

Simple Parent Starter for 10

Digital Poster for parents with supporting points

Key information	Things to Consider
<p>1. There is a very wide range of ‘normal’ during childhood and adolescent growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronological and biological age can vary by up to 5 years – so a 12-year-old can look like a child or an adult, this variation is normal. • There can be differences in timing (when you go through puberty compared to your friends), tempo (how quickly you go through puberty) and stage (what stage of pubertal development you are in). • How mature a young person <i>feels</i> might be different from what they look like.
<p>2. Adolescence is tricky but a good thing! (There are benefits to puberty)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescence encompasses social, emotional and cognitive development, which is why it spans such a long period of time. • While physical change can be difficult, once the most rapid period of growth is completed, we can start to realise the benefits such as increased strength and power. • Increased levels of independence may lead to increased self-ownership of training - an excellent time for learning and creativity. • Eventually they will become more adept at emotionally dealing with successes and failures and better able to establish more realistic goals about their abilities and participation.
<p>3. Persevere: Many of the challenges associated with physical changes of puberty are TEMPORARY.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things to look out for include loss of flexibility, balance, and coordination – these are all normal and temporary changes usually related to the growth spurt, which will settle down/improve. • Consider adjusting the training load and time for rest. • Consider the impact of training on joints during growth period – particularly hips, knees & ankles (depending on genre).
<p>4. Physical changes often have a psychological impact which is a normal human response when adjusting to change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, the growth spurt may have implications for flexibility and a knock-on impact upon confidence or motivation in the dance studio, or changes in body shape and proportion may conflict with a young person’s perception of being a successful dancer or their aspirations in dance. • The teacher may become a significant role model as they start to identify with non-parental adults which means that how you support a young person and your response to these changes are important. • Each individual case is different, think about what you can put in place to support that young person. For example, having a more relaxed approach to uniform and taking the focus away from how things look and focusing more on how movements feel. • As they move away from parental adults, they will also start to rely more on peers.

- Consider peer comparison and concern over perceived physical differences which are at their peak during early adolescence, this may impact how a young person is feeling or viewing themselves.
- Heightened emotional reactivity and sensitivity; greater self-awareness and social interest/sensitivity, risk taking behaviours may occur.
- Consider the experiences of those who may experience earlier or later than average maturation – remember the ‘normal’ range is wide.

5. Be practical in support (as well as understanding)

- Sanitary pouch – for male & female students (deodorant, towel, etc).
- Have spares of everything (tights leotard, underwear).
- Set up a non-verbal code with teacher when you need support and don’t want to draw attention to yourself.
- Periods – consider when (timing) and range – options for sanitary protection in dancewear.
- Breast development – respect need for early or initial additional support & comfort. Consider bras, uniform or cover up options.
- Be aware of sex differences in this experience – which also affects timing and speed of growth spurts – males will have an increased need for a support from dance belt.
- Challenges faced by adolescents – be ready with signposting for support.
- Bring (healthy) food to eat between classes, or activities. Bodies and brains are busy, and so they will be hungry, possibly without realising it. ‘Fuel’ intake or top up can help emotionally as well as physically.

6. Adolescence is a PROCESS, with specific ‘waypoints’. The age and stage of the child determines the right approach.

- Pubertal growth spurt includes not just a spurt in height but also in weight and can take around 3 years from beginning to completion.
- Growth spurt – things to look out for e.g. complaints about knee or ankle pain – these are common in adolescents but can be present at any age. Consider the potential for growth related injuries particularly around specific growth spurt issues at adolescence (Osgood Schlatters, Severs etc)
- Peak height velocity refers to the most rapid period of growth during the growth spurt – look out for growing pains, frequent changes in shoe size/uniform – be especially vigilant during this time – it’s not a time for increasing training or learning new skills e.g. pointe work. For girls this often happens around age 12, for boys around age 14 – but all young people are individual – better to be attuned to signs of change in growth.
- The sequence of key changes for girls (normally, but not always) is breast development, height spurt, menarche.

