Ages and Stages of Young Early and Early Adolescent Development

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Goals

• Identify characteristics of typical adolescent development

• Recognize developmentally appropriate strategies to promote youth development
Adolescence

• Developmental transition from child to adult
  • Adolescence varies by culture
  • Critical period of development
  • Adolescent behavior sets stage for adult behaviors

• Socially constructed:
  • 1920’s kids were educated to age 14 and then went into the workforce
  • 1925: child labor laws; extended education and increased jobs for adults

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Doesn’t Occur Over Night!

- Young early adolescents 9 - 11 years
- Early adolescents 12 - 14 years
- Middle adolescents 15 - 17 years
- Late adolescents 18 - 19 years
Integrated Approach
Bio-Psycho-Social Model
Inter-Related Changes

Physical

Brain

Impulsiveness

Cognitive

Social

Teen-Adult Relationship
Physical: The Brain

- Brain quadruples in size from birth to young adulthood\(^2\)
- Surface folds become more complex\(^1\)
- Prefrontal cortex\(^1\)
  - One of last areas of brain to mature\(^3\)
  - More complex and efficient\(^1,2\)
    - Loss of neural connections (pruning)
    - Faster connections
    - Receives more dopamine (mature judgment and impulse control)

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Inter-Related Changes

Physical

Brain

Cognitive

Impulsiveness

Social

Teen-Adult Relationship
Many imply that the prefrontal cortex greatly contributes to making us who we are as people\(^1\)

- Interpretation of facial expressions (fear vs. reason & judgment)
- Impulse control / Self control
- Decision making
- Empathy
- Planning (less flexibility; seek immediate reward)
- Sensitivity to feedback (reward & punishment)

Inter-Related Changes

Physical

Brain

Cognitive

Impulsiveness

Social

Teen-Adult Relationship
An adult’s relationship with a child has the greatest impact on brain development compared to other factors.¹

- Impulsiveness
- Planning
- Decision-making
- Empathy
- Insight

Greater opportunity and challenge

Inter-Related Changes

Physical
- Brain

Cognitive
- Impulsiveness

Social

Teen-Adult Relationship
Young Early Adolescents

Ages 9-11
Early Adolescence

• 9-11 years old (grades 3-5)
• What age stands out?
• What made you happy?
• What bothered you?
Physical Development of Young Early Adolescents

- Growth spurt and more aware of body changes
  - Early developing girls are more vulnerable for at-risk behavior
- Self-esteem levels
- High energy to expend
  - Androgens for boys
- Unusual flexibility

Cognitive Development of Young Early Adolescents

• Concrete thinkers (e.g., right/wrong or great/terrible)²
  • Little to no in-between
• Lower levels of self consciousness¹
• High energy levels and impulsivity¹
• Low empathy for peers¹
• Low inhibition of inappropriate behavior¹
• Lower levels of self regulation (working towards goals)¹

• Experience more peer pressure than children or older youth/adults

• High family involvement
  • Parents viewed as infallible
  • Follow rules out of respect for authority
  • Greater reliance on parents over peers

• Sex cleavage
  • Girls spend time with girls and boys spend time with boys
  • Most feel more comfortable this way

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Strategies for Young Early Adolescent Development

- Make clear rules and stick to them\(^2\)
- Family involvement\(^2\)
- Use activities that involve movement\(^2\)
- Separate by gender\(^1\)
- Short-term consequences more beneficial than long-term consequences\(^1\)


\(^2\)CDC. (2019, November 7). Middle Childhood (9–11 years old). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/middle2.html
Early Adolescence

Ages 12-14
Physical Development of Early Adolescents

- Increase in physical growth\(^1\)
  - Height and weight
  - Issues can cause awkwardness
- Development of primary sex characteristics\(^1\)
  - Appearance of secondary sex characteristics for females and early males
- Changes in sleeping patterns\(^1\)
- High energy and activity levels\(^2\)
- Changes in hormones can start to see an increase in mood swings and short-term memory\(^1\)


Cognitive Development of Early Adolescents

• Concrete thinkers but gradually moving to more abstract/complex thought\textsuperscript{1,2}

• Hormones
  • Increase in moodiness\textsuperscript{3}
  • Rollercoaster of emotions\textsuperscript{1}

• Increase sense in self \textsuperscript{2}
  • Switch between high expectations and lack of confidence

• Increase in inhibitions\textsuperscript{1}


\textsuperscript{2}CDC. (2019, November 7). Young Teens (12-14 years old). Retrieved February 12, 2020, from https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/adolescence.html

