

Differences of Sex Development

Educating Children at a Glance

Infancy

- Explore and sort out your feelings, and learn all you can about your child's development. (Resources available at www.aisdsd.org)
- Connect with others, and take time for yourself. Your feelings are natural.
- Enjoy your beautiful child, these sweet developmental milestones don't last long.

1-3

- Read books that allow opportunities to help you explain how everyone is unique and special in their own way. Point out differences, super powers, or talents among your family members and friends. Being different is okay!
- Role play upcoming doctor visits and consider finding ways to include family diversity in play, such as adoption.
- Be your child's voice in appointments, and explain what is going to happen in age appropriate ways.
- Connect with other parents. The shared experiences, ideas, and support can be valuable and comforting.

3-5

- Continue celebrating differences together. Boost confidence by finding ways to appreciate your child for who they are.
- Consider role playing for any upcoming appointments, and connecting with others who can share ideas.
- Begin relating concepts of your child's difference to concrete ideas they can understand.
- Listen and repeat questions back to verify what your child is asking. Provide simple, matter-of-fact answers.

5-9

- Revisit concepts, and check understanding with questions during one-on-one play or conversation.
- With the friendships you have developed with other parents, exchange ideas or try concepts from different perspectives. Consider how your child learns best, and try to follow your child's natural cues.
- Make sure your healthcare providers know your child's understanding, and try to include your child in the decision making when possible. Ask your child's opinion at appointments, and encourage open communication.
- Meet others and/ or arrange playdates so your child is aware there are other children and adults who are similar.

9-12

- Highlight strengths and individual characteristics that are unique and amazing in many areas of your child's life.
- Revisit concepts about hormones, and internal or external development when appropriate and unpressured.
- Clarify what internal development may be different, such as testes, ovaries, or something in between.
- Introduce the concepts of chromosomes, genes, and DNA. Explain how these differences contribute to who we are.
- Set a goal for yourself to fully educate your child about all symptoms and concepts. Arrange to meet others.
- Provide your child with tangible materials to read or look at on their own time as well as with you.

Teens

- Provide internet sites and other resources, such as brochures, handbooks, and dsdteens.org.
- Ask them about their sharing experiences, offer ideas, and support them in their choices.
- Consider asking for a teen mentor from a support group or an older patient at the clinic.
- Stay connected. Spend time with your teen, and do your best to keep communication open.

