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### *Achieving Excellence Together!*

Dear ARIS Parents/Guardians,

Your fifth grader is about to start a health unit on what happens to boys' and girls' during puberty. The puberty unit will teach your child age-appropriate facts about puberty in a gentle, supportive environment. Boys and girls will be separated for these lessons.

You have probably already begun to notice changes in your child's physical appearance and emotional development. Now is an ideal time to present the facts, so that your child is aware of the many changes that accompany the transition from childhood to adolescence.

Our classes will be using a program produced by Human Relations Media Center called the Puberty Workshop and Curriculum. It is a five part video and print series that teaches the basics about human development, the role of hormones, the structure and function of the reproductive system for boys and girls, the onset of new feelings and emotions that are part of growing up, and taking care of personal hygiene. The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards require us to touch base on all of the topics above.

If a child asks a question in class that is better left for parents to answer, we simply respond, "That is an excellent question. Please ask your mom, dad or guardian about that tonight." You should be ready to answer possible follow up questions.

Here are some suggestions on how to approach puberty questions with your child :

- Talk about your own experience.
- Reassure your child that every adult has experienced the same transitions he or she is now going through, or will go through in the next few years.
- Reassure your child that it can sometimes feel awkward to have one's body changing in all kinds of ways, but it all works out just fine.
- If you're uncomfortable with your child's questions, just say, "This might be embarrassing, but it's very important, so let me tell you what happens..."  
Help your child purchase whatever hygiene products he or she needs---deodorant, facial scrub, bras, sanitary products, etc.
- Help your child establish a regular schedule for showering, hair washing and getting clean clothes ready every day.

The key is to reassure your child that the new, grown-up version of his or her body will be a wonderful thing - taller, stronger and ready to take on new responsibilities of being a teenager on the road to adulthood.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's Health and Physical Education Teacher.