



NJDOE Clarification on three standards

	Core Idea	Performance Expectation
By the end of grade 2	Every individual has unique skills and qualities, which can include the activities they enjoy such as how they may dress, their mannerisms, things they like to do.	2.1.2.SSH.2: Discuss the range of ways people express their gender and how gender-role stereotypes may limit behavior.

Students typically begin to develop an understanding of themselves and people around them in elementary school. This is also a time when implicit and explicit messages about gender and identity can become ingrained. For instance, girls may receive messages that math and science are “boy” subjects, and boys may be taught that arts are for girls. Gendered stereotypes are real and can have negative consequences for children’s academic growth, self-worth, and mental health as they get older. These standards are designed to ensure that children understand that everyone has the ability to live their life in the way that suits them, no matter their gender. They should also help children to understand that every person deserves respect, no matter their identity or expression....

....Beginning these conversations in early elementary school will help students develop empathy for a diverse group of people, and to learn about how to show respect to people no matter how they identify.



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	Core Idea	Performance Expectation
By the end of grade 5	Puberty is a time of physical, social, and emotional changes.	2.1.5.PGD.4: Explain common human sexual development and the role of hormones (e.g., romantic and sexual feelings, mood swings, timing of pubertal onset).

Best practice is to introduce students to information about puberty prior to its onset, so that children know what to expect (see, for example, World Health Organization 2021 and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2018). Waiting until after they have begun processing the feelings and emotions associated with puberty may leave children without the tools to appropriately process these changes. This can be a challenging time, where students’ rapid physical and emotional development can put them at risk for bullying, social isolation, and increased need for mental health supports. Instruction in upper elementary school focuses on the physical, emotional, and social changes that students may experience. The focus of instruction is to emphasize to students that developmental changes and feelings are normal.

It is important to note that the *examples* in parenthesis of the performance expectations are not required concepts that must be taught in classes. These are merely examples and school district curricula does not need to include these specific words or concepts in order to meet the Core Ideas or Performance Expectations of these standards.



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	Core Idea	Performance Expectation - summary
By the end of grade 8	There are factors that contribute to making healthy decisions about sex.	2.1.8.SSH.9: Define different types of sex.

Finally, ensuring that students understand that they have agency over their own bodies is foundational to keeping them safe and protecting themselves from pressure, dating violence, and assault. It is important to provide students language for, and understanding of, specific acts, empowering them to stay safe, evaluate risks, make informed decisions, and communicate health issues or injuries if necessary. Further, youth who are unable to appropriately name sexual acts may not be able to accurately report instances of sexual harm or abuse if it occurs.