

INFANCY: BIRTH TO 2 YEARS OLD

AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Growth of motor skills including rolling over, sitting, crawling, standing & walking
- Growing ability to reach, grab, manipulate, release, and throw objects
- Rapid brain growth
- Learning basic self-feeding by the end of infancy



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Uses all senses and feelings to interpret the world around them
- Notices characteristics such as light and dark, colors, shapes, movement, and texture
- Growing ability to distinguish different faces and voices
- Rapid growth in communication from postures, gestures, facial expressions and cries; then babbling and forming one-word and multiple word sentences



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Formation of close bonds with responses and affectionate caregivers
- Likes to look at other faces; smiles, then laughs at others
- Engages in side-by-side play with other infants, but not playing together; joins in activities centered around them
- Use of words to name people, things, needs and desires
- Increasing awareness of ownership and boundaries of self ("Mine")
- Developing their sense of power ("No")



DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

- Great diversity exists in the age and manner in which infants develop motor skills
- Infant's temperaments and physical abilities affect how they explore their world
- Nonverbal communication varies with culture. Facial expressions or eye contact may be encouraged or discouraged
- Infants who have little contact with other infants may act tentative or aggressive when placed in a new family, play group or childcare situations
- Infants and toddlers who spend time in multi-age settings interact differently than those who are accustomed to same-age groups



Key Points for Infancy (Birth to 2 years old)

- Interpersonal relationships directly shape the neurobiological state of the infant's brain, brain structure and function. All of the infant's experiences will either facilitate or impede their development.
- Infants rely on their schedules, so be mindful of schedules and limit or ease disruptions to their routines as much as possible.
- Caregiver feedback is essential to a full picture, provide caregivers an opportunity to keep you informed or air concerns, and encourage Caregiver Reports.



Effective Engagement

- Primarily consists of Observation, look for reciprocation and physical cues. Smile, gesture, take an interest, and engage in favorite playthings. Observe an infant's response as you present colorful /contrasting items for play and start naming objects. Interaction will look like play, but by learning an infant's temperament, you'll be better able to assess concerns.
- Words are new, so be creative in learning how to communicate.
- Start building and be consistent in your relationship!

EARLY CHILDHOOD: 2-5 YEARS OLD

AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Increasing abilities in large motor skills such as running, jumping, and throwing
- Increasing abilities in small motor skills such as building block towers, coloring, using scissors, using a fork and spoon, drawing, writing letters and numbers, and buttoning clothes
- Increasing competence in basic selfcare such as washing hands, bathing and brushing teeth
- Potty training begins!



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Play becomes more interactive and complex, including fantasy
- Ability to draw what they see in simple figures
- Learning colors, letters, numbers; early reading skills
- Able to recount familiar stories and events; understand basic game rules
- Ability to indicate when something is "pretend" or "real"
- Development of concrete thinking and reasoning



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Developing an understanding of gender roles
- Emerging abilities to defer immediate gratification, follow directions, share toys, and take turns
- Increasing ability to play and make friends with other children
- Growing awareness of other people's desires, ideas and beliefs
- Can demonstrate sympathy and verbalize fears
- May or may not easily separate from parents



DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

- Children master coordinated physical skills at different ages.
- Some children enter school with few social experiences while others have been in group child care since infancy.
- Family and cultural backgrounds influence the kinds of skills children master.
- Behavioral challenges can appear and many children in this age range have difficulty following rules, standing quietly in line, sitting still/ waiting their turn



Key Points for Toddler/ Early Childhood (2 to 5 Years Old)

- Young children are very literal and do not process abstractions well. Use concrete examples and simple sentences.
- Young children will use words long before they understand their meaning. Make sure you understand what is meant by any unclear or suspicious terms.
- Young children use terms in their simplest way, usually as it applies to them, i.e. referring to all women as "mommy."
- Young children have difficulties with pronouns, so use the proper nouns as much as possible.
- Avoid negatives, such as "didn't you" statements.
- Always keep in mind that children may provide a response, but you need to assess whether it's actually an answer.
- Young children need longer processing times to give accurate responses, so allow plenty of time for an answer.
- Be on the lookout for language that doesn't match the child's age, to follow up for additional gathering questions and assessment.
- Inconsistencies in storytelling is age appropriate and simply requires clarifying questions.
- Young children struggle with transitions, so be mindful of schedules and limit or ease disruptions to their routines as much as possible.
- Finally, young children may not know if they don't understand something!



