books be read. However, reading only one book can still prompt a stimulating discussion allowing you to achieve education's aims.
- Classroom reading log
- Other materials (depending on the planned activity)

**Adopt appropriate attitudes**

- Highlight the diversity of children's representations of love and friendship by:
  - asking them about their representations
  - giving them time to discuss with classmates (in groups of two or three) before having group discussions
- Use examples from books and place them in the context of the children's everyday lives:
  - Are there similar experiences? In what way?

- What do the book analyses teach us about the representation of friendship and love?
- Are there behaviours or attitudes depicted in the story that positively or negatively influence the characters' relationships?
- How do the characters manage their conflicts?
- Etc.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

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The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Two should:

- help students understand the skills needed for interpersonal relationships,<sup>49</sup> including managing any conflicts they may face<sup>50</sup>
- foster the development of social skills, including empathy,<sup>51</sup> in order to increase their ability to be involved in reciprocal emotional relationships

### Key messages:

- Expressing one's feelings and opinions helps to enrich their relationships with others.
- Feelings of love and friendship are varied and natural. They are part of the scope of human feelings.<sup>52</sup>
- Boys and girls can be friends with each other.
- Many skills are required for creating and maintaining a quality friendship, including skills for managing misunderstandings and conflicts.

### INTRODUCTION

- Present the educational aims to the students.
- Activate prior knowledge: ask the students to define love and friendship.
  - Students may define these concepts through representations of them. Note their answers, no matter what form they take. It is not essential that a distinction be made between definition and perception. Rather, it is important that the students can, during the course of the activity, engage in a discussion to identify the nuance between love and friendship, and to reflect on their own interpersonal relationships.

### ACTIVITY: BOOK WEB

To help students discuss their representations of love and friendship (Aim 1):

#### Use a book web

- Use the [book web](#) and suggested questions and activities available on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website.
- Read the books as a group using an interactive reading method: the teacher or non-teaching professional reads to the students, who are invited to participate in various ways.
- **Begin the reading** by working with students to establish a reading aim, using the title, the cover pages and the back cover:
  - What does the book talk about?
  - Why are we reading this book?
  - What do we want to discover?

- Then read the illustrated book to the students and plan strategic pauses:
  - Draw the students' attention to certain pages (e.g. Describe what the cover illustration of *The Other Side* conveys about friendship).
  - Ask the students questions (e.g. On the last page of *The Other Side*, what does Annie mean when she says, "Someday, somebody's going to knock this fence down"? What is the connection between the fence and their friendship?)
  - Ask the students to interact (e.g. In *Just Kidding*, why do Vince's jokes bug D.J.? What is the difference between having fun and making fun?)
  - Help the students to make predictions (e.g. In *The Sandwich Swap*, what do you think will happen when everyone chooses sides between peanut butter and hummus?)
  - Etc.

## NOTES

- The activities are targeted. They relate to the story, the structure, the text and the illustrations. Complementary connections can be made between the text and the images. The implicit information is clarified. The activities allow you to conceptualize reading for the students and to help them become familiar with reading strategies (making predictions, using pictures and other graphic representations to locate specific information and interpret texts, making connections to prior knowledge and to other texts, etc.) while supporting the students as they construct meaning. The activities give rise to interactions that enrich the reading experience without fragmenting it or altering the pace of the story.
- One book is read per period.
- The activity could also be carried out in a reading circle: each student is asked to read a different book in subgroups. Afterwards, the different readings are all listed in the class reading log, and the students are asked to compare the illustrated books and the ways in which the characters express and behave themselves.
- After the reading, ask the students to discuss the book they read in subgroups, and what they understood and interpreted. After a class discussion, the teacher or non-teaching professional makes sure that the students have an in-depth understanding of the work as a whole.
- Ask the students to complete the **class reading log**. The log is a large piece of paper or cardboard that everyone can see and on which the students can write their answers to various questions, in particular:
  - How are love and friendship depicted in these books? How are these two feelings different from one another?
  - What are the characters looking for when entering into relationships with other people? What do they get out of these relationships?
  - What attitudes and behaviours do the characters display that make it easier for them to get along with each other? What attitudes and behaviours do the characters display that make it hard to them to get along with each other?
  - How do the characters who experience conflict manage to resolve it?

The log allows students to record their readings as part of the reading process; it serves as a memory aid bridging classroom periods and provides a framework to structure discussions on the theme. The students are asked to refer to the text several times in order to support their answers. See the appendix for an example of a reading log.

- Once the books chosen from the book web have been read, propose a summary by using the log to:
  - Recap the various representations of love and friendship.
  - Summarize the influence of attitudes and behaviours on interpersonal relationships.

- Make connections with the characters' experiences and the students' behaviours. This enables you to place the observations taken from the book analyses in the context of the students' everyday lives with their friends and loved ones.
  - Lastly, lead a discussion with the students to **differentiate between love, friendship, camaraderie and attraction**, by asking them:
    - Are there different types of love? What are they? How are they different?
    - Are there different types of friendship? What are they? How are they different?
    - At your age, friends are most often of the same sex (gender)? Why?
    - How are love and friendship similar? And different?
      - More specific approaches that can be used:*
        - *What specific things do you share in love or friendship? (activities, feelings, confidences, affectionate gestures, mutual assistance)*
        - *Are you comfortable sharing a friend with others? A romantic partner? Other types of love? (exclusivity)*
        - *Can love and friendship remain secret? (secret or private nature of feelings)*
        - *Are love and friendship always reciprocal? Shared? Are both people involved always aware of each other's feelings? (reciprocity and disclosure of feelings)*
        - *Which causes more physical sensations (e.g. anxiety, pounding heart): love, or friendship?*
        - *Do you always choose your friends? Your romantic partner? The people you love?*
        - *Which lasts longest, love or friendship?*
    - How are camaraderie and friendship similar? How are they different?
    - What is attraction? What are the signs of attraction at your age?
- NOTE:** Some of the illustrated books suggested above can help support this discussion.
- If need be, complete the students' answers using the information under the "Differences between camaraderie, friendship, love and attraction" heading in the "Explanations Concerning Content" section.
  - Conclude this part using the following key messages:
    - Expressing one's feelings and opinions helps to enrich their relationships with others.
    - Feelings of love and friendship are varied and natural. They are a part the scope of human feelings.<sup>53</sup>
    - Boys and girls can be friends with each other.

### **ACTIVITY: IDENTIFICATION OF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS THAT MAKE IT EASIER TO GET ALONG WITH ONE ANOTHER**

**To help students to understand how certain attitudes and behaviours can influence interpersonal relationships (Aim 2):**

- Ask the students to identify, based on different situations, the **attitudes and the behaviours that make it easier to get along with one another** (e.g. acceptance of diversity, concern for others, empathy, commitment, responsibility, respect, mutual assistance, communication). To do so, use:
  - situations from everyday life in the classroom or in the school that are proposed by the students
  - the “Examples in the Lives of Children” under the headings “Behaviours that make it easier to get along with one another” and “Behaviours that make it harder to get along with one another” in the “Explanations Concerning Content” section.
- Have students explain how misunderstandings or conflicts can be managed using the problem- or conflict-solving process.
- To explore further, initiate a debate on how some gender stereotypes make it harder to get along with others, asking students:
  - Do some stereotypes affect friendships or relationships between boys and girls? (e.g. boys don’t have a “best friend” in the same way that a girl might have a BFF (best friend forever); when a boy and a girl are friends, people think they are in love; affectionate gestures in friendship are usually associated with girls)
  - Do some concepts or ideas about boys and girls make it harder for them to get along with each other? (e.g. girls or boys are excluded from certain activities on the pretence that these activities are reserved for the opposite sex (gender); some girls and boys are ridiculed because they don’t express themselves according to stereotypes or social expectations)
  - Is it possible for girls and boys to get along with each other? How?
  - Etc.
- Suggest that the students self-reflect and identify their own aspirations for their interpersonal relationships. On a sheet of paper, write down some sentences to be completed, drawing on the following examples:
  - In my opinion, friendship means . . .
  - I’m friends with someone, because . . .
  - What I appreciate about friendship is that . . .
  - Being a good friend means . . .
  - What I want when I’m with my friends is . . .
  - I think that, at my age, love means . . .
  - I see that I have love in my life when . . .
  - The people I love most are . . .
  - Etc.

### **CONCLUSION**

- If necessary, review with the students:
  - how they express their friendship and love
  - the characteristics of a good friend
  - how to avoid or resolve conflicts
- Ask the students to pay attention over the next few days to what they observe in the interpersonal relationships around them.

- Conclude using the following **key message**:
  - Many skills are required for creating and maintaining a quality friendship, including skills for managing misunderstandings and conflicts.



## APPENDIX

### Example of a Reading Log

	The Other Side	Just Kidding	The Sandwich Swap
<b>In what ways is love represented? (Things said or done that show us)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both Clover's mother and Annie's mother want to keep them safe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D.J.'s father and brother offer sympathy and advice when D.J. needs it.</li> <li>D.J.'s father goes with him to speak with the teacher about the situation with Vince.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both girls' sandwiches remind them of their parent who lovingly prepares it for them in the morning.</li> </ul>
<b>In what ways is friendship represented? (The things said or done that show us)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clover notices that Annie seems lonely and sad, and watches her play by herself.</li> <li>Annie asks if she can jump rope with the other girls.</li> <li>Clover approaches Annie at the fence and introduces herself.</li> <li>Annie invites her to sit on the fence with her. Clover doesn't stop, even when her other friends look at her "funny."</li> <li>Clover's mama remarks on her new friend.</li> <li>Clover, Annie and all the other girls sit on the fence together, in a long line.</li> <li>Annie and Clover both express a wish for the fence to come down, so that nothing will divide the two communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D.J. makes Brian feel better when Vince teases him, by using humour.</li> <li>Brian thanks him for helping him out.</li> <li>D.J. decides to spend time with Brian, Joe and Miguel, whom he likes. They have fun, without making fun of each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salma and Lily draw together, swing together, jump rope together and eat together.</li> <li>Both girls dislike the look and smell of the other's sandwich, but they do not say it out loud, to spare each other's feelings.</li> </ul>
<b>How do certain attitudes or behaviours make the relationship harmonious?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clover reaches out to Annie, notices that Annie has a pretty smile. They smile at one another.</li> <li>Annie invites Clover to join her on the fence.</li> <li>Clover and Annie sit on the fence together all summer.</li> <li>Clover asks if she and Annie can play with the other girls. Annie comes down on their side and plays with them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D.J. stands up for his friends when Vince is teasing them.</li> <li>D.J. tries to stop the bullying by ignoring Vince, and asking him to stop.</li> <li>The teacher suggests that D.J. hang around with kids who make him feel good about himself.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both girls feel ashamed when their argument escalates into a food fight.</li> <li>After eating in silence, Lily finds the courage to address Salma and offer her a bite of her sandwich. Salma accepts and reciprocates.</li> <li>They laugh and hug.</li> </ul>

	The Other Side	Just Kidding	The Sandwich Swap
How do certain attitudes and behaviours make the relationship less harmonious?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both mothers have told Clover and Annie that it is not safe to cross the fence.</li> <li>Annie asks if she can play with them and Sandra responds “no,” without consulting the others.</li> <li>Clover is not sure how she would respond.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vince calls others names, such as “loser,” and justifies it by saying he was just kidding.</li> <li>Vince makes jokes at D.J.’s expense rather than congratulate him for becoming goalie.</li> <li>Vince does not stop poking D.J. on the bus, even after being repeatedly asked to stop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both girls are hurt when the other criticizes their sandwich, because it represents their home life and the love of their parent.</li> <li>After the hurt feelings, the girls do not spend time together, and sit separately at lunch.</li> <li>Sides are taken by the other children; the insulting goes beyond food into personal attacks.</li> </ul>
How do the characters manage their conflicts? What makes it work or not work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annie and Clover find a way to be together without crossing the fence, by sitting on top of it.</li> <li>Clover continues to sit with Annie even though her friends do not agree with it; Clover pretends that she doesn’t care.</li> <li>Clover is able to bring Annie into the group, and bring them all onto the fence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D.J. speaks to his father about what to do. D.J.’s father suggests using humour to diffuse the situation.</li> <li>D.J. brings Vince’s behaviour to the teacher’s attention. She promises to work with the school counselor to help Vince. She explains the difference between tattling and reporting.</li> <li>D.J. takes his teacher’s advice and hangs out with his good friends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By trying each other’s sandwich, they realize their differences were unfounded.</li> <li>The two girls work together to bring all the other students on board, by exposing everyone to all different kinds of food in a cultural context.</li> </ul>

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<b>EMOTIONAL AND ROMANTIC LIFE</b>	Elementary 6
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Become aware of the role that puberty plays in romantic and sexual awakening 2) Express any questions you have about romantic and sexual awakening	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b> <b>250 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT ROMANTIC AND EMOTIONAL LIFE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 10 TO 12 YEARS OLD</b>
<p>Peer relationships contribute to the development of self-esteem<sup>1</sup> and provide emotional and social support.<sup>2</sup> Relationships based on reciprocity and mutuality<sup>3</sup> allow children to express their feelings, to define themselves,<sup>4</sup> to develop their capacity for intimacy and to manage conflicts.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Most of the social skills acquired by forming bonds of friendship are needed to develop romantic relationships<sup>6</sup> and are an indicator of the quality of future romantic relationships.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>Between 6 and 12 years of age, children's interactions with peers diversify and become more complex.<sup>8</sup> Children of this age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognize the importance of trust in friendships,<sup>9</sup> value getting along with peers and become increasingly concerned with peer acceptance<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• develop their capacity for mutual assistance and cooperation<sup>11</sup> as well as their ability to regulate their emotions around their peers<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• experiment with new forms of aggression related to bullying or victimization;<sup>13</sup> these verbal and psychological aggressions (insults, exclusion, threats, rumours) gradually replace the direct physical aggression of early childhood<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• mostly interact with peers of the same gender,<sup>15</sup> but open up to different types of friendship, as they move toward adolescence</li> </ul> <p>In spite of a child's ability to have strong feelings for a peer,<sup>16</sup> it is not until puberty that these feelings are accompanied by attraction that leads to interaction with a potential partner.<sup>17</sup></p>	<p>Some young people will develop an earlier and stronger impulse toward sexual interests than others due to their hormone production, which is primarily responsible for the time and progression of sexual development.<sup>18</sup></p> <p><b>Starting at approximately 10 or 11 years of age, children:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• view friendship as involving intimacy, trust and loyalty<sup>19</sup> as well as a sharing of similar interests; they also have an increased interest in others and are capable of mutual support</li> <li>• gradually progress toward different types of friendships, have greater interest in a romantic partner, and increasingly confide in their peers<sup>20</sup></li> <li>• may experience sexual desire, experiment with masturbation and have sexual fantasies<sup>21</sup> as a result of<sup>22</sup> hormonal surges that are responsible for the biological maturation at this age and that vary among young people</li> </ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>1) Become aware of the role that puberty plays in romantic and sexual awakening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puberty: influence of hormones</li> <li>• Romantic awakening: romantic daydreaming and attraction, changes in interpersonal relationships, first overtures and first dates</li> <li>• Sexual awakening and physiological manifestations: vaginal lubrication, erection, ejaculation</li> </ul>	<p><b>ROLE OF PUBERTY IN ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL AWAKENING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puberty is an important stage in sexual growth: it is a transition from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood. Puberty occurs through a series of physical, psychological, emotional and interpersonal changes, and lasts for a period of several years.</li> <li>• Physical changes make it possible for human beings to conceive. A combination of psychological, emotional and interpersonal changes are required to prepare humans for entering into relationships, having sexual relations, conceiving and fulfilling the role of parenthood (e.g. the desire and ability to enter into relationships, to experience physical attraction and sexual arousal, and to display emotional and interpersonal maturity). Romantic and sexual awakening associated with puberty plays a role in preparing for the transition that will gradually lead from adolescence to adult romantic and sexual life, including reproduction.</li> <li>• Romantic awakening concerns the psychological and emotional aspects (mind and heart), while sexual awakening is more closely tied to the physiological aspects (body). Romantic awakening may occur without sexual arousal and vice versa. Romantic awakening may be experienced before puberty, while sexual arousal cannot.</li> </ul> <p><b>Puberty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puberty occurs through changes not only in the body, but also in the mind, in the heart and in interpersonal relationships.</li> <li>• This stage is triggered by the release of large quantities of sex hormones (testosterone, progesterone and estrogen), which elicit physical, psychological (covered in Elementary 5) and emotional changes.<sup>23</sup></li> <li>• The brain releases sex hormones into the body, which causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the ovaries to mature, through the effect of progesterone and estrogen</li> <li>○ the testicles to mature, through the effect of testosterone</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The production of hormones by the ovaries and the testicles brings about more physical changes, such as menstruation in girls and ejaculation in boys.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Role of puberty in romantic and sexual awakening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lately, at recess, we always seem to be talking about boys.</li> <li>• That actor is really good looking! Sometimes, I dream that he’s kissing me. Does that mean I’m gay?</li> <li>• “Our noses touched. It made me feel weak in the knees, and I thought I was going to pass out.”<sup>28</sup> [Translation]</li> <li>• Suddenly my heart dropped to somewhere in my knees, as if it had taken the elevator down. I had no voice, my sight was blurred . . . and my mind was like two hands in a comic strip trying to catch a bar of soap. I didn’t know where I was going, I just went straight ahead. . . . She must have seen that I couldn’t take my eyes off her. . . . I wanted to say Hi! to her too but my voice failed me. My heart was now right down in my sneakers, my toes were tied in knots and my tongue was like a wad of soft dough in my gaping mouth.<sup>29</sup></li> <li>• A sign that someone is in love is how every time he walks past the person he likes, he stares and just can’t take his eyes off her. Sometimes, his face will even turn red!<sup>30</sup> [Translation]</li> <li>• What causes an erection? It happens to me in class, but I don’t know why.</li> <li>• My penis is hard when I wake up in the morning. Is that normal?</li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The production of the hormones responsible for puberty gives rise to changes that go beyond bodily transformations<sup>24</sup> (budding breasts, voice changes, menstruation, etc.) and the ability to procreate. The hormones released during puberty also contribute to sexual<sup>25</sup> and romantic awakening.</li><li>• This awakening signals the onset of first romantic feelings or feelings of attraction as well as the desire to feel emotionally close to another person. It plays a role in the emergence of the desire to be in love with and to please another person. The romantic and sexual awakening associated with puberty awakens the body, the heart and the mind to love and sexuality, and prepares human beings to enter into relationships for the purpose of potential reproduction.</li></ul> <p><b>Romantic awakening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Romantic and sexual awakening are demonstrated in different ways. Love and attraction are expressed through fantasies in the form of romantic daydreaming or thoughts about someone around you or a celebrity: thinking about the other person, imagining talking to or sharing an activity with the other person, imagining hugging or kissing the other person, etc.</li><li>• Romantic awakening brings about changes in relationships with other people. The homosocial phase (mainly associating with peers of the same gender) subsides and gives way to the pursuit of the company of others without regard to their gender, but rather to the potential attraction they may arouse. The nature of social relationships<sup>26</sup> is influenced by feelings of love or attraction.</li><li>• Love and attraction make it possible to develop new feelings and experience new emotions without necessarily entering into a relationship. As a result, preadolescents may:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ view others from a different perspective, no longer see them in the same way, be interested in them</li><li>○ admire others (e.g. their behaviour, qualities, smile, sense of humour, expression; find them attractive; admire them; think they smell nice)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In my dream, I was kissing her. When I woke up, my sheets were wet. Is that normal?</li><li>• Maria told me that, one day, I'll feel something wet in my underwear. It happened to her when she kissed Cedric. What's that about?</li><li>• Whenever I'm near Nathan, I feel weird. My stomach hurts, my face turns red, and I feel really dizzy.</li><li>• I had a dream about the goalie of my favourite hockey team. I dreamt he was my boyfriend and that he kissed me after the game. I can't stop thinking about it even though I know it will never happen.</li><li>• We did pyramids in phys. ed. When the pyramid collapsed, I fell face first onto Ellie. My insides felt all topsy-turvy when I was pressed up against her.</li><li>• I keep looking at other girls. I like how they dress, how they do their hair, how they talk, how they use makeup. I can't help it.</li><li>• We went to the library today. There were four students laughing in one of the aisles. They had opened a dictionary to a page showing naked bodies.</li></ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ seek the consideration and attention of others</li><li>○ want to please others</li><li>○ want closer, more intimate, contact with others (e.g. take part in an activity or spend time with others)</li><li>○ etc.</li><li>● Preadolescents may imagine and attempt overtures to show their interest in another person. They start flirting, though their attempts to approach someone may be awkward, be misunderstood or go unnoticed by the other person.</li><li>● Dating is really about romantic friendship (e.g. holding hands, walking to school together, exchanging gifts on Valentine’s Day).</li></ul> <p><b>Sexual awakening and physiological manifestations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sexual awakening is expressed through an increased curiosity about sexuality (e.g. jokes, seeking sexually explicit content or images, curiosity, questions) and greater interest in sexuality. Sexual thoughts may also arise (e.g. dreams about nudity, physical contacts with the other person, kissing).</li><li>● It involves manifestations of sexual arousal such as vaginal lubrication (having a wet vagina, feeling warmth and tingling in the vulva) and spontaneous erection (penis hardening and becoming erect).</li><li>● Masturbation (caressing one’s sexual organs to relieve tension or feel pleasure) may occur in response to sexual arousal.</li><li>● Wet dreams (nocturnal emission) may also occur, especially in connection with certain sexual thoughts. Ejaculation may also occur after masturbation.</li><li>● Romantic awakening can also trigger bodily responses when in the presence of the person we love or are attracted to, such as blushing, stuttering, sweating, weakness in the knees, dizziness, trembling, butterflies in the stomach, a racing heart, awkwardness, etc. The body responds to the presence of the other person and the feelings being experienced.</li></ul>	



# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>2) Express any questions you have about romantic and sexual awakening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attitudes and feelings about these new phenomena: individual variations</li> <li>Images and messages from your social environment and the media</li> </ul>	<p><b>QUESTIONS ABOUT ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL AWAKENING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many questions about romantic and sexual awakening exist and they vary from one person to the next. The particular concerns of preadolescents may be explained by shyness, fear of being judged by others, fear of rejection or of not being considered attractive, jealousy,<sup>27</sup> or worries about not being normal.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attitudes and feelings about romantic and sexual awakening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The signs of romantic and sexual awakening vary among individuals (love, attraction, desire, physical signs of arousal), as do a growing curiosity about sexuality and the attitudes and feelings associated with these new phenomena. Some students will express great interest and curiosity, and have many questions, whereas others may be less interested. Some students will have a more intense experience of romantic and sexual awakening, while for others, it may be more gradual. Like puberty, every child’s romantic and sexual awakening follows their individual rate of development and experience.</li> <li>Students’ concerns about romantic and sexual awakening may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Knowledge</b> (e.g. How do I approach someone I find attractive? Take the first step? Show my love? Not appear nervous or awkward? Kiss someone?)</li> <li><b>Required feelings</b> (e.g. Does the other person really like me or not? How can I find out? How do I tell the other person that I’m not interested in them, or that I don’t want to go out with them? How do I tell someone that I don’t have feelings for them anymore?)</li> <li><b>Disclosure of feelings</b> (e.g. How do I tell the other person how I feel? Should I tell them? Can I keep my romantic feelings a secret? Can I tell my best friend that I have a secret crush? Can I ask my partner to keep our relationship a secret?)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Attitudes and feelings about romantic and sexual awakening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There’s a boy in my class who I like. I’ve known him since kindergarten. We laugh a lot together and we look into each other’s eyes a lot. I think he likes me, too. I don’t know how to tell him that I like him without him thinking of me as the little girl I used to be.<sup>31</sup></li> <li>I have a boyfriend I love, but we often argue. For a while now, I’ve had a crush on another guy. I even daydream about him. I’m torn between my feelings for the two of them and I’d like to know who I really love.<sup>32</sup></li> <li>I’m starting to have feelings for my best friend. I told him, but he didn’t say anything. I don’t know what to think, because I thought he liked me, too.<sup>33</sup></li> <li>I secretly like a guy. I think he’s cute, funny and smart, but I don’t know if what I’m feeling is really love.<sup>34</sup></li> <li>How do I know whether I like a boy in a romantic way, or if I just see him as a friend or admire him for the things he does?<sup>35</sup></li> <li>There’s this girl at my school. I’ve never spoken to her, but she gives me butterflies in my stomach. Then again, she also often gets on my nerves. I don’t know if this is love.<sup>36</sup></li> </ul>

# BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Confusion related to feelings</b> (e.g. How do I know whether what I feel is love or friendship? How do I know whether I’m still in love? Can I be interested two people at the same time? Can I be in love with someone and be friends with them at the same time? Can two friends have feelings for the same person? Can friendship turn into love?)</li> <li>○ <b>Disappointment related to feelings</b> (e.g. How do I stop liking someone who doesn’t like me? How do I get over a heartbreak? How do I deal with disappointment in love?)</li> <li>○ <b>Reaction of others</b> (e.g. How can I prevent others from making fun of me for saying that I am in love? How will my BFF react if I have a boyfriend?)</li> <li>○ <b>Normality</b> (e.g. thinking about being attracted to someone of my gender, about not being interested in romantic relationships, about whether my body’s responses are normal and about masturbation).</li> </ul> <p><b>Images and messages from the social environment and the media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people’s curiosity makes them pay more attention to messages about sexuality that circulate in their family, in the social environment and in the media. It is marked by a need to understand the different phenomena related to sexuality, such as sexual orientation, sexually explicit material, sexual assault, sexual organs and the normality of certain behaviours or feelings.</li> <li>• The images and messages put forward by the social environment and the media convey norms to which young people may feel pressure to conform. These representations of sexuality are not always clearly articulated. Rather, they are often implicit and may give rise to questions or reinforce the questions the students already have and which are outlined in the previous section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A boy asked me out. If I say yes, how do I tell my parents? If I say no, how do I avoid hurting his feelings?<sup>37</sup></li> <li>• My two BFFs and I like the same boy. Unfortunately for them, he asked me out. I’d really like to go out with him, but my friends will hate me. What should I do?<sup>38</sup></li> <li>• How do you kiss someone properly? Is it true that you have to use your tongue?</li> </ul> <p><b>Images and messages from the social and media environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone around me is in a relationship, and I’m not. I’ve never had a boyfriend, and that makes me sad. I’d like to have one, too, but I don’t think it will ever happen to me.<sup>39</sup></li> <li>• On TV, there are lots of teens in love and lots of gay couples. Will I know when I’m in love? How can I tell if I’m gay?</li> </ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC FEELINGS AT THIS AGE

- Sexuality begins to take on greater importance in the dynamics of preadolescents' interpersonal relationships with the onset of puberty and the changes associated with it. Students start to feel attraction toward another person, who is no longer viewed as simply a playmate. The other person is seen as cute or pretty, and attractive, because of the shape of their body, their voice, their movements, the way they dress and the way they style their hair. In turn, being attractive becomes important, both in order to love oneself and to be loved by others.<sup>40</sup>
- For children, love is mostly fantasy, filled with expectations, gazes and sighs. How they are viewed by the other person and their desire to please the other person figure prominently in their romantic awakening. For adolescents, love is often a case of pseudo-love, infatuation or passing fancy.<sup>41</sup>
- At age 11, many children report having already experienced romantic feelings for another child. However, these feelings did not usually result in a relationship and, often, the object of the child's affection was not informed of these feelings.

#### TAKE CHILDREN'S LOVE INTERESTS AND THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT LOVE SERIOUSLY

- Children do not have the same representations of love as adolescents and adults do, and their experiences with love differ greatly. However, their feelings are just as intense, sincere and important as they are for adults and must be taken seriously, not trivialized or ridiculed. It is important to address the concerns and conflicts that children experience in connection with love, because they can overwhelm them and distract them in class.

#### USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE THAT REPRESENTS SEXUAL DIVERSITY

- Some students may already have experienced or are experiencing their first romantic feelings or feelings of attraction toward a person of the same gender,<sup>42</sup> others may be questioning their sexual orientation and still others may have not yet become aware of these issues. It is important not to presume that students are heterosexual and to use neutral language (e.g. "when someone falls in love . . ." instead of "when a girl falls in love with a boy . . .").

#### PLACE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SEXUAL AWAKENING IN THE CONTEXT OF RESPECT FOR PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AT THIS AGE

- The starting point for reflection is puberty, a catalyst for romantic and sexual awakening.
- Naming some signs, such as spontaneous erection, vaginal lubrication and nocturnal emission, helps students to understand sexual awakening and to feel reassured about what they are experiencing or will experience. At this age, these signs are unrelated to sexual desire or to a willingness to have sexual relations. Do not sensationalize or project children into adult experience when naming the signs.
- It is important to provide information about ejaculation before students begin experiencing it. The first ejaculation occurs between 10 and 18 years of age, usually around age 12 or 13. Boys who are not prepared with information about ejaculation are surprised, confused and even embarrassed when it happens for the first time.<sup>43</sup>
- To avoid creating feelings of shame, guilt or anxiety, masturbation can be presented as follows:<sup>44</sup>
  - Masturbation means caressing your sexual organs to relieve sexual tension or to feel pleasure.
  - Masturbation is not harmful to your health.
  - Some adolescents experiment with masturbation, others don't. It is a personal choice.
  - Masturbation must be practised privately, that is, in a private, safe place where other people cannot see or hear you.

## REFLECT ON STEREOTYPES THAT MAY BE CONVEYED ABOUT PUBERTY AND ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL AWAKENING

Some stereotypes about romantic and sexual awakening persist. Romantic feelings and concerns about reproduction (becoming fertile, menstruation, risk of becoming pregnant) are most often associated with the feminine gender, whereas pleasure and sexual arousal (erection, ejaculation and masturbation) are more often associated with the masculine gender. However, it is important to adopt a standpoint that enables you to question these stereotypes, especially in order to normalize the feelings of girls and boys who do not recognize themselves in them. In this context, it is recommended that you:

- talk about the aspects associated with sexual awakening by:
  - presenting vaginal lubrication in the same capacity as erection
  - stressing that ejaculation can be a sign of pleasure as well as of fertility (like menstruation)
  - presenting masturbation as a human phenomenon, which is practised (or not) regardless of gender
- challenge the origin and the effects of the gender differences conveyed if they are brought up or identified by students (e.g. girls only think about love; girls and boys can't be friends; it's up to boys to flirt with girls and to take the first step) in order to make students reflect on these stereotypical representations

## REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

To better understand the **experience of preadolescents with feelings of love and attraction**

- Recall your first loves and the emotions you experienced. This is not so much a reading as an inner journey, to reflect on your own experience.
- Read the “[Being in love](#)” section on the Tel-Jeunes website ([www.teljeunes.com/tel-jeunes/en](http://www.teljeunes.com/tel-jeunes/en), under All Topics > Love > Being in Love).

To better **understand sexual awakening** in young people, refer to:

- *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie H. Harris (Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2014)

### For parents

Sexuality education is better consolidated when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can complement the role of the school in the reflection process about friendship and love in the interpersonal relationships that influence students. It is recommended that parents be informed of the content covered with students, the students' psychosexual development and the complementary role that parents and the school play in sexuality education, through the use of:

- The section “Emotional and Sexual Awakening” (page 21) of the booklet [Transformations, Butterflies, Passions . . . and All Sorts of Questions. Parents' guide for discussing sexuality with their teens](#) produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (at [www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en) under Publications)
- Le Bulletin No. 11, “[Romantic Awakening](#),” produced by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, at ([www.msss.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca) under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mosaik > Le Bulletin > English > No. 11)

## **BE PREPARED: gather and create materials, adopt appropriate attitudes**

### **PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT IS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS**

This content can be linked with other content provided in Elementary 6 that covers:

- “Comprehensive View of Sexuality,” which helps students understand that sexuality also involves psychological, emotional and interpersonal dimensions that are aptly demonstrated by the range of manifestations of romantic and sexual awakening.
- “Sexual Growth and Body Image,” which helps students understand that appreciating their bodies in transition is especially important in a context in which they have a growing desire to please others and that they may be influenced by how others view them.
- “Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms,” which deals in particular with homophobia as a form of discrimination and the importance of respecting the differences of others. Links can be made to the attraction and romantic awakening to people of one’s same gender (homosexuality, sexual orientation).

### **GATHER MATERIALS**

- Choose a film to suggest to your group of students. The films described in Appendix 1 have been listed according to the signs of romantic awakening illustrated in the story. How deeply the concept is explored will differ depending on the choice of film, but all the films have the potential to help students achieve the educational aims. The “Suggestions for the Activity” section can serve as a guide to further exploring the concepts.
- The films *Petit Manhattan* and *Les vacances du petit Nicolas* can also be used in Français, langue seconde.

### **ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES**

#### **Prepare to answer students’ questions**

- To prepare to answer students’ questions, read the following documents produced by the Ministère:
  - “Answering Student Questions”: keys to understanding and effectively answering students’ questions
  - “The Question Box”: to prepare to carry out this activity

#### **Be sensitive to the diversity of experiences and concerns with regard to romantic and sexual awakening**

- On average, girls begin puberty around age 11, and boys around age 12. Some Elementary 6 students have just begun to enter puberty. Since the hormones released during puberty trigger romantic and sexual awakening, some students will take an interest in this awakening, and others less so or not at all. It is important to normalize and respect the disinterest and modesty of students who are not experiencing these feelings, while remaining open to the emerging or intense feelings of other students. This allows each individual’s experience to be recognized.
- It is important not to place pressure on students: pressure to experience romantic feelings, to have a girlfriend/boyfriend or to engage in sexual behaviour as soon as they have a romantic partner.<sup>45</sup>

#### **Adopt an appropriate pedagogical posture**

- Establish ground rules with the group to enable students to feel comfortable taking part in discussions. Ask them to share their opinions and ideas, regardless of whether or not they are experiencing feelings of love or attraction. The discussions address their perceptions, not their experience. Offer them a space in which everyone can voice their opinion, reflect and feel respected.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Three should:

- take into account the gradual onset of puberty and the emergence of sexual and romantic feelings
- help students better understand the signs of romantic and sexual awakening and reassure them about the range of feelings that can be associated with it

### Key messages:

- The onset of puberty gives rise to a number of signs of romantic and sexual awakening that are experienced in the body, the mind and the heart.
- These signs are new: they may generate concerns and questions, as well as a great deal of anxiety and happiness.
- Since individual paces of development differ, some individuals will experience these signs intensely, while others will not.

### INTRODUCTION

- Present the educational aims to students:
  - Understand how puberty also triggers signs of romantic and sexual awakening.
  - Express any questions you have about romantic and sexual awakening.
- Activate students' prior knowledge by asking them:
  - What triggers puberty?
  - Can you name the physical changes (in the body) associated with puberty?
  - The changes of puberty occur not only in the body, but also in the mind (psychological), in the heart (emotional) and in interpersonal relationships. Can you name some of these other changes? Etc.
- Based on the "Explanations Concerning Content" section, under the heading "Role of Puberty in Romantic and Sexual Awakening," explain how puberty also brings about changes associated with romantic and sexual awakening. The "Examples in the Lives of Children" section can be used to illustrate and support the information.

### ACTIVITY: FILM ANALYSIS

**In order for students to become aware of the role that puberty plays in romantic and sexual awakening and its signs (Aim 1):**

- Ask students to identify the signs of romantic and sexual awakening at their age by watching a film.
- Present a synopsis of the chosen film to the students and the general aims of viewing it.
- While viewing the film, the students' analysis of the film is guided by the viewing aims; that is, they write down answers to the following questions (Appendix 1):
  - How do the characters experience puberty? (feelings, attitudes, concerns)
  - What signs of romantic awakening do the characters experience in their mind, in their heart and in their interpersonal relationships?

- What signs of sexual awakening do the characters experience? (e.g. in their body)
- What do the characters experience in their relationships with other people? (e.g. new realities, concerns)
- What messages and images do the characters receive from the people around them and the media about romantic and sexual awakening?
- After viewing the film, the students are asked to discuss, as a group, their answers to the questions above.
- Once the group discussion has concluded, summarize the various signs of romantic and sexual awakening as well as the feelings, concerns and attitudes associated with it.
- Complete the signs of romantic and sexual awakening identified in the films under the “Romantic and Sexual Awakening” in the “Explanations Concerning Content” section. Special attention could be paid to **the signs of sexual awakening** that are not specifically illustrated in the suggested books or films.

**NOTE:** If desired, some additional aspects could be explored with the students (see Appendix 1).

- Conclude using the key messages:
  - Puberty gives rise to several signs of romantic and sexual awakening that are experienced in the body, the mind and the heart.
  - Since individual paces of development differ, some people will experience these signs intensely, while others will not.
- Introduce the next activity by pointing out to the students that these signs are new and can generate concerns and questions even though they are the source of anxiety and happiness.

