

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

13 YEAR-OLD

12 YEAR-OLD

11 YEAR-OLD

10 YEAR-OLD

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Little Big Girls

A film by HÉLÈNE CHOQUETTE



Little Big Girls

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SEX EDUCATION

Adolescence is a time of great change that brings with it a host of questions, new areas to explore, and new discoveries about self and others. Puberty, defined as the set of physical and psychological changes leading to maturity, marks the start of a budding sexuality.

Through family, peers, the media and popular culture, young people today have access to a vast array of information and messages, both explicit and implicit, about sexuality. These external influences, some of which can be extreme and/or contradictory, help form their ideas about sexuality. Since sexuality is central to a person's gender identity, relationships, growth, well-being and general health, adults must strive to promote healthy attitudes among young people toward sex.

Anchored in an overall approach to health, sex education involves more than just transmitting knowledge about the phenomenon of reproduction. It should also foster healthy self-esteem, good judgment, clear communication, equality between boys and girls, and respect for physical diversity. A humane, open-minded and respectful approach to sex education hinges on being sensitive to the realities experienced by young people at every level of their development.

Sexuality is a central preoccupation both at school and in other areas of a young person's life. Just like parents and family, school plays a crucial role, providing a context where young people can safely discuss concerns with people they trust: their instructors and their friends.

ABOUT LITTLE BIG GIRLS

In this feature documentary, director H el ene Choquette sheds light on the phenomenon of precocious puberty in girls. Unlike a few decades ago, today it's not uncommon to see the earliest signs of puberty in girls as young as nine—a situation that invariably causes a disconnect between their physical and emotional maturity. Far from being a marginal issue, early puberty is fast becoming a worldwide public health concern. Various causes are suspected: Could obesity and exposure to environmental toxins be among the culprits?

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Designed to accompany a series of [key clips](#) from H el ene Choquette's *Little Big Girls*, this study guide will serve as a springboard for discussion and reflection on the changes caused by puberty among boys and girls. The seven clips selected by the NFB are suitable for exploring the film with students aged 8 to 12 and broaching the various topics with respect, sensitivity and tact.

It is essential that instructors view the film, [Little Big Girls](#), in its entirety before guiding students through the proposed activities. Doing so will allow them to put each clip into context in terms of its message and the questions the film raises about early puberty.

Each clip from *Little Big Girls* addresses a different subject. Based on these clips, the proposed learning sequence has been designed to let instructors gradually and intelligently explore topics that touch on puberty, young people's feelings about it and the importance of respect, empathy and open-mindedness to healthy human relationships.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

HUMAN SEXUAL MATURITY AND BODY IMAGE

- Introduce students to the changes brought on by puberty to demystify physical change and the new feelings that accompany it. (Students are more liable to be receptive to the information when they are actually undergoing puberty.)
- Remember that some kids will enter puberty early, and that without preparation, such an experience can prove negative, particularly for girls.
- Encourage acceptance of physical change, since this lays the groundwork for a positive body image.

IDENTITY, ROLES, SEXUAL STEREOTYPES AND SOCIAL NORMS

- Promote gender equality by fostering awareness of the male and female stereotypes transmitted through the social environment.



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TARGET AUDIENCE

Students aged 8 to 12

TEACHING SCENARIO SUMMARY

Each clip from *Little Big Girls* raises questions related to a particular sex-education topic. The learning sequence is designed to engage students gradually in personal reflection and group discussions, initiating them into the realities of puberty in a climate of trust and respect. Personal “health journals” will provide a space where students can note down thoughts, questions and ideas. Only the instructor will have access to these journals.

