

YOU, YOUR BODY AND PUBERTY

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The program begins with a montage of old home videos showing four kids—Tyler, Sam, Michelle and Vanessa. Tyler begins to narrate in voice over, explaining that the four youth have been best friends all their lives. As we cut to a scene at the skating rink, Tyler explains that things are beginning to change, but the friendship of the four is as strong as ever. “I know it sounds weird, but things stayed this way even as we got older. Our friendships didn’t change, even when other things did.”

Michelle and Vanessa skate to the side of the rink and have a serious conversation. The boys look on, wondering why the girls aren’t skating. Later, Michelle’s older brother Marcus and his girlfriend Julian pick up the kids. When the guys tease the girls about doing more talking than skating, Vanessa tells them to cool it and an awkward silence follows.

The group drops off Tyler at his house, where Tyler’s dad is inside making dinner. When Tyler describes the girls’ strange behavior, his dad points out all the changes they’re going through. When Tyler complains about being the tallest kid in his class, his father reminds him that everyone matures at their own pace. “That’s sort of the cool thing about it. Things happen to everybody in a different way, but the end result is the same...you’re a grown-up.” He also tells his son that the changes are not just physical. Growing up means developing more responsibilities and giving more thought to goals and values. He explains, “What do you value? What kind of friends do you want to have? How will you deal with your new independence? Things like that.”

Later that night, Tyler begins reading a chapter in his health textbook about puberty. As the images in the book become animated, each of the four friends is seen reading a different part. The animation sequences describe specifics about physical changes that take place during puberty for boys and girls. These details include information about when puberty usually begins, the external changes that take place, and the internal developments that transform boys into men and girls into women.

After finishing the chapter, Tyler joins his dad in the kitchen. They have an honest conversation about the slightly embarrassing aspects of puberty including erections and wet dreams. Tyler’s dad assures him that the same things happened to him at that age and that it’s completely normal.

As we cut to Vanessa’s bedroom, we see her reading more of the puberty chapter. Another animated sequence describes menstruation, pregnancy and birth. When her grandmother enters, Vanessa confides that she’s a little disappointed about Michelle getting her period first. Her grandmother reminds her that it’s not a contest and that things happen for everyone when the time is right. “There’s a really wide range of normal... and whatever your time frame is, it’ll be right for you.” As Vanessa agrees, she wonders what Michelle must be feeling.