#### **ACTIVITY: QUESTION BOX**

**In order for students to raise their questions about romantic and sexual awakening (Aim 2)**

- Carry out a “Question Box” activity using the following steps:

##### **Have students write questions**

- Ask the students to formulate their questions about romantic and sexual awakening, indicating that their questions can address:
  - the signs of romantic and sexual awakening (body, heart, mind)
  - feelings and concerns about romantic and sexual awakening
  - the way love and interpersonal relationships are experienced at their age
  - the images and the messages they receive about love from the people around them and the media
  - etc.
- Tell the students that:
  - their questions will remain anonymous, meaning that they will not have to write their name and that no one will be identified
  - their questions will be answered and used for a later discussion

### **Prepare to answer questions**

- If the activity is carried out among several groups in Elementary 6, gather all the students' questions together to enrich the exercise and further preserve anonymity.
- A preliminary sorting of the questions submitted to the Question Box will be necessary to:
  - give yourself time to reflect
  - remove the questions that cannot be answered in a large group (see the document *The Question Box* for possible activities to that effect)
  - separate the students' questions into categories so that the educator can better prepare the answers (see the categories proposed under the heading "Questions About Romantic and Sexual Awakening" in the "Explanations Concerning Content" section)
  - distinguish between questions that reflect a relevant need for information according to the students' age and those that require reframing information they may have heard (in the media, from the people around them, etc.)

### **Answer the questions**

- Using the Question Box, answer the students' questions and address their concerns about romantic and sexual awakening.
- Revisit the students' questions throughout the activities or at the very end to make sure they have all been answered.

### **Review the questions**

- Review the exercise as a class by asking the students:
  - What have you realized during this exercise?
  - What messages have you received from the people around you (family, peers, etc.) about love and relationships?
  - What images are conveyed in the media about love and relationships?
  - How do these messages/images influence you?
- Then review the exercise by pointing out to students that:
  - People often wonder about the same issues, but are reluctant to share their questions and concerns with their peers or the adults around them.
  - Some people have concerns about romantic and sexual awakening, while others do not. Everyone experiences this stage differently, both in terms of pace and the way these signs and feelings present themselves.
  - People hear many messages and see different images about love and romantic relationships, some of which may prompt questions or concerns.
  - Although euphoria and happiness often accompany these new feelings of love and attraction, students might sometimes feel confused and even worried about these new feelings.

### **CONCLUSION**

- To wrap up the activity, help the students become aware of individual differences in how people experience these feelings and, especially, of the importance of respecting others. Play the short animated film *In a Heartbeat* by Beth David and Esteban Bravo (2017), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2REkk9SCRn0>.



- Afterward, ask them what they understood and found important about the film.
- If necessary, complete their answers by emphasizing that:
  - The feelings associated with romantic awakening and attraction naturally emerge sooner or later.
  - Love and attraction can be experienced regardless of gender, sex or sexual orientation. The film depicts two boys, but it could just have easily illustrated two girls, or a boy and a girl. It is important to respect each individual's differences.
  - Similarly, you cannot force yourself to be attracted to someone or to be in love with someone.
  - We might feel disappointed and sad when we think that our romantic feelings are not reciprocated.
  - Since individual paces of development differ, some people will experience these signs intensely, while others will not.

## Appendix 1: Analysis of suggested films

	<b>Nicholas on Holiday (2014)</b> <b>Length: 97 minutes</b>	<b>Little Manhattan (2005)</b> <b>Length: 90 minutes</b>
<b>Film synopsis</b>	The long-awaited holidays have arrived. Nicholas, his parents and Granny hit the road and head to the seaside to stay a while at the Beau-Rivage Hotel. At the beach, Nicholas wastes no time making new friends. But Nicholas also meets Isabelle, a girl who always looks at him with big, round, worried-looking eyes, and he believes that his parents want to force him to marry her. The misunderstandings snowball, and the mischief begins. One thing is for sure: no one will forget this holiday.	Eleven-year-old Gabe loves playing basketball with his three best friends and exploring his New York City neighbourhood. He has no interest in girls, until he meets Rosemary at his karate club. Gabe is fascinated, even though he doesn't understand all the passionate and unsettling feelings that torment him. When Rosemary tells him that she will soon be leaving for summer camp—and worse still, will most likely go to another school in the fall—Gabe is devastated. Never in his young life has he faced such a huge challenge: to do everything he can to keep his first love.
<b>How do the characters experience their puberty? (feelings, attitudes, concerns)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The peer group becomes more important.</li> <li>• Nicholas' feelings are confusing. Who does he love? Mary-Jane or Isabelle?</li> </ul>	<p>Gabe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is experiencing his first feelings of attraction to Rosemary</li> <li>• worries about his appearance (e.g. his hair, his clothes) and he hates himself and puts himself down</li> <li>• wants to practise his karate skills to impress Rosemary</li> </ul>
<b>What signs of romantic awakening do the characters experience: in their mind, in their heart and in their relationships?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicholas and Mary-Jane write letters to each other to talk about their feelings; the “break-up” also happens by written correspondence.</li> <li>• Nicholas and Mary-Jane are awkward and shy together; so are Nicholas and Isabelle.</li> <li>• Nicholas and Isabelle participate in activities together.</li> <li>• Nicholas is fascinated by romantic relationships between adults and he can imagine himself being married.</li> <li>• Nicholas does not want to be apart from his two love interests, Mary-Jane and Isabelle.</li> </ul>	<p>Gabe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• admires Rosemary: he thinks she is beautiful, intelligent and talented</li> <li>• cannot really concentrate when he thinks about her</li> <li>• cannot stop watching her</li> <li>• wants to smell her and enjoy her scent</li> <li>• cannot wait to see her again</li> <li>• hopes that she will phone him</li> </ul>

	<b>Nicholas on Holiday (2014)</b> Length: 97 minutes	<b>Little Manhattan (2005)</b> Length: 90 minutes
<b>What signs of sexual awakening do the characters experience? (e.g. in their body)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They kiss each other on the cheek.</li> <li>• They hold hands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabe’s heart pounds, and his stomach flutters.</li> </ul> <p>Gabe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is awkward when Rosemary is around</li> <li>• wants to kiss her</li> <li>• takes her hand</li> <li>• feels like he is floating, full of energy, alive and happy when she puts her arms around him on his scooter</li> </ul>
<b>What do the characters experience in their relationships with others? (e.g. new realities, concerns)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The peer group becomes more important (group of boys).</li> <li>• The boys do not accept the presence of a girl among them, but they agree to let her play with them when she shows she has athletic abilities.</li> <li>• The boys want to impress Isabelle with what they can do.</li> <li>• Nicholas is afraid of a “forced marriage” that his parents might impose on him but, at the same time, he can see himself being married.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabe no longer sees Rosemary in the same way; he has known her since childhood, but he has only recently been attracted to her (“I didn’t really see her before”).</li> <li>• Gabe hangs around in front of her house and tries to find reasons to run into her.</li> <li>• Gabe is jealous when another boy spends time with her.</li> <li>• Gabe feels really sad (e.g. he cries and says that love hurts) when he understands that he will be separated from Rosemary.</li> <li>• Gabe reflects on relationships and on love: Rosemary is the third most beautiful girl in his class; what do people who love each other do?; boys and girls are separated by an “iron curtain;” girls mature more quickly than boys; does love last forever?; he doesn’t need a woman in his life to be happy, etc.</li> </ul>

	<b>Nicholas on Holiday (2014)</b> Length: 97 minutes	<b>Little Manhattan (2005)</b> Length: 90 minutes
<b>What messages and images do the characters receive from the people around them and from the media about romantic and sexual awakening?</b>	<p><b>Messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents have forbidden their daughter to date a boy because he was not good enough for her.</li> <li>One of the boys has a theory about boys and girls who date when they are rich or poor.</li> </ul> <p><b>Romantic models:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicholas' parents experience disagreements and conflicts.</li> <li>Nicholas' grandmother always brags about George, the boyfriend his mom had before his dad.</li> <li>Nicholas' dad finds girls attractive and looks at them (and smiles more than usual).</li> <li>Nicholas' mom and dad met at a costume ball and danced a lot together.</li> <li>The director, Massimo, tries to seduce Nicholas' mom.</li> <li>The two men (the dad and Massimo) fight over Nicholas' mom.</li> <li>Nicholas' dad is jealous and tries to destroy Massimo's car.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gabe's parents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are divorced, but live together under the same roof</li> <li>Gabe's mom meets with other men to establish a new relationship, while his dad worries</li> <li>experience a few conflicts and learn, through Gabe's story, the importance of naming what you experience in a relationship, and of communicating to better understand each other and get along</li> <li>Gabe's dad listens as he confides in him and is very reassuring</li> </ul> <p><b>Rosemary's parents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are very much in love and very affectionate (e.g. they hold hands)</li> </ul>
<b>Interesting additional aspects for reflection with the students</b>	<p><b>About love</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicholas' mom says, "You're there, then one day someone discovers you and then you discover yourself." What does she mean by this?</li> <li>How is romance between adults different from romance between children?</li> </ul> <p><b>About choosing a romantic partner</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicholas' mom says, "I felt like I was myself when I was with him. I loved him, I chose him." What does she mean by this?</li> </ul> <p><b>About stereotypes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What stereotypes are there in the film? (e.g. girls and women decide everything, and the boys and men carry things out)</li> </ul>	<p><b>About love</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gabe experiences his first heartbreak. Is that possible at his age? How does he experience it?</li> </ul>

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<b>IDENTITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ROLES, AND SOCIAL NORMS</b>	Elementary 3
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Identify stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in your personal and social environments, including the media  2) Make connections between gender stereotypes and the development of your gender identity	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b>  <b>150 minutes</b>
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<b>LEARNING ABOUT IDENTITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ROLES, AND SOCIAL NORMS WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS’ PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 8 TO 11 YEARS OLD</b>
<p><b>Appreciating one’s gender identity: a key element</b>          Becoming aware of and appreciating their gender identity is a vital step in children’s psychosexual development.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>The environment as an agent of socialization</b>          Various agents of socialization (family, peers, significant adults, the media) provide guidelines—in some cases, stereotypes—regarding the gender roles that society associates with boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> These guidelines influence children’s views of what is appropriate regarding appearance, attitudes and behaviours for the female and male genders and contribute to constructing their gender identity.<sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>Stereotypical gender roles can limit gender expression and harm relationships</b>          Children develop stereotypical preferences and behaviours, based on gender, starting in early childhood.<sup>4</sup> These stereotypes present the female and male genders as different and binary realities, and, as a result, drive a wedge between girls and boys, rather than focusing on their many similarities to bring them together.<sup>5</sup> Besides limiting children in the way they develop and express themselves,<sup>6</sup> repeated exposure to gender stereotypes perpetuates sexist attitudes and beliefs,<sup>7</sup> which, in turn, hinder the establishment of harmonious relationships among them. Young people between the ages of 10 and 14 in particular are more likely to conform to gender norms and to the associated inequalities.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p><b>Children 8 to 11 years old:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are more flexible regarding gender roles,<sup>9</sup> but avoid behaviours that do not adhere to what is associated with their gender because they are aware of the pressures from others to conform.<sup>10</sup> Boys are more likely to be rigidly gender-typing,<sup>11</sup> especially since stereotypical male attributes (e.g. strength, power) are considered more acceptable than stereotypical female attributes<sup>12</sup> (e.g. emotion, passivity).</li> <li>• who do not conform to the norms associated with their gender are more at risk of being excluded and victimized by their peers.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• are more aware of the gender inequality caused by stereotypes<sup>14</sup> and the negative nature of certain female stereotypes in society<sup>15</sup> (especially when attributed to men).</li> </ul>

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
1) Identify stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in your personal and social environments, including the media <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Images and messages conveyed by family, peers and the media, regarding attitudes, preferences, appearance and activities</li><li>Stereotypes conveyed about girls and boys</li></ul>	<b>STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A representation is a person’s perception or mental image of a reality.</li><li>Children perceive many stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in their social environment and in the media. These representations come from different sources and concern attitudes, preferences, appearance and activities that are socially associated with masculinity and femininity.</li></ul> <b>Images and messages conveyed by peers, family and the media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The images and messages conveyed in the personal and social environments, including the media, can take the form of stereotypical representations.</li><li>We do not always notice the presence of stereotypes around us. We learn about stereotypes by observing and listening to the people around us: our families, our friends, the students in our class and the adults around us. As we hear and see such stereotypes, we come to understand that boys “are like this,” while girls “are like that.”</li><li>We also learn about stereotypes from the media. Media in the lives of children include:<sup>16</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>music and video clips</li><li>television (e.g. cartoons and advertisements, even when not addressed to children)</li><li>information technology (e.g. video games, computers, tablets, cellphones, applications)</li><li>print media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, books, including those based on TV shows or movies)</li><li>toys and objects with media associations (e.g. stuffed animals, puzzles and clothing inspired by characters from TV shows or movies)</li><li>collectible objects (e.g. action figures, cards, stickers)</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Stereotypical representations in your personal and social environments, including the media</b>  <i>Conveyed by family</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When I talk too loud, I often get reminded that girls should be sweet and calm.</li><li>My big brother says that I have to be strong with big muscles to become a “real man.”</li><li>My dad doesn’t want my little brother to play dolls with me. But we like playing with dolls!</li><li>In my family, it’s the girls who cook and do the dishes.</li><li>My family says boys can’t wear earrings because that’s for girls.</li><li>I wasn’t allowed to help my dad in the garage. I was told it’s because it’s men’s work.</li><li>My family has 4-year-old twins, Nelly and Mateo. At Christmas, my grandparents gave Nelly a cleaning set (broom, rag, vacuum) and they gave Mateo a tool set (hammer, saw, screwdriver).</li></ul> <i>Conveyed by peers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I think that boys like contact sports and girls like more artistic sports.</li><li>Acting like a clown and making everyone laugh makes you a cool guy.</li><li>Adam says that girls cry a lot or are always arguing with their female friends.</li></ul>

<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Gender stereotypes (in children’s own words)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender stereotypes are ideas about what girls and boys are and what they do. These stereotypes separate boys and girls and the things that characterize them: boys are like this and girls are like that, or girls do this, while boys do that.</li><li>• Since stereotypes dictate how boys <b>ARE</b> and how girls <b>ARE</b>, they refer to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ attitudes (e.g. girls are sweet, calm, sensitive and emotional; boys are courageous, clownish, ambitious, active, rugged)</li><li>◦ preferences (e.g. girls are interested in princesses, fashion, relationships and the arts, while boys are interested in cars, sports, video games and superheroes)</li><li>◦ appearance (e.g. girls have long hair, have pierced ears, are flirtatious, and wear pink, sparkles and skirts; boys are taller and stronger than girls, have short hair and wear sports clothing)</li></ul></li><li>• Because stereotypes dictate what boys <b>DO</b> and what girls <b>DO</b>, they also define children’s activities (games, recreation, sports, etc.). For example, according to stereotypes, girls play with dolls and jewellery, while boys play with trucks, tools, construction sets and video games.</li><li>• Stereotypes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ do not allow for <b>variations</b> (e.g. “being a police officer is a man’s job,” when, in fact, female police officers do exist and do a very good job).</li><li>◦ are <b>contagious</b>: they can be found just about everywhere. Though widespread, they often go unnoticed, and we regularly adopt them as our own thoughts. Many people agree with these thoughts.</li><li>◦ <b>assert that boys and girls are different</b> and do not like or do the same things.</li><li>◦ <b>do not take individual differences into account</b>: if you’re a girl, you can’t do the things that boys do, and if you’re a boy, you can’t do the things that girls do.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On Friday, Nathan said that the girls should clean the desks while the boys moved them.</li><li>• Felicia likes girly things: sweaters with sparkles, bracelets, coloured streaks in her hair and nail polish.</li><li>• I like being a boy because we can do more things than girls.</li></ul> <p><i>Conveyed by the media</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Girls’ magazines are always talking about makeup, jewellery and fashion. Never about electronics or cars.</li><li>• On TV, there are chick-flick evenings and guy-flick evenings. Chick flicks are romantic movies and guy flicks are action and combat movies.</li><li>• In movies, boys are always muscular and ready to fight, and drive cars. They’re the ones who always solve the problems.</li><li>• Toys for girls are often pink and toys for boys are often blue.</li></ul>



<b>CONTENT</b> <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	<b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b> <i>To understand</i>	<b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b> <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
<p>2) Make connections between gender stereotypes and the development of your gender identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt: beliefs about preferences and behaviours to adopt according to gender, conformity with expectations regarding peer acceptance, greater division between genders</li> <li>• Influence of the group of friends</li> <li>• Influence of values and personal preferences</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER IDENTITY</b></p> <p>The stereotypes conveyed influence how children develop and express their gender identity.</p> <p><b>Influence of stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s behaviours are initially modeled by their family, personal and social environments (including peers) and the media. Through observation, children learn about the behaviours used to adapt to their environment. These behaviours are rewarded or discouraged by the people around them (adults and children alike). Through the models they imitate, children acquire ways of understanding the world around them and the behaviours deemed appropriate for each gender.</li> <li>• Stereotypes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>increase pressure on children to conform to the social expectations</b> associated with their gender, so that they are accepted by their peer group. Children who do not fit these stereotypes are made to feel inadequate and often make choices that go against their personal preferences just so they can conform to the group.</li> <li>◦ <b>limit everyone’s possibilities and the way they express themselves</b>, and influence choices.</li> <li>◦ <b>contribute to maintaining a binary view of gender</b> (girl or boy) by placing <b>girls and boys</b> in “two separate worlds, where they are assigned distinct characteristics.”<sup>17</sup> [Translation]</li> <li>◦ <b>drive a wedge between children.</b> Children’s similarities outweigh their differences and they all have the same needs: to belong, to feel competent, and to be valued and accepted while knowing they can be themselves.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Influence of stereotypes on the social behaviours to adopt (in children’s own words)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotypes are common ideas. Many people (adults and children) agree with stereotypes.</li> <li>• Stereotypes become a problem when they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ limit our freedom and choices and prevent us from being ourselves. We might stop ourselves from acting or being a certain way because it does not fit with how other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Stereotypes conveyed</b></p> <p><i>About girls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls are pretty, delicate and sweet. (attitudes)</li> <li>• Girls take care of children. (activity/preference)</li> <li>• Girls cook and do the housework. (activity)</li> <li>• Girls like pink, princesses and dolls. (activity/preference)</li> <li>• Girls have long hair and wear skirts. (appearance)</li> </ul> <p><i>About boys</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys are strong and muscular. (appearance)</li> <li>• Boys like sports, cars and superheroes. (activity/preference)</li> <li>• Boys don’t cry and are always on the go. (attitude)</li> <li>• Boys like to be the class clown. (attitude)</li> <li>• Boys play with trucks and building blocks. (activity/preference)</li> </ul> <p><b>Influence of stereotypes on your gender identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pamela would rather play dodgeball than jump rope during recess, but she doesn’t want to be excluded from her group of friends.</li> <li>• Ludovic likes wearing his pink shirt, even though Jeremy says that pink is for girls.</li> <li>• Marianne really likes the hero on this new TV show. He’s a detective and is really good at observing details that help him solve puzzles. She’d really like to be like him.</li> <li>• Mathis is embarrassed to tell the others that he doesn’t want to play soccer at recess. He prefers the swing. It’s a much calmer activity.</li> </ul>

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p>people of the same gender act or are. <b>(beliefs about preferences and appropriate behaviours based on gender)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ stop us from being ourselves or doing what we love because we fear how others will react. If we do something that does not fit with the stereotype for our gender, we might be told that we cannot do it, be prevented from doing it, or be mocked.</li></ul> <p><b>(conformity with expectations regarding peer acceptance)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ lead us to believe that “real boys” or “real girls” do one thing and not the other. Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different and divide the world into two categories (girls and boys). In reality, girls and boys are more alike than different: they can do the same things. <b>(greater division between genders)</b></li></ul> <p><b>Influence of the peer group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The peer group can influence the way children express their gender identity. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Children might avoid being themselves or making certain choices out of fear of being judged, ridiculed, rejected, bullied or excluded by their peer group.</li><li>○ Children might make choices based on the preferences of their peer group, because they identify with their peers.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Influence of values and personal preferences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Children should be guided by their personal values and preferences as they develop their gender identity. They should be able to make choices based on what they are about (values) and their preferences (what they like, what they don’t like, what they feel like doing). In this way, children can think of themselves as girls or boys even if their personal preferences are not in line with stereotypical representations of their gender (e.g. you can be and feel like a girl even if you hate dressing or acting “girly,” and you can be and feel like a boy even if you hate sports or fighting).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Roxanne feels uncomfortable being the only girl on her soccer team. She’d like to see other girls join the team.</li><li>● Justine would like to have nail polish with glitter so she can be like most of the girls at her school.</li><li>● Corianne is angry. The boys don’t want the girls to play basketball with them at recess. They say the girls aren’t as good as they are.</li><li>● Selena bought a baseball jersey while on vacation. But she doesn’t dare wear it to school because she’s afraid that people will say it’s a boy’s shirt.</li></ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### Take stock of your own openness to non-stereotypical attitudes and behaviours by reflecting on the following questions:

- Am I comfortable with my students making choices that are based on their preferences and that go beyond stereotypes?
- Do I encourage students to express themselves in diverse ways, regardless of their gender?
- Do I use a variety of examples that go beyond stereotypes?
- Do I have preconceived ideas about how boys and girls should act?
- Do I further reinforce certain traits, attitudes and behaviours typically associated with boys when these are displayed by boys? (e.g. supporting courage and leadership) And those typically associated with girls when displayed by girls? (e.g. supporting gentleness and patience)
- Do I encourage girls who adopt behaviours that are more often associated with boys, without doing the same for boys? (e.g. encouraging a girl to assert herself without telling a boy that it was okay for him to express his sadness)
- Are my expectations of classroom behaviour the same for all the students, regardless of their gender?

