LEARNER OUTCOME: W-4.3:
Describe physical, emotional and social changes that occur during puberty; e.g., menstruation, secondary sexual characteristics, changing identity and moods.

MATERIALS:
1. HANDOUT 1: “They Tell Me I’m Going Through Puberty”
2. CARDS: Boys/Girls/Both
3. HANDOUT 2: Puberty Changes
4. ANSWER KEY: Puberty Changes

INTRODUCTION:
This lesson plan provides teachers with a quick and easy approach to puberty for elementary grade children. It may be used as an introduction to puberty or as a review of physical changes and practical coping strategies. Teachers may want to supplement this lesson with some of the more comprehensive plans available on the website.

Puberty is a time of change and growth that can be both exciting and frightening. This lesson will give students the opportunity to learn about the basic physical changes that occur during puberty. Students will learn that boys and girls have similar and different experiences during puberty. They will have the opportunity to discuss the changes that are similar and unique to each gender. Students will also learn to identify positive coping strategies during puberty.

Keep in mind that students with differing abilities are also going through physical, emotional, and social changes. They may have very different interpretations or concerns with regards to what is happening with their bodies. Please visit the differing abilities lesson plans to access a series of lessons you can adapt to meet the needs of students with differing abilities.
B. PUBERTY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (5-10 min)

These discussion questions will help students identify puberty as a time of change and development.

1. What do we mean when we use the term puberty?
   - Changing from a child to a teenager is called “PUBERTY”. A teenager is sometimes called an “ADOLESCENT”.
   - Puberty happens to everyone.
   - You will begin to notice body changes, thought changes and relationship changes as you go through puberty.

2. Do boys and girls go through puberty at the same age?
   - The changes that you experience in puberty can happen to different people at different times, and can begin as early as 8 and continue until 18.
   - Girls usually experience puberty earlier than boys.
   - Each person has a body clock that is right for him/her. You can’t decide when you want to go through puberty and you can’t stop it happening. Everyone is different.

Girls usually begin puberty changes between the ages of 8 and 16. For boys this age range is 12-18. The changes are generally complete by the age of 18 for girls and 20 for boys. It is very important that you emphasize to students that everyone is different and there is no correct time for these changes to happen, their bodies will know when the changes should take place.

Students who notice signs of puberty earlier or later than their peers may feel embarrassed and uncomfortable with their changing bodies. This can be a difficult transition for some students, be sure to watch for and address signs of bullying with your students. For more information and support to help stop bullying please visit: http://www.education.alberta.ca/teachers/safeschools/bullying-prevention.aspx
C. THEY TELL ME I’M GOING THROUGH PUBERTY (15-20 min)

Students discover that puberty changes are similar between boys and girls.

1. Have students listen to “They Tell Me I’m Going Through Puberty” as you read Chris’s story aloud.
2. When you are done, ask students this question:
   - Do you think Chris is a boy or a girl, or are you unsure?
3. Have students share their answers with a nearby classmate and discuss their reasons for choosing boy, girl, unsure.

D. BOYS, GIRLS, BOTH (15 min)

Students examine puberty changes and determine changes that are unique to boys and girls and changes that are common to both.

1. Post the following titles on the wall:
   - Boy
   - Girl
   - Both
2. Distribute the Boys/Girls/Both cards, one to each student, or have students take a card from a pile.
3. Students can work in pairs or alone to place each card under the title which best fits the puberty change described.
4. As a class, review the card placements, and make the necessary changes according to the Puberty Changes answer key. Explain changes that participants do not understand.
5. Refer back to Chris’s story (re-read if time) and ask students this question:
   - How many of you (raise your hands) think Chris is a boy? A girl? Can’t tell?
6. Follow up with a discussion emphasizing the following points:
   - No change indicates that Chris is a boy or a girl.
   - The changes happening to Chris are NORMAL and could happen to anyone.
   - The changes Chris is going through are all signs of puberty and will happen to different people at different times.
Elementary Puberty Kit Contents & Discussion Points:

**Active Living (Photo)**
Physical and recreational activities such as sports, walking, having fun with friends outside, etc. improve energy, physical and mental wellbeing.

**Antiperspirant and/ or Deodorant (Product)/Baking Soda in Box (Photo)**
Can be used as an inexpensive, absorbent foot powder.

**Ball Cap (Product)**
Hats or caps can become dirty. Wash them or change hats to keep dirt from the face or hair. Hats are good protection from the sun’s heat and damaging rays.

