

Human sexuality topics about which fifth graders (as well as 6th-8th graders) have asked questions in the past

Puberty/Anatomy

1. Body development
2. Pubic hair
3. Menstruation, irregular menstruation, menopause
4. Pads, tampons, and other products
5. Erections
6. Nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)
7. Urination—does it impact menstruation or ejaculations?

Pregnancy

8. Ovum (egg) and sperm development and fertilization
9. Labor and delivery
10. Caesarian sections (C-sections)
11. Twins, triplets and beyond
12. Infertility (alternative insemination, In Vitro Fertilization)
13. Adoption

Sexual identity/behavior

14. Age-appropriate sexual behavior
15. Sex as pleasurable
16. Sexual orientation
17. Sexual contact including vaginal, anal, and oral sex
18. Sexually transmitted infections
19. Contraception

Note: “Sex” has two general definitions. The first is biological sex as in whether or not someone is male or female. Sex can also refer to specific behaviors. “Sexual behavior is any behavior involving willful physical contact or the sharing of body parts that arouses or is intended to arouse erotic or sexual feelings.” (Excerpt from Deb Roffman’s book *Sex and Sensibility, The Thinking Parent’s Guide to Talking Sense About Sex*).

When students ask questions about “sex” the teacher first determines how the student is using the term to understand what it is they are asking. Is it a question about anatomy, gender identity, behavior? When responding, the teacher affirms the student who asks serious questions about a serious subject and provides accurate information that draws upon the knowledge that has already been constructed in class (i.e., anatomy, body systems, wellness wheel). It is critical that students do not equate sex with reproduction. When responding to questions about sexual behavior and sex as pleasurable, the teacher uses Roffman’s definition as a guide.