#### Become aware of the influence of stereotypes in the lives of children

- The homosocial phase (boys socializing with boys, girls socializing with girls) that students experience at this age sometimes contributes to reinforcing stereotypes.
- The more a person adheres to gender stereotypes, the fewer possibilities they see for themselves, thereby restricting their choices (character traits and expression of one's personality, games/toys, sports, appearance, studies, occupations/professions, etc.). In this regard, it is important to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in school activities (sports, arts and science, etc.). The goal is to avoid separating the genders and, instead, favour the students' individual choices and preferences, regardless of gender.
- Children who do not fit the stereotypes associated with their gender may feel pressure to conform to those stereotypes as well as a sense of inadequacy. They may also be teased, ridiculed, or even rejected by the other children. This is especially the case for children who express a gender variance or who are gender creative.

#### Understand a few concepts associated with stereotyped socialization

- Stereotypes exist throughout the world and transcend cultures.
- It is through socialization that children learn the behavioural norms they must adopt according to their biological sex.<sup>18</sup> This is called stereotyped socialization. In the long term, it impacts academic success and the choice of studies and career as well as the dynamics of romantic relationships, among other things. That is why it is important to work with students on stereotypes throughout elementary school.
- On a daily basis, gender stereotypes influence the way young people and adults:
  - understand the roles and duties typically associated with girls and boys, with women and men
  - interpret their margin of freedom and, inversely, the constraints and limits they believe are imposed on them
  - perceive and reproduce inequalities among themselves<sup>19</sup>

### Understand and distinguish between the concepts of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation

- Gender identity refers to a person’s individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth. A person can therefore identify with the label ‘man’ or ‘woman’, or somewhere else along the spectrum, independently of the sex assigned at birth.<sup>20</sup>
- Gender expression is “how a person expresses their gender to society or how a person expresses their femininity, masculinity, or their gender identity (androgynous, non-binary, etc.). An individual’s gender identity is what they know themselves to be, their gender expression is how they present themselves or show their gender to society, and how their gender is understood by others.”<sup>21</sup>
- Gender identity (who I am) is different from sexual orientation (who I love, who I am attracted to). A person’s sexual orientation and gender identity are not connected.

### REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

For information about **stereotypes** and their impacts, refer to the following section on the [Media Smarts](#) website:

- “[Gender Representation](#)” (under Digital & Media Literacy > Media Issues)
- Especially the “[Men and Masculinity](#)” and “[Women and Girls](#)” sections

For **suggested pedagogical activities** on the **development of egalitarian relationships** between boys and girls, refer to:

- “[Girls and Boys, Let’s Get Along!](#)” a teaching guide produced by the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur
- the “[Tools and resources for professionals working with youth and families](#)” section of the [LGBT Family Coalition](#) website (under “Tools & Courses”)

For **suggested books for classroom use** or for **recommended parent/child readings**, consult:

- the [book web](#) on the sexuality education theme “Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms” for Elementary 3 available on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website (under K/ELA > Kindergarten and ELA Book Webs > Kindergarten and Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Education Book Web Elementary 3), which features:
  - Austrian, J. J. *Worm Loves Worm*. NY, NY: HarperCollins, 2016.
  - Bouchard, David. *That’s Hockey*. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publisher, 2004.
  - Cole, Babette. *Princess Smartypants*. NY, NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons Books for Young Readers, 2005.
  - DeMont, Belle. *I Love My Purse*. Toronto, ON: Annick Press, 2017.
  - DePaola, Tomie. *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*. NY, NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2017.
  - Negley, Keith. *Tough Guys (Have Feelings Too)*. London, UK: Nobrow Press, 2015.
- [Artsy Boys and Smelly Girls](#), available as a free download on author/illustrator [Elise Gravel’s](#) website (also available in French as *Tu peux*). The book deals with both boys and girls, and is accompanied by posters about stereotypes and respect for differences (available in the “[Boutique](#)” section under “[Free Printable Stuff](#).”)
- books suggested on the [LGBT Family Coalition](#) website (under Resources > Books > Books for Kids)
- the [annotated bibliography of children’s books about gender diversity](#) compiled by [Gender Spectrum](#) and available on its website

- For approaches to analyzing gender stereotypes in children’s literature, consult:
  - [“Content Analysis and Gender Stereotypes in Children’s Books”](#) by Frank Taylor, *Teaching Sociology* 31, no. 3 (July 2003): 300-311.
  - [Gender Analysis of School Curriculum and Text Books](#), by Munawar Mirza (Islamabad, Pakistan: UNESCO, 2006).

#### For parents

- Sexuality education is better consolidated and more effective when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process undertaken in school regarding gender roles and stereotypes. Invite parents to consult the following resources:
  - Le Bulletin No. 4, [“Sharing Tasks at Home,”](#) available on the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > Projet Mozaïk – Le Bulletin – Impliquer les parents dans l’éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English)
- [“Talking to Kids About Gender Stereotypes,”](#) a tip sheet available on the [Media Smarts](#) website (under Teacher Resources > Find Lessons and Resources > Tip Sheet > Gender Representation > Talking to Kids About Gender Stereotypes)

### BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes

#### PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PRESENTED IN ELEMENTARY 3

- The content about stereotypes can be presented **after** the content of the theme “Comprehensive View of Sexuality.” The comprehensive view of sexuality makes it possible to situate the socio-cultural dimension of sexuality around us in terms of the content of this theme: awareness of messages about sexuality in our environment, awareness of rules and expectations that can influence our decisions and personal choices.

#### GATHER MATERIALS

- Prepare books and videos that will be useful for the activity (if necessary).
- Prepare communications to parents.

#### ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES

- Avoid the trap of “reversing stereotypes” to get students to reflect (e.g. encouraging girls who play hockey or boys who dance). Instead, explore what society associates with the female and male genders and the obstacles encountered by children when attempting to express their own personality, as well as the influence of stereotypes on the lives of children.
- Help the students to get to know themselves better (what they like, what their characteristics are) so that they are able to express who they are and make their own choices.
- Insist on respect for everyone’s choices and encourage students who respect the choices of other people.

#### Whenever possible, limit activities that separate students according to gender<sup>22</sup>

- As much as possible, limit the practice of separating boys and girls. This practice drives a wedge between the genders and emphasizes their differences. Furthermore, a trans child or a child who does not identify as either a girl or a boy, will wonder where to go during activities that separate girls from boys (back-to-school activities in the fall, educational or recreational activities, etc.). Children can be separated based on different criteria (e.g. children born from January to June and those born from July to December; children who eat cereal in the morning and those who eat toast). In situations where children have to be separated based on gender, you must ensure that they have access to activities that are fully consistent with their gender identity and gender expression.
- It is also preferable to avoid activities that perpetuate gender stereotypes, for example, by limiting participation in hockey to boys and participation in gymnastics to girls.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Two should:

- promote awareness of the impacts of stereotypical messages conveyed in the social environment about gender<sup>23</sup>
- promote egalitarian relationships<sup>24</sup>
- foster respect for individual differences<sup>25</sup>

**Key messages**

- People learn stereotypes by watching and listening to the people around them: family, friends, other students and adults (teachers, educators, etc.).
- People also learn about stereotypes in books, movies, TV shows, advertisements and video games.
- Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different. In fact, they are more alike than different and can do the same things.
- Stereotypes become a problem when they prevent people from being who they are or from doing what they like to do (based on their preferences).
- There is no one way of being a boy or being a girl: there are many ways of being ourselves, of being human beings.

*INTRODUCTION*

- Introduce the theme to the students by telling them that:
  - you will be exploring how families, friends and the media convey specific ideas about who boys and girls are and about what boys and girls do (stereotypes)
  - you will be exploring how these ideas influence the way we behave

**What students already know**

- Ask the students questions to find out what they already know about gender stereotypes: “Do you know what a gender stereotype is?” Write their answers on the board.
- Draw attention to the answers that suggest that stereotypes are widespread ideas about who boys and girls are and what they do.
- Complete their answers with:
  - the “Explanations Concerning Content” section, under the heading “Gender stereotypes (in children’s own words)”
  - the video [Gender Roles and Stereotypes](#) produced by [Amaze](#)

*ACTIVITY: IDENTIFICATION OF STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATIONS*

**To help students identify stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in their personal and social environments, including the media (Aim 1)**

- Ask students to give examples of stereotypes associated with boys and with girls. Write some of the answers on the board.
- Support students as they identify stereotypical representations of femininity (being a girl) and masculinity (being a boy) by asking them the following questions:

- **In your family, among the people around you**
  - Are there people who say that certain things (activities, occupations, appearances, clothing, interests, personality traits) are only for girls or only for boys? Name some.
  - How do the people around you describe how girls should act, or what girls can and cannot do? How boys should act or what boys can and cannot do?
  - Are there things that people encourage girls to do, but not boys? And things that people encourage boys to do, but not girls?
- **With friends and other students at school**
  - At school, do your friends or other students say how a girl should act? How a boy should act?
  - What do people say girls shouldn't do because they are girls? What do people say boys shouldn't do because they are boys?
  - What do you think about the way boys and girls are depicted in the **media** around you.

**NOTE:** This activity could also be carried out as a homework assignment to allow students to make a choice in connection with their experience and possibly with the support of a parent.

- Ask students to choose one or two elements from among the following for analysis. Students should describe how men and women are generally represented (appearance, attitude, character traits, qualities, activities, interests) in the chosen media:

*How are boys and girls and men and women represented:*

- **on television and in movies?**
- **in advertisements** (print, television, Internet)?
- **in music and video clips?**
- **in books?**
- **in video games?**
- Conclude this part with the following key messages:
  - People learn stereotypes by watching and listening to the people around them: family, friends, other students and adults (teachers, educators, etc.).
  - People also learn about stereotypes in books, movies, TV shows, advertisements and video games.

#### ACTIVITY: DISCUSSION

**Choose option A or B to complete the activity:**

##### **Option A – Questions about the connections between stereotypes and gender identity**

- Tell the students that they will be reflecting on THE INFLUENCE of stereotypes on the ways we behave, or conduct ourselves. Stereotypes are common ideas that sometimes prevent people from doing what they want to do (preferences) and from being who they really are.
- Using examples from under the heading “Influence of stereotypes on your gender identity” in the “Examples from the Lives of Children” section, ask the students the following questions about the influence of stereotypes on who we are:
  - *A girl wants to take part in an activity that is usually associated with boys. The people around her (her family or her friends) do not agree with her. What are her choices?*
    - *Possible answers: Not taking part in the activity and feeling sad or disappointed; taking part in the activity in secret; taking part in the activity despite the stereotypes because it is her personal preference.*



- *A boy wants to take part in an activity that is usually associated with girls. If other boys at the school participate in this activity, what difference does it make? If none of the boys at the school participate in this activity, could this make the boy change his mind?*
- *A girl wants to take part in an activity that is usually associated with boys. If other girls at the school participate in this activity, what difference does it make? If none of the girls at the school participate in this activity, could this make the girl change her mind?*
- *How do stereotypes influence children? Can you give some examples?*
- Complete the students' answers using the key messages and the information under the heading "Influence of stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt" in the "Explanations Concerning Content" section.
- Conclude this part using the following key messages:
  - Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different. In fact, they are more alike than different and can do the same things.
  - Stereotypes become a problem when they prevent people from being who they are or from doing what they like to do (based on their preferences).

#### **Option B – Group reading and discussion of observed stereotypes**

- Choose one or several of the suggested books from the "Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms" [book web](#) on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website, under K/ELA > Kindergarten and ELA Book Webs > Kindergarten and Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Book Web Elementary 3.
- Read the selected titles to the students or suggest that they read them.
- Ask the questions proposed by Québec Reading Connection book web either after the reading, or during the course of the reading:
  - Does it take courage to be different from those around you?
  - How do the characters in the stories find happiness while challenging gender stereotypes?
  - When someone stands out because they are unique, how can you show them acceptance?
  - What can we do to make our school welcoming and safe for everyone?

*\*See Appendix 1 for possible answers to questions about some of the books chosen from the book web.*

- Ensure that the students develop their awareness of the existence of gender stereotypes around them and the influence these stereotypes have on them.
- Supplement using the key messages and the information under the heading "Influence of gender stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt" in the "Explanations Concerning Content" section.
- Conclude this part with the following key messages:
  - Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different. In fact, they are more alike than different and can do the same things.
  - Stereotypes become a problem when they prevent people from being who they are or from doing what they like to do (based on their preferences).



#### ACTIVITY: CONNECTION BETWEEN GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER IDENTITY

##### To help the students make connections between gender stereotypes and the development of **THEIR** identity (Aim 2):

- Ask the students to make a self-portrait entitled “ME” in which they draw themselves (their physical features) and describe themselves (their qualities, special talents, interests, favourite activities, tastes, etc.).
- Have the students choose the “tools” they will use for their drawing by:
  1. Placing two containers on your desk:
    - a small cup containing just two pencils, one pink and one blue
    - a large jar containing many pencils of many different colours, including pink ones and blue ones
  2. Ask the students which of the two containers they would prefer to use for their drawing: the one with the two pencils or the one with many pencils of many different colours.
  3. Ask the students to explain the reasons for their choice.
  4. Then, based on their reflections, tell the children:
    - that the cup containing the blue and pink pencils represents the stereotypes associated with boys and girls
    - that the large jar containing many pencils of many colours represents the diversity of models available to the students
    - that they can draw and express themselves more easily using the large jar because they will have more choices and possibilities
  5. Ask the students: ““Would it be fair to let kids only use certain colours for their artwork?’ No! All the coloured pens and pencils in this class are for all the students – they can choose which colours they want to use.”<sup>26</sup>
  6. Conclude this demonstration by emphasizing that diversity enables the students to make choices based on their preferences and, therefore, to be themselves.

**NOTE:** Having students choose the colours they wish to use prior to creating the drawing is not insignificant. It aims to show that gender stereotypes (the pink and blue pencils) place constraints (limitations) on identity and self-expression. Inversely, a world of diversity offers children more choices, freedom and possibilities to define and describe themselves.

- Following this demonstration, ask the students to use their own pencils, in different colours, to create their drawings and personal descriptions.
- After completing the activity, ask the students to reflect on the influence of gender stereotypes on **THEIR** gender identity (who they are) and to say, if necessary, how this influence is felt. The following questions might give them some food for thought:
  - Do gender stereotypes stop me from doing things? Do I stop myself from being me or from doing things because they are not things that boys typically do or that typically girls do? Do I force myself to be a certain way or do something based on gender stereotypes?

#### CONCLUSION

Conclude with the following key message:

- There is no one way of being a boy or being a girl: there are many ways of being ourselves, of being human beings.