LEARNING SEQUENCE

Activity No.	Clip	Topic	Activity Summary
1.	<i>Little Big Girl – A Big Girl Now</i>	Feelings and questions regarding the changes brought about by puberty	Following a brief discussion about puberty, students will conduct a short “puberty interview” with an adult of the same sex whom they trust to discuss the changes associated with this stage of life.
2.	<i>Little Big Girl – Searching</i>	The importance of having a network of reliable, trustworthy and supportive people who can help you cope with life’s challenges	Students play an interactive, questionnaire-type game on the identity quest, discovering how to deal with challenges and identifying the people who can support and inform them.
3.	<i>Little Big Girl – The Hormonal Rollercoaster</i>	Puberty: understanding the changing body by exploring both the obvious and the less obvious/ more private changes (i.e., physical and emotional)	Students will read up on puberty and anonymously contribute to a “question box.” The instructor will use these questions as the basis for subsequent classroom discussions.
	<i>Little Big Girl – The War Against Body Hair</i>		
	<i>Little Big Girl – The Secret</i>		
4.	<i>Little Big Girl – The Body Fat Factor</i>	Respect, empathy and open-mindedness are key values for healthy relationships	Students will draw up a “boy/girl code of conduct” based on avoiding snap judgments and stereotypes. Centred on accepting difference and diversity, this code of values will be the reference point for ways of thinking and acting during discussions between students.
	<i>Little Big Girl – Earlier and Earlier</i>		



1: A BIG GIRL NOW

Topic

Feelings and questions about the changes brought on by puberty.

Materials and Resources

- Film clip: *A Big Girl Now*
- My Health Journal

Procedure

A. Start a conversation with the class about change by exploring the questions below. Direct the discussion to the notion of puberty.

- o Can you think of what kinds of changes happen during a person's life? What about changes to our body?
- o How might someone react to changes to their life and body?

B. Present the questions students will individually explore in their journals after they watch the clip *A Big Girl Now* (see step D).

C. Screen *A Big Girl Now*. Note that it can be very helpful to have students see the clip twice before moving onto the next step.

D. Review the changes pointed out in the clip (growth and puberty) by having students individually answer the following questions in their journals through words and/or drawings.

- o When in your life did you ever feel like you were growing? Why?
- o What kinds of feelings (positive and/or negative) did you experience at this time?
- o What kinds of feelings (positive and/or negative) do you have about the changes brought on by puberty?

E. Give students a chance to consult these resources, which summarize the process of puberty among boys and girls.

- o Puberty in girls: kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/InfoBooth/Physical-Health/Girls-Puberty.aspx

aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HowTheBodyWorks/SexDevelopmentAnOverview/SexualDifferentiation/Pages/PubertyinGirls.aspx

- o Puberty in boys: kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/InfoBooth/Physical-Health/Guys-Puberty.aspx

aboutkidshealth.ca/en/howthebodyworks/sexdevelopmentanoverview/sexualdifferentiation/pages/pubertyinboys.aspx

F. Suggest that students carry out a short interview about puberty with a trusted adult. The exercise will help them build a support network for coping with the changes they'll experience at this important time.

- o Link to the activity: sexualityandu.ca/uploads/files/PubertyInterview.pdf





2: SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

Topic

The importance of having a network of reliable, trustworthy and supportive people who can help you cope with life's challenges.

Materials and Resources

- Film clip: *Searching*
- My Health Journal

Procedure

A. Invite students to continue exploring the topic of puberty by asking the following questions:

- o What are the risks of relying solely on the Internet for information when you have questions about puberty and sexuality?
- o Who can you trust to help guide you as you learn about sexuality? (Underscore the important roles of school and family.)
- o How might you navigate through some of the more difficult moments of puberty?

B. Screen the clip *Searching*. Remind students of the questions and watch the clip again before moving onto the next stage.

C. Point out clues to the answers to the questions.

D. Propose a game that will help students find more answers to the questions raised during the discussion. This interactive, questionnaire-type game can help them come up with a personal strategy for facing challenges. After completing the activity, students will print their "life map" and glue it into their journal.

o Link to the activity (Self Quest):

kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/YourSpace/Self-Quest.aspx?lang=en-ca





3: UNDERSTANDING PUBERTY: THE HORMONAL ROLLERCOASTER, THE WAR AGAINST BODY HAIR, AND THE SECRET

Topic

Understanding the body by exploring the obvious changes (physical) as well as the more private ones (emotional) linked to puberty.

