



Helpful Tips to Support Girls During Puberty

1. What is the best way to help girls feel more comfortable about periods and puberty?

At puberty, it can be nerve-racking to speak openly about the physical changes we all experience. Preparing for “the talk” can feel like a daunting task, but it will help girls better understand what is going on. Start the conversation early and use the correct terms for body parts. Remind them often that the changes they’re experiencing are completely normal. Share your own experiences of first getting your period, and what it was like. Additionally, it’s important to let girls know the importance of using safe and hygienic period protection. For example, if not all girls have access to proper period products, some may have to resort to using non-pad materials such as toilet paper or paper towels which may result in irritation or infection. Talk to your girls about the resources that exist in your community, whether it’s a school nurse, a school pantry or local shelter.

2. How can you prepare yourself with the right information, guidance and advice?

Utilizing the proper resources, such as the [Always & Walmart Live #LikeAGirl Webinar](#), as a guide to these types of conversations will not only benefit the girls, but can also help parents, caretakers, mentors and coaches get on the same page to provide the stability kids need for their confidence during puberty and beyond. There are multiple resources to rely on in local communities that can make sure you’re helping navigate girls in the best way possible: recreation centers, community centers, educational classes, and online resources like the articles found on www.Always.com.

3. What if a girl comes to you directly with a period poverty concern?

The first thing we would tell a girl when she comes forward with a problem is, “thank you.” Express appreciation for the trust they are putting in you to help them with a sensitive issue. It is important for her to understand that there’s nothing to be worried about and that they can come to you anytime. As a next step, you can offer them product and, if it is an ongoing issue, it may be nice give them enough pads to help them get through their cycle. Lastly, you can ask if they have any specific questions about their period. Sometimes kids just need a prompt to help them open up. At this stage, it’s also helpful to reference her copy of the Puberty and Confidence Curriculum, to help with any follow-up questions.

4. How should I approach a girl who seems to be having trouble accessing product?

The important thing is obviously to make sure that the girl you are speaking to gets the supplies she needs. Ask to speak to her one-on-one so that she feels less singled-out in a group setting. It is important to let the girl know that neither she nor her family have done anything wrong. To make the conversation more personable, you can remind her that having a period is a normal part of life and everyone among us has been surprised by their period at one point or another. You might share a story from your own experiences, if applicable. We recommend grabbing a

pad before this conversation so you can make the interaction as direct and natural as possible. Don't take it personally if she seeks to end the conversation quickly – some girls are more comfortable talking about periods than others, but the important thing is to establish yourself as someone she can turn to when she needs help.

5. More broadly, how can I help my girls feel comfortable and confident when they're with me?

As girls develop their confidence, it's important to help them discover their true passions in life – whether it's art club, martial arts or softball. Create opportunities for girls to try new activities and expand their skills. Switch up the types of exercises you do over the course of your program to show them new approaches that they can try. Rachel Simmons advises that when girls are part of a bigger team, whether sports, service or the arts, they learn to work cooperatively and persevere through setbacks. Learning new skills and praising them for their success will help them grow in confidence.

6. How can I teach her perseverance so that she can overcome any obstacle she encounters?

Girls can learn the importance of perseverance from you, so let her see how you dust yourself off after a setback. Failure is part of the learning process and role modeling the right behavior can give her a clear script for her own positive self-talk. When she judges herself harshly, remind her of all she's accomplished already. After a misstep, help her to regroup and plan her next move by asking her to write down some next steps. Focus on small goals. For example, if she makes a bad grade in chemistry, encourage her to aim for a grade letter higher the next time around and formulate a study plan to help her meet that goal.

7. How can you help girls take safe risks that help them grow?

Risks can be scary but if we never venture from our comfort zones, we don't grow. This is an important lesson to teach girls and you can help! Take the skills she knows and offer her a tougher challenge within the context of your activity – one that she likely does not yet have the experience to immediately complete successfully. When she makes an honest attempt, it creates a moment where you can reinforce that the PROCESS is sometimes just as important as the OUTCOME. Though she may not have gotten it right, she'll be learning new ways to think and grow. After girls experience failure, it is important to recognize their accomplishments within the process, which makes these moments more enjoyable for girls. Perhaps you were impressed with the way she organized her thoughts, or the way she was willing to try multiple ways to solve the problem at-hand. Consistently being there and cheering them on is one of the most important things you can do for them, especially at puberty. Expressing praise and noticing how hard they've worked for something, even if they fail, will help boost their confidence in more ways than you may know.