Social Development of Early Adolescents

- More concern towards body image
- More interest and influence by a peer group
- Movement towards independence
  - Start to view themselves as grown up and invincible
- Continuing to develop their identity
- An increase in conflict with adults
  - Adults are no longer infallible
  - Parent approval is still important
  - Safe to explore autonomy
- Sex cleavage

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Strategies for Early Adolescent Development

- Reward system
- Family involvement
- Separate by gender
- Have unstructured time
- Respect teen’s opinions
- Honesty
- Older youth as mentors
- Mentorship of younger youth


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Adolescents</th>
<th>Physical Development</th>
<th>Cognitive Development</th>
<th>Social Development</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young Early Adolescents</strong> 9-11 years</td>
<td>Growth spurt - High energy to expand - Unusual Flexibility</td>
<td>Concrete thinkers - High energy levels - Impulsivity - Low levels of self-consciousness - Low levels of self-regulation (working towards goals)</td>
<td>Experience more peer pressure - High family involvement - Sex cleavage</td>
<td>Family involvement - Make clear rules and stick to them - Activities that involve movement - Separate by gender - Short-term consequences not long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Adolescents</strong> 12-14 years</td>
<td>Increase in physical growth - Development of primary sex characteristics - Changes in sleep - High energy and activity levels - Increase in mood swings</td>
<td>Concrete thinkers (gradually moving to more complex) - Hormones - Increase in inhibitions - Increase in sense of self</td>
<td>More concern on body image - Movement towards independence - Developing identity - Sex cleavage - An increase in conflict with adults</td>
<td>Family involvement - Reward system - Separate by gender - Provide unstructured time - Honesty - Respect teen opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Adolescents</strong> 15-17</td>
<td>Stabilization of body changes - Mixed gender relationships - Brain is continuing to change and mature</td>
<td>Abstract thinking - Think towards the future - Struggle for more independence - Teen slang</td>
<td>Beginning of romantic relationships - Mixed gender relationships - Advanced cooperation skills - Influence of drugs, alcohol, and sex - May initiate working outside of home</td>
<td>Important to listen to concerns - Respect privacy - Encourage sleep and exercise - Provide unstructured time - Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late Adolescents</strong> 18-19</td>
<td>Brain continuing to develop - Body appears fully developed</td>
<td>More focused on future - Impulse control - Able to serve as a leader for younger ages</td>
<td>Stronger sense of individuality - Relationships more stable (Friends and romantic) - Reduced conflict with parents</td>
<td>Create positions of leaderships - Role model positions - Community projects - Provide unstructured time</td>
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Listening
Listening

• Critical aspect of positive communication
• Be present and show interest
• Avoid using “I told you so”
• Try to eliminate distractions and actively listen

*Meschke, L. L, Ages and Stages of Adolescent Development: Review and Application [PowerPoint Slides]*
Active listening

• Good eye contact
• Focus
  • Pay attention to what the teen is saying
  • Actually hear the words the teen is using
• Watch body language
• Eliminate distractions
• Be conscious of your tone of voice
• Ask open-ended questions
  • Avoid questions that can be answered with a yes/no

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1Meschke, L. L, Ages and Stages of Adolescent Development: Review and Application [PowerPoint Slides]
Summary

• When interacting with young people keep in mind physical, cognitive, and social development

• Continue to brainstorm
  • There is no one solution that works for all adult-youth relationships

• There will be challenges
  • But teenage years can be an exciting time for BOTH teens and adults

\(^7\text{Meschke, L. L, Ages and Stages of Adolescent Development: Review and Application [PowerPoint Slides]}\)
Activities and Scenarios
- Can be group or individual work
- 4 Scenarios
Scenario 1

• Given the differences in physical, cognitive, and social development across adolescence, which age group most interests you in relation to health promotion?

• Rationalize your answer given the three areas of development and possible programing practices.

Scenario 2

- What age group would benefit most from the strategies listed below? (Justify your answer based on physical, social, and/or cognitive development)
  - Utilize youth as peer leaders and teachers of the adolescent health information.
  - Sex/Health education courses are taught separately for male and female students.
  - Incorporate parent involvement in the adolescent health promotion efforts.
  - Include long-term health challenges related to adolescent behavior choices.

Scenario 3

• You have been tasked with creating an activity to increase early adolescents’ knowledge about how to avoid OUD (opioid use disorder). What biological, cognitive, and social development outcomes should be taken into consideration?

• Provide on strategy that addresses the developmental outcome identified.

You have been given the opportunity to create an activity to educate and engage youth for all levels of adolescents. Think of activities that will best each group (games, group work, etc.)

- Young Early Adolescents
- Early Adolescents
- Middle Adolescents
- Late Adolescents