

Stages of Adolescent Development

Adolescence is a challenging period for both children and their parents. Three stages of adolescence - early, middle, and late, are experienced by most teens, but the age at which each stage is reached varies greatly from child to child. These different rates of maturation are connected to physical development and hormone balance, neither of which the child can control. For this reason, adolescents should be treated as individuals and any guidelines should be adapted to the particular child.

Early Adolescence 12 - 14 years	Middle Adolescence 15 - 17 years	Late Adolescence 18 - 21 years
Rapid body changes as puberty is in full swing. Very moody. Teens wonder if they are going to be normal. They are very sensitive to their changing body and often measure their physical appearance and skills against idealized images. This is especially true of girls, who tend to be less satisfied with their body image and most constantly want to lose weight.	The majority of changes associated with puberty have taken place	Physiological development is generally complete. Greater emotional stability Height may continue to develop for a short time in males.
Begins to show concern for their body as rapid changes occur; shyness, blushing, modesty, and the need for privacy.	Adolescents at this age are very concerned with their physical appearance and believe that others are also concerned. Greater time is invested in grooming, exercising, and experimenting with new images such as makeup and clothing styles. This is done with the purpose of developing a satisfying and realistic body image.	Less concerned about their body as puberty ends
Curiosity about sexual matters begins. Teens begin having new feelings, which are usually centered around their own bodies, rather than developing sexual relationships with the opposite sex. Their sexual curiosity is often expressed by affection for remote and desirable people, such as teen idols, rock band members, and movie stars.	Begins to have increased concerns about their own sexual attractiveness with a movement towards heterosexuality and some have concerns about attraction to same sex. Tenderness is shown toward the opposite sex with frequently changing relationships. Sexuality is a major preoccupation for the middle adolescent.	Develops clear sexual identity. Is very concerned about serious relationships and develops the capacity for tender and sensual love.
Young teens would much rather be with their friends than their family, especially their parents. Realizes parents are not perfect and often points out their faults. Searches for new adults to confide in instead of parents. They often need a "hero" or an adult to look up to today.	Experiences of middle adolescents are broadened by their relationships with adults outside the family. This exposes them to new and unfamiliar situations and lifestyles. These may be frightening to the middle adolescent causing them to begin to worry about the separation process, They often write down their inner thoughts and feelings in a diary.	Adolescents in this age group often turn back to the family and realize that their parents can be their best friends. This is especially true if both the adolescent and parent show mutual respect for each other. The peer group fades in importance and is replaced by a few good friends.
Young adolescents may be quick to disagree with parents and take the opposite view on an issue to test parental values. They will often cast away hobbies or objects that link them to their childhood. Shows parents less attention and is may be rude to them.	Complains that parents interfere with their independence. Teens during this stage experience the most conflict with their parents. There is a lowered opinion of parents and withdrawal from them. Achieving independence from their parents is particularly important to a middle adolescent. Annoying habits, such as refusal to wash, poor manners, vegetarianism, messy rooms, and untidy dress are normal ways in which the middle adolescent tries to become independent. While they still need love and acceptance by their parents, most middle adolescents will hide such needs in an effort to be mature.	Young adult will start to listen to parents advice again. They may even seek out their parents opinion as parents accept adolescent as a young adult.

<p>Teens this age feel invincible as if nothing bad could possibly happen to them; mostly interested in the present. Young teens may start engaging in risky behaviors such as experimenting with smoking, drugs, sex etc..</p>	<p>Most teens this age still feel invincible and that nothing bad could possibly happen to them. This will cause them to engage in high risk behaviors. Experimentation with alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and sexual intercourse increases sharply during this stage.</p>	<p>Teens this age begin to realize their mortality and begin to worry about the future. Some still think they are invincible. There may be less participation in risky behavior Relationships with parents improve for another reason: The adolescent has established a sense of identity and is no longer threatened by seeking their parents' advice or counseling.</p>
<p>Close relationships with peer groups become important at this age. It is important to the young adolescent to fit in and not appear different from his/her peers. Most young teens would rather "hang out" with the same sex friends. Peer group friendships become more intimate with increased sharing of ideas, opinions, and activities. Conformity in behavior and physical appearance (clothes, speech, hair styles, etc.) becomes very important,</p>	<p>Friends mean "everything" to the middle adolescent. Picking good friends is important, and loss of friendships can cause serious depression. Strong emphasis on their peer group and the need for peer approval uses much of the teen's energy. Middle adolescents often confide more in each than with their parents</p>	<p>Peer group less influential. One on one dating becomes more important, and late adolescents may develop a more intimate relationship with someone.</p>
<p>Quick to demonstrate feelthrough behavior (acting-out). They become frustrated and anxious because of lack of experience and inability to cope with certain events and problems. , They have rigid concepts of right and wrong.</p>	<p>Begins better use of speech to express themselves; less acting out of feelings. Increased ability to control their impulses, resolve conflicts, and say no to peer pressure.</p>	<p>Has greater ability to express ideas rather than acting out. Their value system is also changing. Often idealistic. Causes are embraced with conviction. Peer-group relationships are replaced by individual friendships.</p>
<p>Has varying interests in future; some are unrealistic (rock start, astronaut, etc.)</p>	<p>Most begin to think about future vocation.</p>	<p>Begins to think seriously about career goals; Very concerned about the future; World of work becomes very real for those who do not plan for college.</p>
<p>Special athletic, artistic, academic, or musical talents may emerge</p>	<p>Encouragement of any special athletic, artistic, academic, or musical talents may help develop a good self-esteem.</p>	<p>Encouragement of any special athletic, artistic, academic, or musical talents will help develop a good self-esteem.</p>
<p>Vacillation between considerable maturity and babyiness; secretive "clams up at home" talkative but not communicative; often giggly; Usually unwilling to compromise</p>	<p>Have poor concept of cause and effect causing many middle adolescents to be unable to link driving while drinking with auto accidents and sexual intercourse with pregnancy or STD's</p>	<p>Rapidly emerging ability to make independent decisions and to compromise - but they still have a long way to go. Takes pride in their work and some can be self-reliant.</p>

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