

Preparing for Puberty: A Workshop for Parents of Children with Autism

Generally, in our work, we come across parents who understandably are very concerned about how their children will communicate, or make friends or hold a pencil or copy like other kids in the classroom. For some reasons, very few parents ask us questions about their child's sexual development. Very often, we too as professionals tend to focus on what seems more pressing and that includes communication, social issues, academics, sensory issues, etc.

This usually continues till we encounter either behaviours like touching someone else or oneself inappropriately or a girl starting to show signs of breast development or even getting her first period. The child's development of language, social skills and school difficulties take priority over their sexual development.

Preparing for Puberty fills this gap and tackles the issue by teaching parents how they can use the strategies used to teach children with ASD (visuals, breaking up into small steps, making it predictable) about the various aspects of puberty starting with awareness of the body to menstruation and masturbation that affect teens.