**Healthy Nutrition (Photo)**
Eating healthy food choices improves energy, physical and mental wellbeing. Work towards increasing fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while minimizing high fat and high sugar foods/drinks.

**Hot Water Bottle (Photo)**
Exercise and warmth may help with menstrual cramps.

**Jockey Short Boy’s Cotton (Product)**
Boys may choose to wear boxers or briefs. Cotton underwear allows the skin to “breathe” and keep moisture away from the body. Underwear should be comfortably loose. The scrotum moves close to or away from the body to adjust the temperature of the testicles, to promote the growth of healthy sperm. It is important to change underwear every day.

**Bra (Product)**
Girls can wear a bra for comfort as their breasts develop. Some boys develop breast tissue for a year or more, but this will go away.
Menstruation Supplies (Product X 5: Pad, Pad with “Wings”, Panty-liner, Cardboard Tampon, Plastic Tampon)

Pads are widely available at drug stores and grocery stores. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Choose pads that are unscented. Pads attach to the inside of underwear by sticky strips. The wings wrap around the leg openings of the underwear. Pads catch menstrual flow. Keep pads in a backpack, locker or bag. Change and dispose of used pads often (wrap in toilet paper and put in the garbage). Panty-liners are similar to pads and are used to catch light menstrual flow or vaginal discharge.

Tampons are best not to use until you are a teenager. Tampons need to be changed often (at least every 4 – 6 hours) and come with either cardboard or plastic applicators, some come with no applicator. To dispose of used tampons, wrap them in toilet paper and throw them into the garbage. You may need parental support to help remind you to remove them. Avoid super-absorbent tampons. Choose unscented tampons. Using tampons incorrectly could result in Toxic Shock Syndrome, a rare but serious infection.

Razor (Product) *put the razor in a bag if using the actual product.
Some men shave their facial hair and some women shave the hair on their legs and underarms. Ask your parents what you should do.

Shampoo (Product)
Wash hair often to clean away the oil and dirt. Some people wash their hair every day, some less often.

Shaving Foam (Photo)
Shaving with moisture feels better. Some people use shaving foam, or soap and water.

Soap Unscented (Product)
A mild, unscented soap in bar or liquid form is used for showering or bathing daily and for washing the face twice daily. Scented, deodorant soaps can cause dry skin.

Sock (Product)
Wash feet and change socks every day. Occasionally, wash the insoles of shoes.

Toothbrush, Paste, and Floss (Product)
Brush and floss teeth at least twice a day. For fresh breath also brush the tongue.

T-Shirt Cotton (Product)
Natural fibres such as cotton allow the skin to “breathe”. Clothes made from these fabrics may be more comfortable to wear.
**Underwear Girl’s Cotton (Product)**
Cotton underwear is more comfortable as this natural fibre allows the skin to “breathe”. Synthetic underwear (e.g., nylon, polyester, rayon) may not allow the skin to “breathe”. Some synthetic underwear, pantyhose and tights, have cotton gussets (crotches) to allow moisture to leave the body. Trapped moisture could cause vaginal infections.

**Wash Cloth (Product)**
A clean washcloth or sponge can be used to wash the face with warm water and mild soap. No other skin care products are necessary unless advised by a doctor or parents.

**Water Bottle (Product)**
Drinking water is important and especially during physical activities and in hot weather. Plain water is the easiest and least expensive and doesn’t cause tooth decay. Don’t share water bottles and other mouth objects like lip balm or lip gloss and straws even with close friends or family members as they can spread germs that could make you sick or give you an infection in or around your mouth.

**Procedure:**

1. Introduce the Puberty Kit. Tell the students that you are going to use it to teach them about the tools that they have to help them get through the challenging parts of puberty.

2. Have students brainstorm the changes that occur during puberty that could be challenging.

3. Have students (or pairs of students) choose an item from the kit. You may also give students items, which would allow you to be sensitive to student needs, or to cluster products (i.e., washing items such as shampoo, soap and washcloth could go together).

4. Have students brainstorm answers to these questions:
   - What is the item?
   - How would the item be used?
   - How does this item relate to puberty changes?

5. Inform students that each item in the kit relates to a puberty change, and that they will complete a handout after this activity that tests their knowledge about each item.