Appendix 1: Content elements based on book web questions

Questions to explore	Oliver Button Is a Sissy	Worm Loves Worm	That’s Hockey!
Summary	<p>Oliver Button likes to do quiet things, such as reading and drawing and playing dress up. His schoolmates call him a sissy; his Papa calls him a sissy. Because he loves to dance, he is sent to dance classes: “‘Especially for the exercise,’ Papa said.” After his schoolmates play keep-away with his new shiny tap shoes, it is written on the school wall for all to see: “Oliver Button is a sissy.” Oliver joyfully practises his tap dancing nevertheless. After losing in a talent contest, Oliver bravely heads back to school the next day, expecting more ridicule. Instead he sees the message on the school wall has been changed: “Oliver Button is a star!”</p>	<p>When a worm meets a special worm and they fall in love, you know what happens next: They get married! But their friends inform the worms that it is not that easy—they need someone to marry them, a Best Beetle, Bride’s Bees, a tuxedo, a dress and a ring. Each new expectation highlights its own absurdity: “We don’t have heads for hats, or hands to hold flowers,” says Worm. Their friends want to know—who will wear the dress? And who will wear the tux? The answer is: It doesn’t matter. Because worm loves worm.</p>	<p>Spending a weekend with Cousin Étienne in the far north, the narrator learns to play street hockey, which is very different from hockey played on the ice in the city. No skates, no pads, no helmets, but everyone wears the number 9 sweater of the Canadiens. Everyone scores and everyone wins; the game goes on for hours and hours until it begins to get dark. After the game, drinking hot chocolate by the stove and dreaming of the NHL, Étienne gives his cousin the number 9 sweater to keep. The sweater and the good memories last for many years to come.</p>
What <b>stereotypes</b> do the characters encounter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A boy who likes to draw, read, play with paper dolls and play dress up, is called a sissy.</li><li>• A boy who does not like to play sports, and is not athletic, is always chosen last for the team.</li><li>• A boy who enjoys dancing is rejected by the other boys and experiences bullying.</li><li>• In the dance class, Oliver is the only boy in a class of girls.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A wedding must have a bride and a groom.</li><li>• The bride wears a white dress, the groom wears a tuxedo.</li><li>• It is important to know which one is the bride, and which one is the groom, so that they can fulfill their designated roles.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hockey is a rough sport, where size and ability to knock others over is prized; traditionally more suitable for boys.</li><li>• A girl who lives for hockey, just like her cousin, and who is a skilled player.</li><li>• A girl who can get into the spirit of the game with the same passion and abandon as the other players.</li><li>• A girl who dreams of playing in the NHL and who appreciates hockey heroes of the past, such as Maurice “Rocket” Richard.</li></ul>

Questions to explore	Oliver Button Is a Sissy	Worm Loves Worm	That's Hockey!
How are these stereotypes <b>conveyed</b> (by friends, parents, traditions)?	<p>By the father:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Don’t be such a sissy! Go out and play baseball or football or basketball; any kind of ball!”</li> <li>Oliver’s father allows him to take dance class “for the exercise.”</li> </ul> <p>By the other boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oliver’s lack of athletic skills means they do not want him on their team. “Oh, rats, we have to have Oliver Button. Now we’ll lose for sure.”</li> <li>Oliver is bullied for joining dance class; they play catch with his tap shoes.</li> <li>They tease Oliver when a girl comes to his defense. “Gotta have help from the <i>girls</i>.”</li> <li>They write “Oliver Button is a sissy” on the school wall.</li> <li>The boys tease and mock him every day.</li> </ul>	<p>By the bees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“You need a white dress, a tuxedo, a top hat.”</li> <li>“But which one of you is the bride? How can we be bride’s bees if we don’t know who the bride is?”</li> </ul> <p>By the beetle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“But one of you has got to be the groom, or how can I be best beetle?”</li> </ul> <p>By the cricket/by tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“You’ll need to get rings to wear on your fingers, that’s how it’s always been done”</li> <li>When the worms decide they can both be both bride and groom, Cricket responds, “That isn’t how it’s always been done.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The traditions of street hockey, as conveyed by Étienne: “That stuff’s for city kids. We play real hockey here.”</li> <li>The goalie has had his front teeth knocked out; he would rather continue to play than have them fixed.</li> <li>Mop, the big kid who is the only one with a real chance of making it to the NHL, is always picked first for the team.</li> </ul>
To what extent do the stereotypes <b>affect the characters’ happiness or fulfillment</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oliver’s father is angry that he does not want to play ball; his mother is worried that he does not get enough exercise.</li> <li>The bullying at school does not prevent Oliver from participating in dance class and taking part in the show.</li> <li>Oliver expects more bullying after the show; he does not want to go back to school and is the last one to go in the building.</li> <li>Pursuing his dream of dancing allows Oliver to change the bullying into encouragement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not being able to tell the bride from the groom is initially upsetting to the friends, who want to play their traditional roles of bridesmaids and best man.</li> <li>Overcoming stereotypes requires the friends to adjust their thinking. “I can be the groom,” says Worm. “I can, too,” says Worm. “We can be both.” “Really?” ask Beetle and the Bees.</li> <li>Cricket relies on tradition to determine how the wedding should proceed. When he says, “That isn’t how it’s always been done,” the worms respond with “Then we’ll just change how it’s done.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skill and passion for the game are more important than gender. Says Étienne proudly, “Hey! You guys see that? Does my cousin have moves or what?”</li> <li>The narrator can score and keep up with the male players.</li> <li>The roughness of the game does not deter her; she admires them for it. “Mop stood in one spot grabbing, knocking, tripping or elbowing anyone within reach.”</li> <li>She keeps the number 9 sweater as a souvenir, and passes it on to her own daughter when the time comes, so that she too can carry on the passion for hockey.</li> </ul>

Questions to explore	Oliver Button Is a Sissy	Worm Loves Worm	That’s Hockey!
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The stereotypes surrounding a wedding do not prevent Worm and Worm from getting married, they simply change some of the traditions.</li><li>• The friends are able to celebrate along with them, because it is the love between the worms that is important.</li></ul>	

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IDENTITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ROLES, AND SOCIAL NORMS	Elementary 3
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Educational aims	<p>1) Identify stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in your personal and social environments, including the media</p> <p>2) Make connections between gender stereotypes and the development of your gender identity</p>	<p>Estimated duration of the activity</p> <p>150 minutes</p>
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LEARNING ABOUT IDENTITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ROLES, AND SOCIAL NORMS WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS’ PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT	CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 8 TO 11 YEARS OLD
<p><b>Appreciating one’s gender identity: a key element</b> Becoming aware of and appreciating their gender identity is a vital step in children’s psychosexual development.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>The environment as an agent of socialization</b> Various agents of socialization (family, peers, significant adults, the media) provide guidelines—in some cases, stereotypes—regarding the gender roles that society associates with boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> These guidelines influence children’s views of what is appropriate regarding appearance, attitudes and behaviours for the female and male genders and contribute to constructing their gender identity.<sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>Stereotypical gender roles can limit gender expression and harm relationships</b> Children develop stereotypical preferences and behaviours, based on gender, starting in early childhood.<sup>4</sup> These stereotypes present the female and male genders as different and binary realities, and, as a result, drive a wedge between girls and boys, rather than focusing on their many similarities to bring them together.<sup>5</sup> Besides limiting children in the way they develop and express themselves,<sup>6</sup> repeated exposure to gender stereotypes perpetuates sexist attitudes and beliefs,<sup>7</sup> which, in turn, hinder the establishment of harmonious relationships among them. Young people between the ages of 10 and 14 in particular are more likely to conform to gender norms and to the associated inequalities.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p><b>Children 8 to 11 years old:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are more flexible regarding gender roles,<sup>9</sup> but avoid behaviours that do not adhere to what is associated with their gender because they are aware of the pressures from others to conform.<sup>10</sup> Boys are more likely to be rigidly gender-typing,<sup>11</sup> especially since stereotypical male attributes (e.g. strength, power) are considered more acceptable than stereotypical female attributes<sup>12</sup> (e.g. emotion, passivity).</li> <li>who do not conform to the norms associated with their gender are more at risk of being excluded and victimized by their peers.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>are more aware of the gender inequality caused by stereotypes<sup>14</sup> and the negative nature of certain female stereotypes in society<sup>15</sup> (especially when attributed to men).</li> </ul>

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
1) Identify stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in your personal and social environments, including the media <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Images and messages conveyed by family, peers and the media, regarding attitudes, preferences, appearance and activities</li><li>Stereotypes conveyed about girls and boys</li></ul>	<b>STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A representation is a person’s perception or mental image of a reality.</li><li>Children perceive many stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in their social environment and in the media. These representations come from different sources and concern attitudes, preferences, appearance and activities that are socially associated with masculinity and femininity.</li></ul> <b>Images and messages conveyed by peers, family and the media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The images and messages conveyed in the personal and social environments, including the media, can take the form of stereotypical representations.</li><li>We do not always notice the presence of stereotypes around us. We learn about stereotypes by observing and listening to the people around us: our families, our friends, the students in our class and the adults around us. As we hear and see such stereotypes, we come to understand that boys “are like this,” while girls “are like that.”</li><li>We also learn about stereotypes from the media. Media in the lives of children include:<sup>16</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>music and video clips</li><li>television (e.g. cartoons and advertisements, even when not addressed to children)</li><li>information technology (e.g. video games, computers, tablets, cellphones, applications)</li><li>print media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, books, including those based on TV shows or movies)</li><li>toys and objects with media associations (e.g. stuffed animals, puzzles and clothing inspired by characters from TV shows or movies)</li><li>collectible objects (e.g. action figures, cards, stickers)</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Stereotypical representations in your personal and social environments, including the media</b>  <i>Conveyed by family</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When I talk too loud, I often get reminded that girls should be sweet and calm.</li><li>My big brother says that I have to be strong with big muscles to become a “real man.”</li><li>My dad doesn’t want my little brother to play dolls with me. But we like playing with dolls!</li><li>In my family, it’s the girls who cook and do the dishes.</li><li>My family says boys can’t wear earrings because that’s for girls.</li><li>I wasn’t allowed to help my dad in the garage. I was told it’s because it’s men’s work.</li><li>My family has 4-year-old twins, Nelly and Mateo. At Christmas, my grandparents gave Nelly a cleaning set (broom, rag, vacuum) and they gave Mateo a tool set (hammer, saw, screwdriver).</li></ul> <i>Conveyed by peers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I think that boys like contact sports and girls like more artistic sports.</li><li>Acting like a clown and making everyone laugh makes you a cool guy.</li><li>Adam says that girls cry a lot or are always arguing with their female friends.</li></ul>

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Gender stereotypes (in children’s own words)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender stereotypes are ideas about what girls and boys are and what they do. These stereotypes separate boys and girls and the things that characterize them: boys are like this and girls are like that, or girls do this, while boys do that.</li><li>• Since stereotypes dictate how boys <b>ARE</b> and how girls <b>ARE</b>, they refer to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ attitudes (e.g. girls are sweet, calm, sensitive and emotional; boys are courageous, clownish, ambitious, active, rugged)</li><li>◦ preferences (e.g. girls are interested in princesses, fashion, relationships and the arts, while boys are interested in cars, sports, video games and superheroes)</li><li>◦ appearance (e.g. girls have long hair, have pierced ears, are flirtatious, and wear pink, sparkles and skirts; boys are taller and stronger than girls, have short hair and wear sports clothing)</li></ul></li><li>• Because stereotypes dictate what boys <b>DO</b> and what girls <b>DO</b>, they also define children’s activities (games, recreation, sports, etc.). For example, according to stereotypes, girls play with dolls and jewellery, while boys play with trucks, tools, construction sets and video games.</li><li>• Stereotypes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ do not allow for <b>variations</b> (e.g. “being a police officer is a man’s job,” when, in fact, female police officers do exist and do a very good job).</li><li>◦ are <b>contagious</b>: they can be found just about everywhere. Though widespread, they often go unnoticed, and we regularly adopt them as our own thoughts. Many people agree with these thoughts.</li><li>◦ <b>assert that boys and girls are different</b> and do not like or do the same things.</li><li>◦ <b>do not take individual differences into account</b>: if you’re a girl, you can’t do the things that boys do, and if you’re a boy, you can’t do the things that girls do.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On Friday, Nathan said that the girls should clean the desks while the boys moved them.</li><li>• Felicia likes girly things: sweaters with sparkles, bracelets, coloured streaks in her hair and nail polish.</li><li>• I like being a boy because we can do more things than girls.</li></ul> <p><i>Conveyed by the media</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Girls’ magazines are always talking about makeup, jewellery and fashion. Never about electronics or cars.</li><li>• On TV, there are chick-flick evenings and guy-flick evenings. Chick flicks are romantic movies and guy flicks are action and combat movies.</li><li>• In movies, boys are always muscular and ready to fight, and drive cars. They’re the ones who always solve the problems.</li><li>• Toys for girls are often pink and toys for boys are often blue.</li></ul>



<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
<p>2) Make connections between gender stereotypes and the development of your gender identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt: beliefs about preferences and behaviours to adopt according to gender, conformity with expectations regarding peer acceptance, greater division between genders</li> <li>• Influence of the group of friends</li> <li>• Influence of values and personal preferences</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER IDENTITY</b></p> <p>The stereotypes conveyed influence how children develop and express their gender identity.</p> <p><b>Influence of stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s behaviours are initially modeled by their family, personal and social environments (including peers) and the media. Through observation, children learn about the behaviours used to adapt to their environment. These behaviours are rewarded or discouraged by the people around them (adults and children alike). Through the models they imitate, children acquire ways of understanding the world around them and the behaviours deemed appropriate for each gender.</li> <li>• Stereotypes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>increase pressure on children to conform to the social expectations</b> associated with their gender, so that they are accepted by their peer group. Children who do not fit these stereotypes are made to feel inadequate and often make choices that go against their personal preferences just so they can conform to the group.</li> <li>○ <b>limit everyone’s possibilities and the way they express themselves</b>, and influence choices.</li> <li>○ <b>contribute to maintaining a binary view of gender</b> (girl or boy) by placing <b>girls and boys</b> in “two separate worlds, where they are assigned distinct characteristics.”<sup>17</sup> [Translation]</li> <li>○ <b>drive a wedge between children.</b> Children’s similarities outweigh their differences and they all have the same needs: to belong, to feel competent, and to be valued and accepted while knowing they can be themselves.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Influence of stereotypes on the social behaviours to adopt (in children’s own words)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotypes are common ideas. Many people (adults and children) agree with stereotypes.</li> <li>• Stereotypes become a problem when they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ limit our freedom and choices and prevent us from being ourselves. We might stop ourselves from acting or being a certain way because it does not fit with how other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Stereotypes conveyed</b></p> <p><i>About girls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls are pretty, delicate and sweet. (attitudes)</li> <li>• Girls take care of children. (activity/preference)</li> <li>• Girls cook and do the housework. (activity)</li> <li>• Girls like pink, princesses and dolls. (activity/preference)</li> <li>• Girls have long hair and wear skirts. (appearance)</li> </ul> <p><i>About boys</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys are strong and muscular. (appearance)</li> <li>• Boys like sports, cars and superheroes. (activity/preference)</li> <li>• Boys don’t cry and are always on the go. (attitude)</li> <li>• Boys like to be the class clown. (attitude)</li> <li>• Boys play with trucks and building blocks. (activity/preference)</li> </ul> <p><b>Influence of stereotypes on your gender identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pamela would rather play dodgeball than jump rope during recess, but she doesn’t want to be excluded from her group of friends.</li> <li>• Ludovic likes wearing his pink shirt, even though Jeremy says that pink is for girls.</li> <li>• Marianne really likes the hero on this new TV show. He’s a detective and is really good at observing details that help him solve puzzles. She’d really like to be like him.</li> <li>• Mathis is embarrassed to tell the others that he doesn’t want to play soccer at recess. He prefers the swing. It’s a much calmer activity.</li> </ul>

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p>people of the same gender act or are. <b>(beliefs about preferences and appropriate behaviours based on gender)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ stop us from being ourselves or doing what we love because we fear how others will react. If we do something that does not fit with the stereotype for our gender, we might be told that we cannot do it, be prevented from doing it, or be mocked.</li></ul> <p><b>(conformity with expectations regarding peer acceptance)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ lead us to believe that “real boys” or “real girls” do one thing and not the other. Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different and divide the world into two categories (girls and boys). In reality, girls and boys are more alike than different: they can do the same things. <b>(greater division between genders)</b></li></ul> <p><b>Influence of the peer group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The peer group can influence the way children express their gender identity. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Children might avoid being themselves or making certain choices out of fear of being judged, ridiculed, rejected, bullied or excluded by their peer group.</li><li>○ Children might make choices based on the preferences of their peer group, because they identify with their peers.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Influence of values and personal preferences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Children should be guided by their personal values and preferences as they develop their gender identity. They should be able to make choices based on what they are about (values) and their preferences (what they like, what they don’t like, what they feel like doing). In this way, children can think of themselves as girls or boys even if their personal preferences are not in line with stereotypical representations of their gender (e.g. you can be and feel like a girl even if you hate dressing or acting “girly,” and you can be and feel like a boy even if you hate sports or fighting).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Roxanne feels uncomfortable being the only girl on her soccer team. She’d like to see other girls join the team.</li><li>● Justine would like to have nail polish with glitter so she can be like most of the girls at her school.</li><li>● Corianne is angry. The boys don’t want the girls to play basketball with them at recess. They say the girls aren’t as good as they are.</li><li>● Selena bought a baseball jersey while on vacation. But she doesn’t dare wear it to school because she’s afraid that people will say it’s a boy’s shirt.</li></ul>

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### Take stock of your own openness to non-stereotypical attitudes and behaviours by reflecting on the following questions:

- Am I comfortable with my students making choices that are based on their preferences and that go beyond stereotypes?
- Do I encourage students to express themselves in diverse ways, regardless of their gender?
- Do I use a variety of examples that go beyond stereotypes?
- Do I have preconceived ideas about how boys and girls should act?
- Do I further reinforce certain traits, attitudes and behaviours typically associated with boys when these are displayed by boys? (e.g. supporting courage and leadership) And those typically associated with girls when displayed by girls? (e.g. supporting gentleness and patience)
- Do I encourage girls who adopt behaviours that are more often associated with boys, without doing the same for boys? (e.g. encouraging a girl to assert herself without telling a boy that it was okay for him to express his sadness)
- Are my expectations of classroom behaviour the same for all the students, regardless of their gender?

#### Become aware of the influence of stereotypes in the lives of children

- The homosocial phase (boys socializing with boys, girls socializing with girls) that students experience at this age sometimes contributes to reinforcing stereotypes.
- The more a person adheres to gender stereotypes, the fewer possibilities they see for themselves, thereby restricting their choices (character traits and expression of one's personality, games/toys, sports, appearance, studies, occupations/professions, etc.). In this regard, it is important to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in school activities (sports, arts and science, etc.). The goal is to avoid separating the genders and, instead, favour the students' individual choices and preferences, regardless of gender.
- Children who do not fit the stereotypes associated with their gender may feel pressure to conform to those stereotypes as well as a sense of inadequacy. They may also be teased, ridiculed, or even rejected by the other children. This is especially the case for children who express a gender variance or who are gender creative.

#### Understand a few concepts associated with stereotyped socialization

- Stereotypes exist throughout the world and transcend cultures.
- It is through socialization that children learn the behavioural norms they must adopt according to their biological sex.<sup>18</sup> This is called stereotyped socialization. In the long term, it impacts academic success and the choice of studies and career as well as the dynamics of romantic relationships, among other things. That is why it is important to work with students on stereotypes throughout elementary school.
- On a daily basis, gender stereotypes influence the way young people and adults:
  - understand the roles and duties typically associated with girls and boys, with women and men
  - interpret their margin of freedom and, inversely, the constraints and limits they believe are imposed on them
  - perceive and reproduce inequalities among themselves<sup>19</sup>

### Understand and distinguish between the concepts of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation

- Gender identity refers to a person’s individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth. A person can therefore identify with the label ‘man’ or ‘woman’, or somewhere else along the spectrum, independently of the sex assigned at birth.<sup>20</sup>
- Gender expression is “how a person expresses their gender to society or how a person expresses their femininity, masculinity, or their gender identity (androgynous, non-binary, etc.). An individual’s gender identity is what they know themselves to be, their gender expression is how they present themselves or show their gender to society, and how their gender is understood by others.”<sup>21</sup>
- Gender identity (who I am) is different from sexual orientation (who I love, who I am attracted to). A person’s sexual orientation and gender identity are not connected.

### REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

For information about **stereotypes** and their impacts, refer to the following section on the [Media Smarts](#) website:

- “[Gender Representation](#)” (under Digital & Media Literacy > Media Issues)
- Especially the “[Men and Masculinity](#)” and “[Women and Girls](#)” sections

For **suggested pedagogical activities** on the **development of egalitarian relationships** between boys and girls, refer to:

- “[Girls and Boys, Let’s Get Along!](#)” a teaching guide produced by the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur
- the “[Tools and resources for professionals working with youth and families](#)” section of the [LGBT Family Coalition](#) website (under “Tools & Courses”)

For **suggested books for classroom use** or for **recommended parent/child readings**, consult:

- the [book web](#) on the sexuality education theme “Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms” for Elementary 3 available on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website (under K/ELA > Kindergarten and ELA Book Webs > Kindergarten and Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Education Book Web Elementary 3), which features:
  - Austrian, J. J. *Worm Loves Worm*. NY, NY: HarperCollins, 2016.
  - Bouchard, David. *That’s Hockey*. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publisher, 2004.
  - Cole, Babette. *Princess Smartypants*. NY, NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons Books for Young Readers, 2005.
  - DeMont, Belle. *I Love My Purse*. Toronto, ON: Annick Press, 2017.
  - DePaola, Tomie. *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*. NY, NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2017.
  - Negley, Keith. *Tough Guys (Have Feelings Too)*. London, UK: Nobrow Press, 2015.
- [Artsy Boys and Smelly Girls](#), available as a free download on author/illustrator [Elise Gravel’s](#) website (also available in French as *Tu peux*). The book deals with both boys and girls, and is accompanied by posters about stereotypes and respect for differences (available in the “[Boutique](#)” section under “[Free Printable Stuff](#).”)
- books suggested on the [LGBT Family Coalition](#) website (under Resources > Books > Books for Kids)
- the [annotated bibliography of children’s books about gender diversity](#) compiled by [Gender Spectrum](#) and available on its website

- For approaches to analyzing gender stereotypes in children’s literature, consult:
  - [“Content Analysis and Gender Stereotypes in Children’s Books”](#) by Frank Taylor, *Teaching Sociology* 31, no. 3 (July 2003): 300-311.
  - [Gender Analysis of School Curriculum and Text Books](#), by Munawar Mirza (Islamabad, Pakistan: UNESCO, 2006).

#### For parents

- Sexuality education is better consolidated and more effective when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process undertaken in school regarding gender roles and stereotypes. Invite parents to consult the following resources:
  - Le Bulletin No. 4, [“Sharing Tasks at Home,”](#) available on the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux website (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk > Projet Mozaïk – Le Bulletin – Impliquer les parents dans l’éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English)
- [“Talking to Kids About Gender Stereotypes,”](#) a tip sheet available on the [Media Smarts](#) website (under Teacher Resources > Find Lessons and Resources > Tip Sheet > Gender Representation > Talking to Kids About Gender Stereotypes)

### BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes

#### PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PRESENTED IN ELEMENTARY 3

- The content about stereotypes can be presented **after** the content of the theme “Comprehensive View of Sexuality.” The comprehensive view of sexuality makes it possible to situate the socio-cultural dimension of sexuality around us in terms of the content of this theme: awareness of messages about sexuality in our environment, awareness of rules and expectations that can influence our decisions and personal choices.

#### GATHER MATERIALS

- Prepare books and videos that will be useful for the activity (if necessary).
- Prepare communications to parents.

#### ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES

- Avoid the trap of “reversing stereotypes” to get students to reflect (e.g. encouraging girls who play hockey or boys who dance). Instead, explore what society associates with the female and male genders and the obstacles encountered by children when attempting to express their own personality, as well as the influence of stereotypes on the lives of children.
- Help the students to get to know themselves better (what they like, what their characteristics are) so that they are able to express who they are and make their own choices.
- Insist on respect for everyone’s choices and encourage students who respect the choices of other people.

#### Whenever possible, limit activities that separate students according to gender<sup>22</sup>

- As much as possible, limit the practice of separating boys and girls. This practice drives a wedge between the genders and emphasizes their differences. Furthermore, a trans child or a child who does not identify as either a girl or a boy, will wonder where to go during activities that separate girls from boys (back-to-school activities in the fall, educational or recreational activities, etc.). Children can be separated based on different criteria (e.g. children born from January to June and those born from July to December; children who eat cereal in the morning and those who eat toast). In situations where children have to be separated based on gender, you must ensure that they have access to activities that are fully consistent with their gender identity and gender expression.
- It is also preferable to avoid activities that perpetuate gender stereotypes, for example, by limiting participation in hockey to boys and participation in gymnastics to girls.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Two should:

- promote awareness of the impacts of stereotypical messages conveyed in the social environment about gender<sup>23</sup>
- promote egalitarian relationships<sup>24</sup>
- foster respect for individual differences<sup>25</sup>

**Key messages**

- People learn stereotypes by watching and listening to the people around them: family, friends, other students and adults (teachers, educators, etc.).
- People also learn about stereotypes in books, movies, TV shows, advertisements and video games.
- Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different. In fact, they are more alike than different and can do the same things.
- Stereotypes become a problem when they prevent people from being who they are or from doing what they like to do (based on their preferences).
- There is no one way of being a boy or being a girl: there are many ways of being ourselves, of being human beings.

*INTRODUCTION*

- Introduce the theme to the students by telling them that:
  - you will be exploring how families, friends and the media convey specific ideas about who boys and girls are and about what boys and girls do (stereotypes)
  - you will be exploring how these ideas influence the way we behave

**What students already know**

- Ask the students questions to find out what they already know about gender stereotypes: “Do you know what a gender stereotype is?” Write their answers on the board.
- Draw attention to the answers that suggest that stereotypes are widespread ideas about who boys and girls are and what they do.
- Complete their answers with:
  - the “Explanations Concerning Content” section, under the heading “Gender stereotypes (in children’s own words)”
  - the video [Gender Roles and Stereotypes](#) produced by [Amaze](#)

*ACTIVITY: IDENTIFICATION OF STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATIONS*

**To help students identify stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity in their personal and social environments, including the media (Aim 1)**

- Ask students to give examples of stereotypes associated with boys and with girls. Write some of the answers on the board.
- Support students as they identify stereotypical representations of femininity (being a girl) and masculinity (being a boy) by asking them the following questions:

- **In your family, among the people around you**
  - Are there people who say that certain things (activities, occupations, appearances, clothing, interests, personality traits) are only for girls or only for boys? Name some.
  - How do the people around you describe how girls should act, or what girls can and cannot do? How boys should act or what boys can and cannot do?
  - Are there things that people encourage girls to do, but not boys? And things that people encourage boys to do, but not girls?
- **With friends and other students at school**
  - At school, do your friends or other students say how a girl should act? How a boy should act?
  - What do people say girls shouldn't do because they are girls? What do people say boys shouldn't do because they are boys?
  - What do you think about the way boys and girls are depicted in the **media** around you.

**NOTE:** This activity could also be carried out as a homework assignment to allow students to make a choice in connection with their experience and possibly with the support of a parent.

- Ask students to choose one or two elements from among the following for analysis. Students should describe how men and women are generally represented (appearance, attitude, character traits, qualities, activities, interests) in the chosen media:

*How are boys and girls and men and women represented:*

- **on television and in movies?**
- **in advertisements** (print, television, Internet)?
- **in music and video clips?**
- **in books?**
- **in video games?**
- Conclude this part with the following key messages:
  - People learn stereotypes by watching and listening to the people around them: family, friends, other students and adults (teachers, educators, etc.).
  - People also learn about stereotypes in books, movies, TV shows, advertisements and video games.

#### ACTIVITY: DISCUSSION

**Choose option A or B to complete the activity:**

##### **Option A – Questions about the connections between stereotypes and gender identity**

- Tell the students that they will be reflecting on THE INFLUENCE of stereotypes on the ways we behave, or conduct ourselves. Stereotypes are common ideas that sometimes prevent people from doing what they want to do (preferences) and from being who they really are.
- Using examples from under the heading “Influence of stereotypes on your gender identity” in the “Examples from the Lives of Children” section, ask the students the following questions about the influence of stereotypes on who we are:
  - *A girl wants to take part in an activity that is usually associated with boys. The people around her (her family or her friends) do not agree with her. What are her choices?*
    - *Possible answers: Not taking part in the activity and feeling sad or disappointed; taking part in the activity in secret; taking part in the activity despite the stereotypes because it is her personal preference.*



- *A boy wants to take part in an activity that is usually associated with girls. If other boys at the school participate in this activity, what difference does it make? If none of the boys at the school participate in this activity, could this make the boy change his mind?*
- *A girl wants to take part in an activity that is usually associated with boys. If other girls at the school participate in this activity, what difference does it make? If none of the girls at the school participate in this activity, could this make the girl change her mind?*
- *How do stereotypes influence children? Can you give some examples?*
- Complete the students' answers using the key messages and the information under the heading "Influence of stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt" in the "Explanations Concerning Content" section.
- Conclude this part using the following key messages:
  - Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different. In fact, they are more alike than different and can do the same things.
  - Stereotypes become a problem when they prevent people from being who they are or from doing what they like to do (based on their preferences).

#### **Option B – Group reading and discussion of observed stereotypes**

- Choose one or several of the suggested books from the "Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms" [book web](#) on the [Québec Reading Connection](#) website, under K/ELA > Kindergarten and ELA Book Webs > Kindergarten and Elementary Book Webs > Sexuality Book Web Elementary 3.
- Read the selected titles to the students or suggest that they read them.
- Ask the questions proposed by Québec Reading Connection book web either after the reading, or during the course of the reading:
  - Does it take courage to be different from those around you?
  - How do the characters in the stories find happiness while challenging gender stereotypes?
  - When someone stands out because they are unique, how can you show them acceptance?
  - What can we do to make our school welcoming and safe for everyone?

*\*See Appendix 1 for possible answers to questions about some of the books chosen from the book web.*

- Ensure that the students develop their awareness of the existence of gender stereotypes around them and the influence these stereotypes have on them.
- Supplement using the key messages and the information under the heading "Influence of gender stereotypes on the behaviours to adopt" in the "Explanations Concerning Content" section.
- Conclude this part with the following key messages:
  - Stereotypes convey the idea that boys and girls are very different. In fact, they are more alike than different and can do the same things.
  - Stereotypes become a problem when they prevent people from being who they are or from doing what they like to do (based on their preferences).



#### ACTIVITY: CONNECTION BETWEEN GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER IDENTITY

##### To help the students make connections between gender stereotypes and the development of **THEIR** identity (Aim 2):

- Ask the students to make a self-portrait entitled “ME” in which they draw themselves (their physical features) and describe themselves (their qualities, special talents, interests, favourite activities, tastes, etc.).
- Have the students choose the “tools” they will use for their drawing by:
  1. Placing two containers on your desk:
    - a small cup containing just two pencils, one pink and one blue
    - a large jar containing many pencils of many different colours, including pink ones and blue ones
  2. Ask the students which of the two containers they would prefer to use for their drawing: the one with the two pencils or the one with many pencils of many different colours.
  3. Ask the students to explain the reasons for their choice.
  4. Then, based on their reflections, tell the children:
    - that the cup containing the blue and pink pencils represents the stereotypes associated with boys and girls
    - that the large jar containing many pencils of many colours represents the diversity of models available to the students
    - that they can draw and express themselves more easily using the large jar because they will have more choices and possibilities
  5. Ask the students: ““Would it be fair to let kids only use certain colours for their artwork?’ No! All the coloured pens and pencils in this class are for all the students – they can choose which colours they want to use.”<sup>26</sup>
  6. Conclude this demonstration by emphasizing that diversity enables the students to make choices based on their preferences and, therefore, to be themselves.

**NOTE:** Having students choose the colours they wish to use prior to creating the drawing is not insignificant. It aims to show that gender stereotypes (the pink and blue pencils) place constraints (limitations) on identity and self-expression. Inversely, a world of diversity offers children more choices, freedom and possibilities to define and describe themselves.

- Following this demonstration, ask the students to use their own pencils, in different colours, to create their drawings and personal descriptions.
- After completing the activity, ask the students to reflect on the influence of gender stereotypes on **THEIR** gender identity (who they are) and to say, if necessary, how this influence is felt. The following questions might give them some food for thought:
  - Do gender stereotypes stop me from doing things? Do I stop myself from being me or from doing things because they are not things that boys typically do or that typically girls do? Do I force myself to be a certain way or do something based on gender stereotypes?

#### CONCLUSION

Conclude with the following key message:

- There is no one way of being a boy or being a girl: there are many ways of being ourselves, of being human beings.

Appendix 1: Content elements based on book web questions

Questions to explore	Oliver Button Is a Sissy	Worm Loves Worm	That’s Hockey!
Summary	<p>Oliver Button likes to do quiet things, such as reading and drawing and playing dress up. His schoolmates call him a sissy; his Papa calls him a sissy. Because he loves to dance, he is sent to dance classes: “‘Especially for the exercise,’ Papa said.” After his schoolmates play keep-away with his new shiny tap shoes, it is written on the school wall for all to see: “Oliver Button is a sissy.” Oliver joyfully practises his tap dancing nevertheless. After losing in a talent contest, Oliver bravely heads back to school the next day, expecting more ridicule. Instead he sees the message on the school wall has been changed: “Oliver Button is a star!”</p>	<p>When a worm meets a special worm and they fall in love, you know what happens next: They get married! But their friends inform the worms that it is not that easy—they need someone to marry them, a Best Beetle, Bride’s Bees, a tuxedo, a dress and a ring. Each new expectation highlights its own absurdity: “We don’t have heads for hats, or hands to hold flowers,” says Worm. Their friends want to know—who will wear the dress? And who will wear the tux? The answer is: It doesn’t matter. Because worm loves worm.</p>	<p>Spending a weekend with Cousin Étienne in the far north, the narrator learns to play street hockey, which is very different from hockey played on the ice in the city. No skates, no pads, no helmets, but everyone wears the number 9 sweater of the Canadiens. Everyone scores and everyone wins; the game goes on for hours and hours until it begins to get dark. After the game, drinking hot chocolate by the stove and dreaming of the NHL, Étienne gives his cousin the number 9 sweater to keep. The sweater and the good memories last for many years to come.</p>
What <b>stereotypes</b> do the characters encounter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A boy who likes to draw, read, play with paper dolls and play dress up, is called a sissy.</li><li>• A boy who does not like to play sports, and is not athletic, is always chosen last for the team.</li><li>• A boy who enjoys dancing is rejected by the other boys and experiences bullying.</li><li>• In the dance class, Oliver is the only boy in a class of girls.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A wedding must have a bride and a groom.</li><li>• The bride wears a white dress, the groom wears a tuxedo.</li><li>• It is important to know which one is the bride, and which one is the groom, so that they can fulfill their designated roles.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hockey is a rough sport, where size and ability to knock others over is prized; traditionally more suitable for boys.</li><li>• A girl who lives for hockey, just like her cousin, and who is a skilled player.</li><li>• A girl who can get into the spirit of the game with the same passion and abandon as the other players.</li><li>• A girl who dreams of playing in the NHL and who appreciates hockey heroes of the past, such as Maurice “Rocket” Richard.</li></ul>

Questions to explore	Oliver Button Is a Sissy	Worm Loves Worm	That's Hockey!
How are these stereotypes <b>conveyed</b> (by friends, parents, traditions)?	<p>By the father:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Don’t be such a sissy! Go out and play baseball or football or basketball; any kind of ball!”</li> <li>Oliver’s father allows him to take dance class “for the exercise.”</li> </ul> <p>By the other boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oliver’s lack of athletic skills means they do not want him on their team. “Oh, rats, we have to have Oliver Button. Now we’ll lose for sure.”</li> <li>Oliver is bullied for joining dance class; they play catch with his tap shoes.</li> <li>They tease Oliver when a girl comes to his defense. “Gotta have help from the <i>girls</i>.”</li> <li>They write “Oliver Button is a sissy” on the school wall.</li> <li>The boys tease and mock him every day.</li> </ul>	<p>By the bees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“You need a white dress, a tuxedo, a top hat.”</li> <li>“But which one of you is the bride? How can we be bride’s bees if we don’t know who the bride is?”</li> </ul> <p>By the beetle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“But one of you has got to be the groom, or how can I be best beetle?”</li> </ul> <p>By the cricket/by tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“You’ll need to get rings to wear on your fingers, that’s how it’s always been done”</li> <li>When the worms decide they can both be both bride and groom, Cricket responds, “That isn’t how it’s always been done.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The traditions of street hockey, as conveyed by Étienne: “That stuff’s for city kids. We play real hockey here.”</li> <li>The goalie has had his front teeth knocked out; he would rather continue to play than have them fixed.</li> <li>Mop, the big kid who is the only one with a real chance of making it to the NHL, is always picked first for the team.</li> </ul>
To what extent do the stereotypes <b>affect the characters’ happiness or fulfillment</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oliver’s father is angry that he does not want to play ball; his mother is worried that he does not get enough exercise.</li> <li>The bullying at school does not prevent Oliver from participating in dance class and taking part in the show.</li> <li>Oliver expects more bullying after the show; he does not want to go back to school and is the last one to go in the building.</li> <li>Pursuing his dream of dancing allows Oliver to change the bullying into encouragement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not being able to tell the bride from the groom is initially upsetting to the friends, who want to play their traditional roles of bridesmaids and best man.</li> <li>Overcoming stereotypes requires the friends to adjust their thinking. “I can be the groom,” says Worm. “I can, too,” says Worm. “We can be both.” “Really?” ask Beetle and the Bees.</li> <li>Cricket relies on tradition to determine how the wedding should proceed. When he says, “That isn’t how it’s always been done,” the worms respond with “Then we’ll just change how it’s done.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skill and passion for the game are more important than gender. Says Étienne proudly, “Hey! You guys see that? Does my cousin have moves or what?”</li> <li>The narrator can score and keep up with the male players.</li> <li>The roughness of the game does not deter her; she admires them for it. “Mop stood in one spot grabbing, knocking, tripping or elbowing anyone within reach.”</li> <li>She keeps the number 9 sweater as a souvenir, and passes it on to her own daughter when the time comes, so that she too can carry on the passion for hockey.</li> </ul>

Questions to explore	Oliver Button Is a Sissy	Worm Loves Worm	That’s Hockey!
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The stereotypes surrounding a wedding do not prevent Worm and Worm from getting married, they simply change some of the traditions.</li><li>• The friends are able to celebrate along with them, because it is the love between the worms that is important.</li></ul>	

