Adolescents are extremely focused on changes in their bodies and their lives, especially in regard to peer relationships. Sexual behavior becomes increasingly more adult-like.

**Developmentally Appropriate Behaviors:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmentally Appropriate Behaviors</th>
<th>Ways to Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing modesty and a desire for privacy</td>
<td>Respect the growing need for privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of sexual orientation occurs</td>
<td>Be open to discussion of sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous erections, nocturnal emissions (wet dreams), and vaginal lubrication occur</td>
<td>Discuss these normal body functions with your child. Give your child access to educational information about sex, sexuality, and puberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens are defining their comfort level with types of physical affection (i.e. hugs, wrestling, kissing, holding hands, tickling)</td>
<td>Respect teen’s changing attitudes toward physical affection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Potentially Concerning Behaviors**

- Excessive aggressiveness or passiveness
- Indiscriminate sexual activity
- Excessive masturbation to the exclusion of other activities
- Manipulating or forcing others to participate in sexually-oriented activity
- Excessive use of and/or obsession with pornography (i.e. magazines or internet)

**Ways to Respond:**

Although you may feel shocked, panicked, or frightened, your reaction is critical to helping your child.

- Remain Calm
- Stop the behavior
- Initiate a conversation about the behavior
- Seek professional help. The following types of agencies or professionals can assist you:
  - Child Protection Agency
  - Mental Health Professional
  - Law Enforcement
  - Physician or Nurse

*Special thanks to the Larimer Child Advocacy Center for providing the content for this handout.*