6. Students present each item to the class, with the teacher adding comments to the discussion. (Use comments from the slides and the discussion points to enhance the discussion about items in the kit.) Students who are unsure about what the item is or how it would be used can simply state that they do not know.
7. Allow students to pass the items around so that they have a chance to examine them.

8. Debrief this activity using the following questions:
   - What items from the kit are most helpful for shaving? Menstruation? Preventing acne? Smelling good? Looking good? Feeling good?
   - Where can you find or buy most of the items in the puberty kit?
   - Who can you talk to about getting items in this kit?

**QUESTION BOX (10min)**
Have students fill out questions and address them next class.

**SELF REFLECTION**
During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT**
During the lesson, did students:

**Knowledge:**

- Identify various changes that occur during puberty?
- Categorize changes into those that happen to boys, girls or both?
- Describe ways to cope with physical and emotional changes?
- Identify who they can go to or where they can go to talk about puberty changes?

**Skills:**

- Demonstrate appropriate listening and speaking skills during class discussion?

**Attitudes:**

- Accept that change is a part of puberty?
- Anticipate the changes that will occur during puberty?
- Acknowledge that changes happen to everyone?
Hi, I'm Chris and I'd like to tell you about what's happening to me. It seems that every day brings a new change. It's almost like I'm getting a new body! They tell me I'm going through puberty.

One thing that's happening is this new hair that's growing in places it's never been before. Like under my arms. I know this is normal and all, but it still takes getting used to.

I don't mind some of the changes I'm seeing. In fact, some things I even like. I'm taller than I was last year. I know I'm smarter just because I'm able to think and write about what I'm going through now.

But then, there are some changes that aren't so good. Like B.O., body odour. The first time I noticed it, I thought I had some kind of disease or something. Now I realize it's not too bad if I wash or use deodorant.

A really dirty trick though, is acne. I remember I was getting ready to go to a party, washing up and stuff, when I looked in the mirror and saw this big zit staring back at me. I held hot wash-cloths on it for a long time. It went down, but not the whole way. I went to the party anyway. I noticed that many other kids had the same or worse luck with their zits. I wonder how common this is.

There's one thing I get a little embarrassed about. It's even hard for me to say this. When I was at the party the other night, I was with someone I like (and I'm not mentioning any names). I got this new feeling. It was strange but kind of nice. They tell me it's normal. Is it?

They tell me I'm going through puberty. That means I have to go to school with my zits and my B.O. But, I'm taller and smarter. I think I'll survive.

Do you think Chris is a boy or a girl, or are you unsure?
GROW TALLER

SKIN GETS OILY

ACNE (PIMPLES)

VOICE CHANGES

HAIR GROWS ON FACE

HAIR GETS OILY

HAIR GROWS IN ARMPITS

HAIR GROWS ON GENITALS (PUBIC HAIR)

SWEAT GLANDS DEVELOP
BREASTS DEVELOP

HIPS GET WIDER

SHOULders GET WIDER

START PRODUCING SPERM

PENIS GROWS BIGGER

TESTICLES GET BIGGER

BODY STARTS PRODUCING SEX HORMONES

NOCTURNAL EMMISSIONS (WET DREAMS)

ERECtIONS HAPPEN OUT OF THE BLUE (PENIS GETS HARD)
SPERM CAN BE RELEASED FROM PENIS (EJACULATION)

START RELEASING EGGS (OVULATION)

MENSTRUATION BEGINS

MOOD SWINGS

START HAVING SEXUAL THOUGHTS

START HAVING SEXUAL FEELINGS

START PRODUCING VAGINAL DISCHARGE

CAN BECOME INTERESTED IN HAVING A BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND
FRIENDSHIPS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT

SOMETIMES FEEL LONELY AND CONFUSED

STRONGER FEELING OF WANTING TO BE LIKED AND “FIT IN”

WANT MORE INDEPENDENCE

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

CONCERNED ABOUT APPEARANCE
Student Name: ________________________
Parent/Adult Support: ________________________

PUBERTY CHANGES

Place an “X” in the correct column for each puberty change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBERTY CHANGE</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
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<td>Grow Taller</td>
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<td>Skin gets oily</td>
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*Breast development is related to an increase in the estrogen hormone. Males normally produce some estrogen in the adrenal glands and testes. Nearly one in two boys experiences temporary enlargement of the breasts during puberty.

Adapted from: Canadian Federation for Sexual Health. (2005). *Beyond the Basics: A Sourcebook on Sexuality and Reproductive Health Education*, p.69