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<b>IDENTITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ROLES, AND SOCIAL NORMS</b>	Elementary 4
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<b>Educational aims</b>	1) Make connections between gender inequalities and the establishment of harmonious relationships  2) Understand the norms that guide how you express yourself	<b>Estimated duration of the activity</b>  <b>150 minutes</b>
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LEARNING ABOUT IDENTITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ROLES, AND SOCIAL NORMS WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS’ PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT	CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN 8 TO 11 YEARS OLD
<p><b>Appreciating one’s gender identity: a key element</b>            Becoming aware of and appreciating their gender identity is a vital step in children’s psychosexual development.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>The environment as an agent of socialization</b>            Various agents of socialization (family, peers, significant adults, the media) provide guidelines—in some cases, stereotypes—regarding the gender roles that society associates with boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> These guidelines influence children’s views of what is appropriate regarding appearance, attitudes and behaviours for the female and male genders and contribute to constructing their gender identity.<sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>Stereotypical gender roles can limit gender expression and harm relationships</b>            Children develop stereotypical preferences and behaviours, based on gender, starting in early childhood.<sup>4</sup> These stereotypes present the female and male genders as different and binary realities, and, as a result, drive a wedge between girls and boys, rather than focusing on their many similarities to bring them together.<sup>5</sup> Besides limiting children in the way they develop and express themselves,<sup>6</sup> repeated exposure to gender stereotypes perpetuates sexist attitudes and beliefs,<sup>7</sup> which, in turn, hinder the establishment of harmonious relationships among them. Young people between the ages of 10 and 14 in particular are more likely to conform to gender norms and to the associated inequalities.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p><b>Children 8 to 11 years old:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are more flexible regarding gender roles,<sup>9</sup> but avoid behaviours that do not adhere to what is associated with their gender because they are aware of the pressures from others to conform.<sup>10</sup> Boys are more likely to be rigidly gender-typing,<sup>11</sup> especially since stereotypical male attributes (e.g. strength, power) are considered more acceptable than stereotypical female attributes<sup>12</sup> (e.g. emotion, passivity).</li> <li>who do not conform to the norms associated with their gender are more at risk of being excluded and victimized by their peers.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>are more aware of the gender inequality caused by stereotypes<sup>14</sup> and the negative nature of certain female stereotypes in society<sup>15</sup> (especially when attributed to men).</li> </ul>

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
1) Make connections between gender inequalities and the establishment of harmonious relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signs of gender inequality</li><li>• Positive attributes associated with each gender</li><li>• Negative attributes associated with each gender</li><li>• Double standard associated with gendered attitudes</li></ul>	<p><b>GENDER INEQUALITY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender inequalities have repercussions on the establishment of harmonious relationships between boys and girls. They lead to an imbalance in relationships between boys and girls and even between individuals of the same gender.</li><li>• Gender stereotypes hinder the achievement of equality and compromise the establishment of egalitarian relationships. The persistence of gender stereotypes has a significant effect on the way that girls and boys view the role they should play in society. These stereotypes often influence their behaviours<sup>16</sup> and their choices (activities, clothing, appearance, expression of feelings, etc.).</li><li>• Gender stereotypes eliminate nuances<sup>17</sup> that exist among individuals of the same gender (sex) and amplify differences between boys and girls.<sup>18</sup> These differences form the basis of inequalities.</li><li>• Gender equality fosters more harmonious relationships. Equality is respected when all people have the possibility of fully benefiting from their rights to achieve their own full potential.<sup>19</sup></li></ul> <p><b>Signs of gender inequality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perceptions of what it means to be a girl or a boy and what girls and boys do can lead to inequalities, because children understand from a very young age what roles are expected of each gender (sex).<sup>20</sup></li><li>• Equality is a principle stating that all human beings must be treated in the same way and that, despite their differences, they have the same rights.<sup>21</sup></li><li>• Inequalities between boys and girls occur when (<b>adapt to the language of children</b>):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>you can't think or do something</b> because you are a girl or a boy. You can't do this or that because you or the people around you think that only boys or girls can think or act that way (and vice versa). It is as if you were being told that some things are <b>reserved</b> for girls or for boys.</li><li>○ <b>you're not treated or judged in the same way</b> as a girl if you are a boy, and vice versa. It is as if you are being told that girls and boys should be treated differently.</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Signs of gender inequality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I'd really like to play ball at recess, but the boys don't want the girls to play. Why can't I play?</li><li>• I think it's unfair that my brother can go fishing with dad and grandpa, and I have to help cook the fish they bring back.</li><li>• Boys call girls names that aren't very nice. I'm fed up and I think it's unfair. We don't do that to them!</li><li>• Max is always being told that he's too sensitive and that he needs to toughen up. I think people tell him that because he's a boy.</li><li>• There was a part as an airline pilot in our end-of-year play. They told me I couldn't play that part because I'm a girl.</li><li>• When Patrick cries, he gets told off. When I cry, people ask me why I'm sad.</li><li>• At home, when my brother laughs at me, I'm not allowed to get angry. Mom says I shouldn't be so sensitive.</li><li>• The fastest runner in our grade would get the chance to participate in the interscholastic cross-country competition. Eduardo and Sofia ended up competing against each other for the spot. Some people said that Sofia had no chance of winning against a boy.</li></ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children, whether boys or girls, can think, like and do the same things, and can play the same games and with the same toys. They also have the right to be treated in the same way.</li> <li>With inequality, people claim that one gender (sex) is superior to the other. In fact, no gender (sex) is superior to or better than another.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attributes associated with each gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attributes associated with each gender function as implicit expectations of children, without regard to their individuality. These attributes bring the masculine and feminine genders into opposition and divide them.<sup>22</sup> Certain adjectives are considered typically masculine or feminine, regardless of culture.<sup>23</sup></li> <li>Attributes associated with each gender:<sup>24</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>men: strong, dominant, spirited, independent, adventurous, masculine</li> <li>women: sentimental, submissive, superstitious</li> </ul> </li> <li>Moreover, people usually expect<sup>25</sup> <p><b>boys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to be very active and to take up space</li> <li>to be interested in sports and competition</li> <li>to be interested in machines</li> <li>to develop their imagination with regard to exploration and conquest</li> <li>to ensure they are respected and know how to fight</li> </ul> <p><b>girls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to be calm and discreet</li> <li>to be clean and well-groomed</li> <li>to be attentive to the needs of others</li> <li>to take care of others</li> <li>to develop their imagination around expectations of Prince Charming</li> <li>to invest themselves in mothering</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive and negative attributes associated with each gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the stories I read, there’s always a strong, brave boy who comes along to save a delicate damsel in distress.</li> <li>Kevin is really annoying. He can’t stop laughing or stay still. He’s a real boy!</li> <li>My aunt had a baby and needed help so she could rest. She asked my mom and me to go help her. People always think that girls know all about babies and should take care of them.</li> <li>When I don’t understand an exercise, I go ask a girl in my class. Girls are better at school and more patient than boys.</li> <li>My sister has to choose her prom dress. She asked my mom and me to go shopping with her. My dad and my brother are staying home because they’re not very good at that sort of thing.</li> <li>The teacher explained that, after Christmas, we’ll be doing a building project in class with hammers, screwdrivers, nails and wood. The boys are happy, because they think that they’ll be better than us.</li> </ul>



CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Double standard associated with gendered attitudes (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inequalities between genders (sexes) sometimes occur based on double standards, which means the same attribute is not perceived in the same way based on whether you are a girl or a boy:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Positive attributes usually associated with girls</b> acquire a <b>negative connotation</b> when attributed to boys (e.g. being sensitive). This means that, for a boy, being told he “acts girly” is usually considered an insult.</li><li>○ The opposite is less true: when <b>positive attributes usually associated with boys</b> are attributed to girls (e.g. being independent and ambitious), they are usually seen as <b>positive</b>.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My dad knocked a tray of nails and screws on the floor. He asked me to come pick them up, saying that girls are more patient and careful than boys.</li></ul> <p><b>Double standard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Matt was crying when he got to school this morning. This happens to him a lot and people were laughing at him again. But when Elodie cries, her friends comfort her.</li><li>• Mae always knows what to say when someone teases her and she even defends others. She never lets anyone get to her! People look up to her.</li><li>• In class, a guest brought in animals like snakes, lizards and hairy spiders. The girls who touched the animals were called brave. And the boys who touched the animals? Nobody said anything.</li><li>• Dylan and Emy are always drawing. They’re really talented! Emy gets compliments, but the other kids are less interested in Dylan’s drawings, like it’s weird for a boy to be artistic.</li></ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
<p>2) Understand the norms that guide how you express yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal preferences: tastes, interests, aspirations, etc.</li> <li>• Norms and outside influences: peer relationships and the social environment (e.g. role models, influences, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>NORMS THAT GUIDE HOW YOU EXPRESS YOURSELF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development and expression of gender identity are an interplay between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the gender norms conveyed in society</li> <li>○ the children (their choices and decisions based on their personal preferences)</li> <li>○ the feedback they receive when expressing their gender identity<sup>26</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Social norms, including gender stereotypes, are therefore connected to gender identity.<sup>27</sup> Norms and outside influences stem from relationships with peers and a person’s social environment (e.g. family, school, media, literature, toys). They can influence <b>children’s gender identity and gender expression</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Gender identity</b> is the profound and intimate inner sense of being female, male, both, neither, or somewhere else along the spectrum.<sup>28</sup> It’s how you feel, how you see yourself.<sup>29</sup></li> <li>○ <b>Gender expression</b> is how you present and communicate your gender identity to the outside world, to society, for example through your appearance and your mannerisms.<sup>30</sup> It’s how you express yourself. Gender expression is therefore influenced by what is deemed feminine or masculine in a given society.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Children therefore construct their <b>gender identity</b> based on the norms conveyed in society and <b>express it</b> in conformity with or in contrast to these norms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ by making choices based on their personal preferences (authenticity)</li> <li>○ based on anticipated feedback from others (e.g. having others laugh at them, being ridiculed, being valued) about the way they express themselves in the outside world.<sup>31, 32</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Personal preferences (tastes, interests, aspirations, etc.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should be guided by their personal preferences when expressing their gender identity. They should be able to make choices based on these preferences: what they like, what they don’t like, what they feel like doing and what they aspire to.</li> <li>• Children should:<sup>33</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ be able to do what they want to do</li> <li>○ have a choice</li> <li>○ feel free to do what they want regardless of what others think</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal preferences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You don't really need to have stereotypes, you could just be yourself.”<sup>37</sup></li> <li>• “Do what you want to do, not what others think you should do.”<sup>38</sup></li> <li>• “It’s okay to be inside or outside of the box. You should pick which one is right for you.”<sup>39</sup></li> <li>• “You don’t have to do what other people have to do. . . .If you think that what someone else is doing is fun, then you can do that.”<sup>40</sup></li> </ul>

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT</b></p> <p><i>To understand</i></p>	<p><b>EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN</b></p> <p><i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ make decisions without being pressured by others</li> <li>• Even if their personal preferences are not in line with gender norms, children should be able to feel comfortable and recognized in their gender (e.g. you can be and feel like a girl even if you do not like dressing or acting “girly,” and you can be and feel like a boy even if you do not like sports or fighting).</li> <li>• Gender norms—what we associate socially with boys and girls—can sometimes influence children’s personal preferences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Norms and outside influences (adapt to the language of children)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A norm indicates what a specific group of people usually does (e.g. students at school, members of the hockey team). A norm is what the majority of people belonging to a group does.</li> <li>• Norms associated with gender (sex) dictate how boys and girls should be and should act. For example, it is normal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to like pink and fashion if you are a girl</li> <li>○ to like sports and action if you are a boy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When expressing yourself, you can conform to norms (by imitating the group) or not conform to norms (by being different from the group).</li> <li>• Norms can be <b>conveyed and reinforced</b> by the people around us (e.g. family, peers) and our social environment (e.g. media). Family and peers have significant influence over adherence to gender norms.<sup>34</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Peer relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer relationships can influence conformity to gender norms: children feel pressure to conform to these norms, are afraid people will laugh at them, have a fear of being teased, are concerned about being judged, are afraid of being rejected by others and are worried about acts of violence and bullying.<sup>35</sup></li> <li>• The peer group is an agent of socialization: not only are gender norms conveyed within this group, but it is also where they are reinforced.<sup>36</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I found out that Julie Payette wanted to be an astronaut ever since she was little. Nobody thought she could do it. I admire her for doing what she loved even if others didn’t believe she could.</li> <li>• Miley has played hockey since she was three years old. She always played with her older brothers and loved it. She dreams of going into a sports-study hockey program even though everyone tells her she won’t be able to.</li> <li>• My grandfather always tells me that it takes courage to be yourself.</li> <li>• “I’m a girl and I want to be a scientist. I’m not at all ashamed! You shouldn’t let people tell you how to live your life just because you’re a girl or a boy!”<sup>41</sup>[<i>Translation</i>]</li> </ul> <p><b>Norms and outside influences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My cousin Sacha plays hockey and when he goes to a tournament, he has to wear a suit and tie like a man.</li> <li>• At home, on the weekend, I can wear the clothes I want. I often borrow my brother’s clothes, even though it makes me look like a boy.</li> <li>• I think it’s annoying when my uncles ask me why I never wear skirts and why I don’t have long hair. It makes me feel like I’m not normal.</li> <li>• At the afterschool program, you can sign up for activities. There is a knitting activity that I’d like to join, but I don’t dare. I’d be the only boy!</li> </ul>

CONTENT <i>What students learn to do, to discern and to understand</i>	EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING CONTENT <i>To understand</i>	EXAMPLES FROM THE LIVES OF CHILDREN <i>Present these to the students to improve their understanding</i>
	<p><b>Social environment (role models, influences)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender norms are conveyed in the social environment and serve as role models for children. These norms can confirm, contradict or confuse young people’s concept of what a boy or a girl is.</li><li>• For instance, from the moment a child feels like a boy, he will seek to confirm this feeling among the people around him by expressing his gender. This is how gender norms influence a child, whether they are consistent or inconsistent with their inner feeling.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tomorrow is school picture day. My friends are talking about what they’ll wear and how they’ll do their hair. I’m not interested in that. Should I be more like them?</li><li>• Ophelia wants to invite William to play at her house this Saturday. She doesn’t want the other kids to find out, because she knows they’ll make fun of them at school. It’s not normal for a boy and a girl to be friends.</li><li>• Julianne does silly things, wears athletic clothes, plays baseball and loves playing with boys. The other girls say that she’s not a “real girl.”</li></ul>

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### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT before intervening with students

#### TAKE STOCK OF YOUR OWN OPENNESS TO NON-STEREOTYPICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS BY REFLECTING ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Am I comfortable with my students making choices based on their preferences and that go beyond stereotypes?
- Do I encourage students to express themselves in diverse ways, regardless of their gender?
- Do I use a variety of examples that go beyond stereotypes?
- Do I have preconceived ideas about how boys and girls should act?
- Do I further reinforce certain traits, attitudes and behaviours typically associated with boys when these are displayed by boys (e.g. supporting courage and leadership)? And those typically associated with girls when displayed by girls (e.g. supporting gentleness and patience)?
- Do I encourage the girls who adopt behaviours that are more often associated with boys (e.g. encouraging a girl to assert herself) and the boys who adopt behaviours that are more often associated with girls (e.g. telling a boy that it was okay for him to express his sadness)?
- Are my expectations of classroom behaviour the same for all the students, regardless of their gender?

#### UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER NORMS IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

- The more children adhere to gender stereotypes, the fewer possibilities they see for themselves, thereby restricting their choices (character traits and expression of one's personality, games/toys, sports, appearance, studies, occupations/professions, etc.). In this regard, it is important to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in school activities (sports, arts and science, etc.). The goal is to avoid separating the genders and, instead, favour the students' individual choices and preferences, regardless of gender.
- Children who do not express their identity in conformity with gender norms may:
  - feel pressure to conform to norms
  - feel inadequate, have doubts or question their gender identity (e.g. they may not feel their gender identity is recognized)
  - be teased, ridiculed or even rejected by the other children<sup>42</sup>
- Compared to girls, boys:
  - are more likely to receive negative feedback in response to the expression of behaviours that are atypical for their gender
  - perceive more pressure to behave in gender-normative ways<sup>43</sup>

#### UNDERSTAND A FEW CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH STEREOTYPED SOCIALIZATION

- Stereotypes exist throughout the world and transcend cultures.
- It is through socialization that children learn the behavioural norms they must adopt according to their biological sex or the sex assigned to them at birth.<sup>44</sup> This is called stereotyped socialization. In the long term, it impacts, in particular, academic success and the choice of studies<sup>45</sup> and career as well as the dynamics of romantic relationships, among other things. That is why it is important to work with students on stereotypes throughout elementary school.
- On a daily basis, gender stereotypes influence the way young people and adults:
  - understand the roles and duties typically associated with girls and boys, with women and men

- evaluate the “costs” (constraints, limitations, negative feedback from the people around them) against the benefits (positive feedback from family and peers, feeling their gender identity is recognized) of expressing themselves in a gender conformist or nonconformist manner
- perceive and reproduce inequalities among themselves<sup>46</sup>

#### UNDERSTAND AND DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS OF GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER EXPRESSION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- **Gender identity** is “[a]n individual’s intimate, personal and internal sense of gender. Gender is a spectrum that is widely viewed as encompassing two poles, male and female, but in which nuances between the two extremes are possible, personal and legitimate. A person’s gender identity may differ from their assigned sex at birth. Since gender identity is a personal experience only the person in question can affirm their identity, a fundamental right to which, per the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, everyone is entitled.”<sup>47</sup>
- **Gender expression** is “how a person expresses their gender to society or how a person expresses their femininity, masculinity, or their gender identity (androgynous, non-binary, etc.). An individual’s gender identity is what they know themselves to be, their gender expression is how they present themselves or show their gender to society, and how their gender is understood by others.”<sup>48</sup>
- **Gender identity** (who I am) is different from **sexual orientation** (who I love, who I’m attracted to). A person’s sexual orientation and gender identity are not connected.

#### REFER TO RESOURCES: brief readings, short videos

To identify various **issues related to gender equality in school**, refer to:

- The document [Avis : L’égalité entre les sexes en milieu scolaire, 2016](#), available on the Conseil du statut de la femme [website](#) (under Publications) [French only]

For **suggested pedagogical activities** on the **development of egalitarian relationships** between boys and girls, refer to:

- [Girls and Boys, Let’s Get Along!](#), a teaching guide produced by the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur and available on its [website](#)
  - Learning situations 2 (“In the Schoolyard”) and 6 (“Let’s All Join Hands!”) are particularly relevant to the educational aims for this content.
- [Homophobia](#), pedagogical materials on homophobia and gender stereotypes available on the Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur [website](#)
  - Pages 18-19 of the [Elementary Facilitation Guide](#)
  - The [Learning Situation for Elementary Cycles One and Two](#)

For **suggested books**:

- that promote self-acceptance to build one’s identity:
  - Britt, Fanny. *Jane, the Fox, and Me*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books, 2013.
  - Dubé, Pierrette and Margeret K. McElderry. *The Little Pig, the Bicycle, and the Moon*. Toronto, ON: Simon and Schuster, 2018.
  - Gravel, Élise. *Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere*. Toronto, ON: Harper Collins, 2017.
  - Gravel, Élise. *You Can Be*. Seattle, WA: The Innovation Press, 2018.
  - McGregor, Roy. *The Highest Number in the World*. Northampton, MA: Tundra Publishing, 2014.
  - McDonnell, Patrick. *Me . . . Jane*. NY, NY: Little Brown Books for Your Readers, 2011.
  - Roger, Marie-Sabine. *Of Course They Do!* Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2014.
  - Woollvin, Bethan. *Rapunzel*. Atlanta, GA: The Peachtree Publishing Company, 2017.
  - Woollvin, Bethan. *Little Red*. Atlanta, GA: The Peachtree Publishing Company, 2016.

