

## **Talking about Maturation**

By: Bright Tomorrows Staff

Last week's article discussed the importance of talking to your child about their bodies and using the proper names for body parts. If we as parents are not educating our children, someone else is, and often that person's intentions are not good.

It is important to talk to your child about puberty and their body changing before the signs of maturation even begin. In girls puberty typically starts between the ages of 8 and 13, and in boys between the ages of 9 and 14. If parents wait until the signs begin to show, children are typically more embarrassed and unwilling to talk about the issue.

When you talk to your children before the signs of puberty begin they will be more open to the conversation. Often children will have questions, and rather than being surprised or frightened by changes in their body they can look forward to these changes or watch for the signs.

Don't wait for your child to come to you with questions, you may be waiting forever, and the day may never come. By the time children are eight years old they should understand the physical and emotional changes their bodies will undergo. It is also important that children understand the changes in puberty for the opposite sex.

There are some great books available that you can read with or give to your child: "The Care and Keeping of YOU, The Body Book for Girls" by American Girl, and "The Boy's Body Book, Everything you Need to Know for Growing Up YOU" by Dunham/Bjorkman.

For more information about how to talk to your child about puberty and a list of changes to discuss with your child visit:

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/talk\\_about\\_puberty.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/talk_about_puberty.html).

For more information about Bright Tomorrows visit: [www.brightcac.org](http://www.brightcac.org).