Materials and Resources

- Film clips: *The Hormonal Rollercoaster/The War Against Body Hair/The Secret*
- My Health Journal
- Question box

Procedure

- Watch the three clips with the class. Review the information presented in each to awaken students' curiosity and provoke the desire to find out more about puberty in boys and girls. Play the clips again as needed.
- Explain to students that it is normal to have feelings that are all over the map, and a ton of questions about puberty. To properly support them throughout their discoveries, suggest that they use their journals to note down any questions that come to mind during the upcoming presentations on puberty. Insist they use respectful and appropriate vocabulary, and explain that they can submit their questions anonymously for subsequent classroom discussions.
- Play the two PowerPoint presentations that explain puberty in boys and girls respectively. Plan a few breaks to let students write down their questions.
- Links to presentations:
 - o [Puberty - Complete Presentation for Boys](#)
 - o [Puberty - Complete Presentation for Girls](#)

- Allow students to review the presentations at their own pace. During this personal journey, they should jot down any questions they have. Insist they use respectful and appropriate vocabulary.

- o Links to supporting documents:

[Puberty – Complete Presentation for Boys](#)

[Puberty – Complete Presentation for Girls](#)

- Ask students to put their questions into the box so that you can make a relevant selection for subsequent follow-up and discussion.





4: THE BODY FAT FACTOR

Topic

Respect, empathy and open-mindedness are key values for healthy relationships.

Materials and Resources

- Film clip: *The Body Fat Factor*
- My Health Journal

Procedure

- Watch the two clips with the class. Ask students to write or draw, in their journals, their personal response to the following questions: Do you ever feel different from other kids your own age? How do you feel in those situations? Replay the clips as needed. Invite students to share their ideas.
- Explain that, regarding the start and progression of puberty, there's a whole world of variations and that this is normal! Each person is unique, which means their experience of puberty will also be unique. Media messages bombard us with male and female stereotypes that can strongly influence how we perceive "normalcy." It can be hard for kids to see these sexist images and representations without feeling the need to conform; some of them even believe this is the only way to be accepted by their peers. Rather than mimic models that impose unrealistic ideals, why not recognize and embrace the uniqueness and diversity that each person has naturally?

- Suggest exploring the idea of gender stereotypes in the media to develop critical thinking and understand that the so-called "perfect" bodies seen in ads, on television shows and so on, can negatively affect how we perceive our own bodies.

o Link to activity "Girls and Boys on TV": mediasmarts.ca/lessonplan/girls-and-boys-television

- Now have students draw up a "boy/girl code of conduct" based on avoiding snap judgments and stereotypes. Centred on accepting difference and diversity, and underscoring the core values of respect, empathy and openness in healthy relationships, this code of conduct will be the reference point for ways of thinking and acting during discussions between students.
- Post the code of conduct in the classroom. Through discussion and role-play, explore scenarios that show how the code could be applied. Together with the students, create a strategy for applying the code in the classroom.





EXTENSION ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL)

To continue exploring puberty from a health standpoint, invite students to explore the KidsHealth website in small groups and discuss their questions, discoveries and interests among themselves. Their journals can always serve for noting down questions of a more personal nature that can then be submitted to the question box. Encourage students to discuss how they can take action to stay healthy!

kidshealth.org/en/kids

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Resources

Kids' Help Phone

kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx?lang=en-ca

AboutKidsHealth

aboutkidshealth.ca/En/Pages/default.aspx

Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy

mediasmarts.ca

Sexuality and U: Teachers' Resources

sexualityandu.ca/resource-library/teachers

Tel-Jeunes

en.teljeunes.com/home

Éducation et Enseignement supérieur Québec

education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/sexuality-education

Government of Ontario

ontario.ca/page/sex-education-ontario

BC Teachers' Federation

bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=21406



References

Transformations, Butterflies, Passions... and All Sorts of Questions: Parents' guide for discussing sexuality with their teens
publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2014/14-307-01WA.pdf

Sex Education in the Context of Education Reform

education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/19-7048a.pdf

Learning Content in Sexuality Education: Kindergarten and Elementary School

education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/Apprentissages_prescolaire-primaire_EN.pdf

Kids' Help Phone

kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/InfoBooth.aspx?lang=en-ca

Sexuality and U

sexualityandu.ca

Credits

This educator's guide was produced by NFB Education. It was written by Danielle Delhaes, education consultant. Danielle's focus is developing and implementing conceptually based educational programs across various fields and disciplines, with a view to building sustainable communities both inside and outside the classroom.