

This Ain't Your Mama's Library!

Creating a New Generation of Developmentally Appropriate Library Services for a New Generation of Library Users

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Adolescent Brain Research:

Different regions of the brain regulate different functions. Our thoughts, behaviors, and emotions are the result of how the different parts of the brain work together to process information and memories

Frontal Lobe/ Prefrontal Cortex (REASON)

- Responsible for reasoning, motivation, judgment, problem solving, and rational decision making
- Governs impulsivity, aggression, ability to organize thoughts, and plan for the future
- Controls ability to think abstractly, perform higher level thinking, see consequences of actions
- Undergoes significant changes during adolescence
- Is one of the last areas of the brain to fully develop (not fully developed until early to mid 20s)

As this area of the frontal lobe matures, through experience and practice, teens can reason better, develop more impulse control, and make better judgment. Sometimes we (adults) have to function like a "surrogate" set of frontal lobes (auxiliary problem solver) for teens – can't just tell a teen what to do, but have to set boundaries and help them figure things out for themselves.

Temporal Lobe/Amygdala (EMOTION)

- Responsible for instinctual reaction
- Limbic system regulates emotions and motivations—particularly those related to survival—such as fear, anger, and pleasure
- Feelings of pleasure/reward are very powerful and self-sustaining
- Matures around ages 18-19 (before prefrontal cortex), so teens use it to process a situation and therefore they often overreact, get emotional, erupt for no reason.

How does all this impact adolescence?

- Adolescent brains are far less developed than we previously believed
- Normal adolescent development includes conflict, facing insecurities, testing out different identities, mood swings, self-absorption, etc.

Adolescence is a transitional period during which a child is becoming, but is not yet, an adult. Because of immature brains, adolescents do not handle social pressure, instinctual urges, and other stresses the way adults do. A major part of adolescence is learning how to assess risk and consequences — adolescents are not yet skilled at these tasks. As teens begin to look like us, we often expect them to act like us. But that doesn't work. We need to use this information to create awareness so we are more thoughtful in how we act and react when dealing with teens.\

The 7 Developmental Needs of Teens:

1. Physical Activity

Teens have an amazing amount of energy – use it, and remember to plan activities and programs that give them time to both move and relax

2. Competence and Achievement

Teens are often self-conscious. They need to do things that they can well, and for which they can receive praise and admiration. They need opportunities to prove themselves.

3. Self-Definition

Teens need to explore their world. They need to reflect upon new experiences and have opportunities to explore their ethnic and gender identity.

4. Creative Expression

Teens need to express their feelings and their interests. Plan programs that help them get in touch with their creative side. This is why crafts without too many boundaries are such a big hit with teens.

5. Positive Social Interaction with Peers and Adults

Teens need support, companionship, and constructive criticism. They need to learn to create relationships, both with their peers and with the adults they interact with outside of the school environment or the home.

6. Structure and Clear Limits

Teens to know and understand the rules of the system. They often search for security by testing their limits and boundaries.

7. Meaningful Participation

Teens need opportunities in which to express their social and intellectual skills. Participation allows teens to gain a sense of responsibility and to make meaningful contributions to their community.

The Stages/Milestones of Adolescence:

Early Adolescence (11-13 years of age)

- Increases concern about appearance
- Seeks independence from family
- Displays rebellious/defiant behavior
- Importance of friends increases
- Peer group dominates
- Ego dominates viewing of all issues

Middle Adolescence (14-16 years of age)

- Becomes less self-absorbed
- Makes decisions on own
- Experiments with self image
- Takes risks and seeks out "adventure"
- Becomes sexually aware
- Develops sense of values/morality

Late Adolescence (17-18 years of age)

- Views world idealistically
- Becomes involved with world outside school/home
- Relationships stabilize
- Sees adults as equals
- Seeks to firmly establish independence

How do we go about creating positive relationships with teens?

Make the first impression a positive one.

This is the easy part. Smile. Say hello. Introduce yourself. Ask if you can help in anyway. Let them know they can come to you for help.

Keep your cool.

Teens often take a cue from the adult in the room. If you lose your cool, chances are good they will too.

Remember that this is not personal.

If they call you a name, disrespect you in front of friends, or strike out at you –chances are good that it's not YOU they have a problem with...it's authority as a whole, or posturing for their friends, or maybe they just had a bad day and a bad experience with a parent or teacher.

Lighten up.

Teens make mistakes – grant them a learning curve, as they are learning how to exist in this world, figuring out where they fit, and trying to get by, usually without causing too many waves.

MOST IMPORTANTLY: Remember what it was like to be teen.

Summon up those feelings of insecurity and confusion you once experienced. Put yourself in their shoes, and remember that one's teen years are filled with unexpected emotions, obstacles, and opportunities for growth.

5 core values of quality service to this them:

1. Respecting and Responding to Unique YA Needs
2. Providing Equal Access
3. Empowering Youth Through participation
4. Engaging Teens in Active Collaboration
5. Supporting Healthy Youth Development

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40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets® are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. The list below describes the 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (ages 12-18).

Source: <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/>

Asset Type	Asset Name & Definition	Description
EXTERNAL ASSETS		
Support	Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
	Positive family communication	Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
	Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
	Caring neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.
	Caring school climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
Empowerment	Community values youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
	Youth as resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.
	Service to others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
	Safety	Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.
Boundaries and Expectations	Family boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
	School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.
	Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
	Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
	Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
	High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
Constructive Use of Time	Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
	Youth programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
	Religious community	Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
	Time at home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.
INTERNAL ASSETS		
Commitment to Learning	Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
	School engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.
	Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
	Bonding to school	Young person cares about her or his school.
	Reading for pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
Positive Values	Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.
	Equality and social justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
	Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
	Honesty	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
	Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
	Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
Social Competencies	Planning and decision making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
	Interpersonal competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
	Cultural competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
	Resistance skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
	Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
Positive Identity	Personal power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
	Self-esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
	Sense of purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
	Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.