- that promote egalitarian relationships between boys and girls:
  - Beaton, Kate. *The Princess and the Pony*. NY, NY: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2015.
  - Favilli, Elena and Francesca Cavallo. *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*. LA, CA: Timbuktu Labs Inc., 2016.
  - Guerra, Jill. *Long Hair Don't Care: A Poem About Boys With Long Hair*. Seattle, WA: Amazon Digital Services LLC – KDP US, 2016.
  - Kerascoët. *Paul & Antoinette*. Brooklyn, NY: Enchanted Lion Books, 2016.
  - de Pesloüan, Lucile. *What Makes Girls Sick and Tired*. Toronto, ON: Second Story Press, 2019.
  - Sanchez Vegara, Isabel. *Ada Lovelace*. London, UK: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2019.
  - Turin, Adela. *Candy Pink*. Madrid, Spain: NubeOcho, 2016.
- that go against gender norms (e.g. *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch [Toronto, ON: Annick Press, 1980.])
- that celebrate the gender diversity of young people:
  - the [Annotated Bibliography of Children's Book About Gender Diversity](#) compiled by [Gender Spectrum](#) and available on its website
- that present examples of prominent individuals who followed their dreams by going against gender norms (e.g. *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Tales of Extraordinary Women* by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo (LA, CA: Timbuktu Labs Inc., 2016).

To understand the **effects of gender socialization** on the acquisition and transmission of gender stereotypes based on social norms, refer to:

- Pages 15 to 27 of the summary of the study [Entre le rose et le bleu](#) by the [Conseil du statut de la femme](#) [French only]

For information about **stereotypes** and their impacts, refer to:

- The “[Gender Representation](#)” page on the [Media Smarts](#) website (under Digital & Media Literacy > Media Issues), especially the “[Men and Masculinity](#)” and “[Women and Girls](#)” sections

To understand the **effects of attributes typically associated with girls** during puberty, particularly in relation to self-confidence and boys, refer to:

- The video [Always™ #LikeAGirl](#) available on [Youtube](#)
- The video [Always™ #LikeAGirl – Unstoppable](#) available on [Youtube](#)

For suggested **books for classroom use or for recommended parent/child readings**, consult:

- For approaches to analyzing gender stereotypes in children’s literature:
  - “[Content Analysis and Gender Stereotypes in Children’s Books](#)” by Frank Taylor in *Teaching Sociology* 31, No. 3 (July 2003): 300-311.
  - [Gender Analysis of School Curriculum and Text Books](#) by Munawar Mirza (Islamabad, Pakistan: UNESCO, 2006).

## FOR PARENTS

- Sexuality education is better consolidated and more effective when there is collaboration between the school and families. Parents can play a complementary role in the reflection process undertaken in school regarding gender roles and stereotypes. Invite parents to consult the following resources:
  - “[Talking to Kids About Gender Stereotypes](#),” a tip sheet available on the [Media Smarts](#) website (under Teacher Resources > Find Lessons and Resources > Tip Sheet > Talking to Kids About Gender Stereotypes – Tip Sheet:
  - Le Bulletin No. 6, “[The Influence of Friends and the Media](#),” available on the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux [website](#) (under Publications > Sujets > Projet Mozaïk – Le Bulletin – Impliquer les parents dans l’éducation à la sexualité de leurs jeunes > English)



## BE PREPARED: gather and create material, adopt appropriate attitudes

### PLAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTENT WILL BE PROVIDED TO ELEMENTARY 4 STUDENTS

- The content on equality and harmonious relationships can be covered **as a complement to** the content under the “Emotional and Romantic Life” theme. The latter content makes it possible to understand the behaviours that have a positive and negative influence on interpersonal relationships.

### MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THIS CONTENT AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Connections can be made with the Ethics and Religious Culture program (ERC), for the theme:

- ***Interpersonal relationships in groups***, in Elementary Cycle Two, contains the following related content:
  - the development of personal identity and the groups to which people belong (e.g. my preferences, abilities, qualities, areas of interest, the traits that are particular to me and the ones I share with other students)
  - the diversity of relationships between group members (e.g. egalitarian, harmonious, conflictual interpersonal relationships)

### GATHER MATERIALS

- Prepare videos and scenarios that will be useful for the activity.
- Prepare communications to parents.

### ADOPT APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES

- Avoid the trap of “reversing stereotypes” to get students to reflect (e.g. encouraging girls who play hockey or boys who dance). Instead, explore what society associates with the female and male genders and the obstacles encountered by children when attempting to express **their own personality**, as well as the influence of stereotypes on the lives of children.
- Help the students to get to know themselves better (what they like, what their characteristics are) so that they are able to express who they are and make their own choices.
- Insist on respect for everyone’s choices and encourage students who respect the choices of others.

### Whenever possible, limit activities that separate students according to gender<sup>49</sup>

- As much as possible, limit the practice of separating boys and girls. This practice drives a wedge between the genders and emphasizes their differences. Furthermore, a trans child or a child who does not identify as either a girl or a boy will wonder where to go during activities that separate girls from boys (back-to-school activities in the fall, educational or recreational activities, etc.). Children can be separated based on different criteria (e.g. children born from January to June and those born from July to December; children who eat cereal in the morning and those who eat toast). In situations where children have to be separated based on gender, you must ensure that they have access to activities that are fully consistent with their gender identity and gender expression.
- It is also preferable to avoid activities that perpetuate gender stereotypes and that create inequality between genders, for example, by limiting participation in hockey to boys and participation in gymnastics to girls.



**On a day-to-day basis, use strategies to challenge gender norms**

- Encourage the children who reject gender stereotypes and norms associated with their gender (e.g. pink is not a girl's colour, it's a . . . colour; it's not true that boys can't . . . ; you might think that boys are like that, but I don't agree . . . ; I know a boy who likes such-and-such a thing even though everyone says that it's only for girls . . . ).
- Help the children to reflect on and challenge stereotypes (e.g. Who said that girls should . . . ? Where does that idea come from? Who thinks that . . . ?).
- Support the students who assert themselves according to their own preferences in spite of negative feedback from their peers.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

The approach taken in Elementary Cycle Two should:

- promote awareness of the impacts of stereotypical messages conveyed in the social environment about gender<sup>50</sup>
- promote egalitarian relationships<sup>51</sup>
- foster respect for individual differences<sup>52</sup>

### Key messages

- Stereotypes contribute to inequalities because they:
  - amplify differences between boys and girls
  - place boys or girls in a position of superiority (in a situation of inequality)
  - restrict children's choices
- Inequalities can hinder harmonious relationships between children.
- Some children are treated in a negative or unequal way because of their gender.
- Children have their own talents, characteristics, strengths and goals regardless of their gender. They are equal.
- Personal preferences should guide how people express who they are.

### INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the theme to the students by telling them that they will reflect on:
  - what stereotypes are and how they contribute to gender (sex) inequalities
  - how inequalities can prevent people from getting along and developing harmonious relationships
  - how the messages we receive influence our way of being
- Ask the students questions to find out what they already know about **gender stereotypes** and their influence (elements of content covered in Elementary 3, on the same theme):
  - Do you know what a gender stereotype is?
  - Can you give examples of stereotypes about boys? About girls?
  - How do stereotypes influence children?
- Write these elements on the board: what a stereotype is and some examples.
- Draw attention to the answers that suggest that stereotypes are widespread ideas about who boys and girls are and what they do.

#### ACTIVITY: UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN STEREOTYPES AND INEQUALITIES

To help students make connections between gender inequalities and the establishment of harmonious relationships (Aim 1):

- Following the reflection, ask the students:
  - Do stereotypes contribute to inequalities between boys and girls?
  - In what way?
- To help them answer the questions above as well as to illustrate the connection between **stereotypes and inequalities**, have the students watch the video [Gender Stereotypes and Education](#), produced by the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) and available on [Youtube](#).
- Lead a brief discussion around some of the following questions:
  - Do you sometimes notice that girls and boys are not on equal footing? Give some examples.
  - What does it mean to “experience inequalities between girls and boys”?
  - In what situations do these inequalities occur?
  - How would you feel in these situations? Why? (e.g. You feel like a victim of injustice, or not taken into account.)
  - What does it mean “to be equal”?
- To demonstrate an instance of inequality toward girls, show the students the video [Norway Child Experiment About Gender Equality](#) (with English subtitles) produced by the Finansforbundet Norge, the Financial Sector Union of Norway.
- If necessary, complete the elements suggested by the students using the content under the heading “Signs of gender inequality,” in the “Explanations concerning content” section, giving examples as required and drawing on the “Examples from the lives of children.”
- Have the students name the **positive and negative attributes socially associated with girls and boys** by asking them:
  - What **qualities** do people attribute to girls? To boys?
  - What **strengths** do people attribute to girls? To boys?
  - What **talents** are most often associated with girls? With boys?
  - What **shortcomings** do people attribute to girls? To boys?

**NOTE:** The activity to identify attributes typically associated with girls and boys can be carried out using children’s literature and popular movies and TV shows by highlighting characteristics of the characters (portrait of girls and boys).

- Write the attributes on two different posters, in two columns in a table or in two boxes (girls and boys). Draw the students’ attention to:
  - the similarities and the differences between the two lists
  - how these attributes do not apply to **ALL** girls or to **ALL** boys
  - how certain attributes that are considered positive for one gender become negative when they are applied to the other gender and how certain attributes that are considered negative for one gender become positive when they are applied to the other gender (see the heading “Double standard associated with gendered attitudes” in the “Explanations concerning content” section)

- Next, ask the children:
  - Are there advantages in seeing girls and boys in this way? Do children gain something from this (benefits)?
  - How are children disadvantaged by these attributes?
  - How can these inequalities influence the relationships between children?
- Conclude this part with the **following key** messages:
  - Stereotypes contribute to inequalities because they:
    - amplify differences between boys and girls
    - place boys or girls in a position of superiority (in a situation of inequality)
    - restrict children's choices

#### *ACTIVITY: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INEQUALITIES AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS*

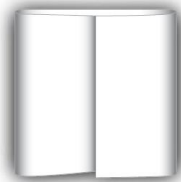
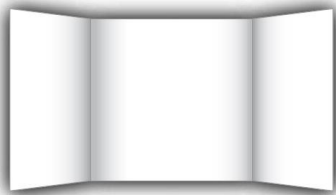
##### **To help students make connections between gender inequalities and the establishment of harmonious relationships (Aim 1):**

- Ask the students to form teams of 3 or 4 and assign each team a scenario from Appendix 1.
- Review their teamwork by asking them:
  - Who experiences **inequalities** in this situation? In what way?
  - How do the children who experience inequalities feel in this situation?
  - How do the inequalities make it harder for the children **to get along with one other** (harmonious relationships)?
- If necessary, complete the students' answers using Appendix 1.
- Conclude this part with the **following key** messages:
  - Some children are treated in a negative or unequal way because of their gender.
  - Inequalities can hinder harmonious relationships between children (feelings of rejection and exclusion, conflicts, hurtful comments, insults, etc.).

#### *ACTIVITY: THE NORMS THAT INFLUENCE ME*

##### **To help the students understand the norms that guide how they express themselves (Aim 2):**

- Ask the students to create a self-portrait (their identity) using an 8 ½ X 14 sheet of paper, in landscape format and folded to make the flaps on each side meet in the middle. This way, the sheet of paper will fold out into three sections which include two flaps of equal size on the outer edges of the sheet (see image on next page):<sup>53</sup>



- Suggest that they create a portrait of themselves (collage, text, etc.) in the centre of the sheet where they will illustrate their qualities, particular talents, interests, the areas in which they excel, the sports or activities they practise, what they like, what they dislike, etc.
- Next, on the outside of the two flaps folded into the centre, ask them to write how a girl should be (on one flap) and how a boy should be (on the other flap), based on the positive and negative attributes typically associated with boys and with girls, for example as indicated in the previous activity.

**NOTE:** They can use elements written on the board during a prior activity.

- Next, lead a group discussion in relation to the self-portrait using the following questions:
  - Does your self-portrait include attributes typically associated with girls? With boys? With both? Name some.
  - Do these attributes serve as a model for you or inspire you? Which ones? Why?
  - It is possible you do not behave the way others think a boy or a girl should behave. In that case, how might you feel?
  - Do you sometimes express your personality based on attributes that are typically associated with boys? With girls? With both? What reactions do you observe from others?
  - Do you sometimes express yourself based on attributes typically associated with your gender out of fear of being rejected or ridiculed? To behave like others?
  - Is there sometimes a difference between what you are (gender identity) and what you express to others (gender expression)?
- **Point out to the students that all the attributes identified should not be associated with only one gender. These attributes should be perceived as characteristics of all human beings.**

**NOTE:** To this end, the titles “boys and girls” can be erased and replaced with “being yourself, being human” at the top of the lists or on the boxes.

- If necessary, complete the elements raised by the students based on the headings “Norms and outside influences” and “Personal preferences” in the “Explanations concerning content” section.
- Conclude this part with the following **key message**:
  - Children have their own talents, characteristics, strengths and goals regardless of their gender. They are **EQUAL**.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY:** The key message of this activity can be further supported by using models derived from famous personalities who have, in the course of history, shown courage and determination by pursuing their dreams based on their personal preferences AND by challenging the norms related to their gender. See the suggested books in the “BE PREPARED” section.

## *CONCLUSION*

- Conclude with the key message:
  - Children should be guided by their personal preferences when expressing their gender. They should be able to make choices based on these preferences: what they like, what they do not like, what they feel like doing and what they aspire to.

Appendix 1: Situation and content elements

Scenarios	Who experiences inequalities in this situation? In what way?	How do the children experiencing inequalities <b>feel</b> in this situation?	How do the inequalities <b>make it harder for the children to get along with one another</b> (harmonious relationships)?
At recess, some boys won't let the girls play soccer with them. They say that the girls aren't good enough at soccer. Sometimes, they agree to let some girls play with them. But when the girls play, the boys don't pass the ball to them.	The girls who want to play soccer. They're not allowed to play the activity of their choice. They are told that they are not good at sports. They don't receive passes.	The girls feel excluded, rejected and ignored. They can't do what they want to do. When they play, they don't feel recognized (don't receive passes).	This situation can create a conflict between the girls and the boys. The girls might also decide to refuse to allow the boys to play with them. This also creates exclusion and rejection. It is not recognized that girls can be good at soccer and contribute to the team.
A teacher proposes an art project. She asks the students to form teams of four people for the project. Some of the boys ask some of the girls to work with them. The girls refuse: they say that the boys are not good at art, that they don't work well and that they don't pay attention to details.	The boys who want to work in teams with the girls. They are told that they are not good at art, that they don't work well and that they don't pay attention to details.	The boys may feel excluded, rejected and demeaned. They may feel their skills and abilities are not recognized.	This situation can create a conflict between the girls and the boys when forming teams. It involves exclusion and rejection. It is not recognized that boys can be good at art and contribute to the team.
Naomi is a girl at school who is often teased by the other girls. She plays hockey, has short hair, prefers to play with boys at recess and wears athletic clothing. A group of girls make fun of her and call her a tomboy. When she wants to play with the girls, they refuse, claiming that they don't want to play with "a guy."	The girl who plays hockey. The girls refuse to allow her to play with them. She is told that she is a boy because she plays hockey, has short hair, etc.	Naomi may feel excluded and rejected by the other girls. She may feel that she is not recognized for who she is.	It involves exclusion and rejection, based on stereotypes. The teasing is hurtful and also makes it hard for the girls to get along with one another.
Marcus is crying in a corner of the schoolyard. He was crying yesterday, too. Today, Ethan decides to go see him to help him out. He approaches Marcus, listens to him and places his hand on the other boy's shoulder to console him. The other children make fun of them.	Marcus and Ethan. They are laughed at, because they show emotion and sensitivity. Ethan is also laughed at, because he shows support and empathy toward another person.	Marcus and Ethan may be hurt by the teasing by others. Marcus, who already feels hurt, may feel even more so. He may also feel even more alone and isolated. Ethan may feel misunderstood and ridiculed, because he wanted to help and take action to show support.	Teasing other children makes it hard for them to get along with one another. Ridiculing someone who is hurting shows lack of empathy, of respect and of consideration for the needs of others.

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## Avis de recours

À la suite d'une décision rendue en vertu de la Loi sur l'accès aux documents des organismes publics et sur la protection des renseignements personnels (la Loi).

### Révision par la Commission d'accès à l'information

#### a) *Pouvoir :*

L'article 135 de la Loi prévoit qu'une personne dont la demande écrite a été refusée en tout ou en partie par le responsable de l'accès aux documents ou de la protection des renseignements personnels peut demander à la Commission d'accès à l'information de réviser cette décision. La demande de révision doit être faite par écrit; elle peut exposer brièvement les raisons pour lesquelles la décision devrait être révisée (art. 137).

L'adresse de la Commission d'accès à l'information est la suivante :

Québec	525, boul René-Lévesque Est Bureau 2.36 Québec (Québec) G1R 5S9	Tél. : 418 528-7741 Numéro sans frais 1 888 528-7741	Télec. : 418 529-3102
Montréal	500, boul. René-Lévesque Ouest Bureau 18.200 Montréal (Québec) H2Z 1W7	Tél. : 514 873-4196 Numéro sans frais 1 888 528-7741	Télec. : 514 844-6170

#### b) *Motifs :*

Les motifs relatifs à la révision peuvent porter sur la décision, sur le délai de traitement de la demande, sur le mode d'accès à un document ou à un renseignement, sur les frais exigibles ou sur l'application de l'article 9 (notes personnelles inscrites sur un document, esquisses, ébauches, brouillons, notes préparatoires ou autres documents de même nature qui ne sont pas considérés comme des documents d'un organisme public).

#### c) *Délais :*

Les demandes de révision doivent être adressées à la Commission d'accès à l'information dans les 30 jours suivant la date de la décision ou de l'expiration du délai accordé au responsable pour répondre à une demande (art. 135).

La Loi prévoit spécifiquement que la Commission d'accès à l'information peut, pour motif raisonnable, relever le requérant du défaut de respecter le délai de 30 jours (art. 135).