

Saleema
Noon growing up
game plan

*Preteens
& Puberty*

A GAME PLAN FOR PARENTS

Normalize it.

- **Talk openly and honestly about puberty with your whole family.**

Puberty changes are normal, necessary and healthy. Every body experiences them.

“ Every body grows at a different rate. Every body is unique and amazing.

When do you think is a good age to start wearing deodorant?

- **Share fun facts.**

Did you know that, once they start during puberty, the testicles make one million sperm per minute, 24 hours a day?

“ Did you know that it’s totally normal for one breast to grow faster than the other?

Doctors tell us that kids need to gain about 35 lbs. during puberty just to be healthy.

Check in with yourself.

- **How do you feel about your own body?**
- **Are you obsessed with losing weight or fitting into something? If so, what’s behind that?**
- **Don’t trash your body when your child is around (or ever!), they’ll internalize this negativity.**
- **Give yourself meaningful compliments.**

I felt strong in my yoga class this morning.

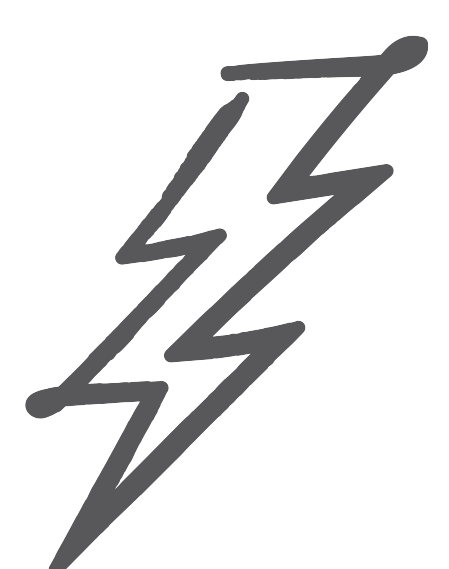
“ I’m really pleased with how my presentation went today.

A problem came up at work today and I feel good about how I solved it.

Talk about healthy eating.

- **Model moderation in your eating habits. Don’t make a big deal about food.**
- **Believe your child when they say they’re full. Don’t make them finish their plate. Give them choices in what they eat.**
- **Watch for any strange or restrictive eating habits.**

“ I can’t help but notice you haven’t been eating breakfast lately. Is there a reason for that?



Redefine beauty.

- **Celebrate authentic, natural beauty: being strong, healthy and confident.**
- **Don't ever make comments, positive or negative, about your child's body. Instead, give compliments based on personality characteristics, special talents and accomplishments.**
- **Talk about role models in the context of what they do, not what they look like.**

I love the outfit you chose to wear today. You have great style.

“Wow, Lady Gaga has amazing style and a powerhouse voice but I find her work with her Born This Way Foundation even more inspiring.

You are worthy and deserving of love simply because you were born and the uniqueness you bring into the world.

Cultivate a healthy relationship with exercise.

- **Stress that exercise should be fun.**
- **Talk about how sports and other activities help us become stronger and healthier.**
- **Never force them to do activities they hate (unless they've committed & need to follow through).**
- **Invite them to join you in exercise that you enjoy.**
- **Make physical activity part of your family culture.**

“You looked really strong at ballet today.

It's important in our family to play a team sport because of what it teaches us, but you can play whichever one you like.

Recognize the struggle is real.

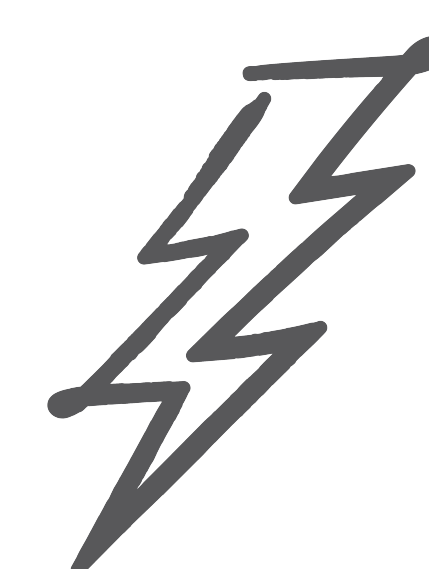
- **Don't belittle or brush off comments your child makes about their appearance.**
- **Teach your child to replace negative thoughts about their body with positive ones. We all have an inner voice and what it tells us isn't true (our Monster).**

You're not alone. Even people who seem super confident about their bodies have bad days.

“How we look is only one small (and not the most important) piece of who we are.

I'm noticing you're making lots of comments about your acne lately. Is it really that that's bothering you or is there something else going on?

How can I help?



Be vulnerable. Be available.

- **Share your experiences with puberty.**
- **What did you struggle with? What helped?**
- **Did your friends have similar/different struggles?**
- **How did you/do you deal with negative self-talk?**
- **Talk about the importance of treating ourselves with kindness and compassion.**

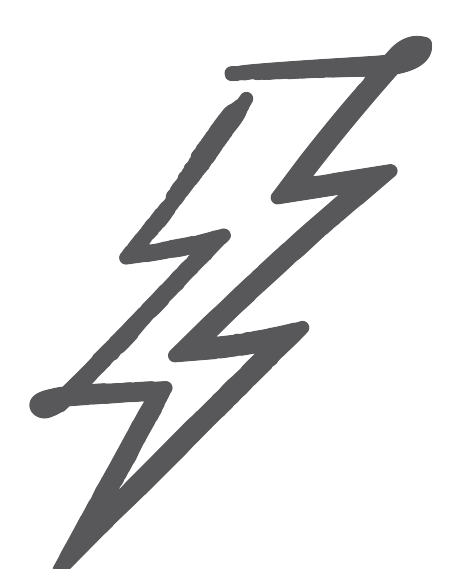
“ Let’s make a deal that we’re not going to compare our bodies to others’. Instead, let’s appreciate our bodies for what they can do for us.

- **Let your preteen know you want to help.**

“ I’m here to answer any questions you have about puberty and growing up. I want to support you through this time. Show me how.

*Smart things to **not** say*

- “Why don’t we try to lose a few pounds together?”
- “What do you say we hit the gym so we can bulk up a bit?”
- “Doing cross country this term will help you lose some of that baby fat.”
- “When you reach your goal weight I’ll buy you those jeans you want.”
- “I’m not eating carbs this month.”
- “We gotta get some meat on your bones!”
- “Are you eating enough? Your friends are so much bigger than you!”
- (When seeing an old friend) “You look great, you’ve lost so much weight!”



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RESOURCES

www.amaze.org

www.sexpositivefamilies.com

www.everybodycurious.com

www.birdsandbeesandkids.com