Effective Engagement

- Respond to children on their level. Remember kids develop differently, so pay attention to their cognitive and social cues.
- Children will often play-act their experiences using toys, so be observant of their play and unspoken cues.
- Young children may be nervous or afraid and tune out of conversation. Sit down or get down on their level, make eye contact, and use comforting body language to create a safe place for talking.
- Smile, gesture, take an interest, and engage in favorite playthings. Be encouraging and using praise as often as possible.
- Young children don't have story-telling language skills to provide narratives, so information will have to be gathered by very short simple questions.
- Young children don't think in terms of a beginning, middle or end to their story, so you will have to ask gathering questions to frame events.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD: 6-10 YEARS OLD

AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Physical growth continues rapidly; may have early onset of puberty
- Learns to successfully imitate the complex physical movements of others
- Increased participation in organized sports and activities
- Learns to ride a bicycle
- Increasing abilities in art and writing skills



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Development of basic skills in reading, writing, math and other academic subjects
- Thinking process becomes more organized and logical; begins problem solving
- Ability to perform multiple ordered tasks, and follow more complex conversations
- Abstract thinking begins to develop



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Increasing awareness of how one's own abilities compare with their peers
- Time with friends becomes increasingly important
- More time is spent away from home and family
- Increasing responsibilities within the family -household chores
- Can understand and follow rules in games
- Sex education develops
- Gains an understanding of basic moral rules



DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

- Children begin to compare their academic and physical skills to their peers
- Individual differences in learning styles and abilities become more evident
- Many children still struggle to follow directions or sit quietly for long periods
- Difference in temperament and sociability become evident
- Some children may begin to show levels of dysregulation such as fears, depression, or hyper-activity.
- Children continue to need adult help in structuring activities and resolving conflicts.



Key Points for Middle Childhood (6-10 Years Old)

- When dealing with children remember that they are now developing a personality of their own. At this stage children are just starting to develop attributes that distinguish them as individuals.
- When a child starts to develop likes and dislikes, it's important to allow them to teach you how or why these choices and feelings came about.
- Children can be seen as defiant or rebellious when exploring new boundaries or testing limits, so be sure to give them the space to talk about the "why".
- Children are always watching and listening to adults and may respond to events or conversations they don't really understand. Children will use words they don't yet understand, so be prepared to ask clarifying questions in a curious and judgment-free way.
- Children are still developing abstract thinking skills, so follow up with concrete examples to ensure your understanding.



Effective Engagement

- Children at this stage want to feel successful at what they are learning in life, whether it is in school, sports or with friends. Be curious about their development and interests.
- Be encouraging in their daily activities using praise as often as possible.
- Be consistent in your relationship!
- Children at this stage are learning to self-regulate, but may still struggle, so be mindful of schedules and transitions.
- Children at this stage are better able to accept consequences. Offer choices as much as possible and use "If/Then" examples.
- Caregiver feedback is essential to a full picture, provide caregivers an opportunity to keep you informed or air concerns, and encourage Caregiver Reports.

EARLY ADOLESCENCE: 11-13 YEARS OLD

AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- The onset of Puberty
- Significant growth spurt
- Many body changes: body hair, skin and hair become more oily, muscular development, voice changes and genital development



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Emerging capacity to think and reason about abstract ideas
- Academic learning becomes more advanced in specific subject areas
- Believe they are the center of attention; very self-conscious and self-absorbed
- "Invincible" thinking; bad things won't happen to them, so they are risk-takers
- Youth begin to question family and school rules



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Continued interest in peer relationships
- Emerging sexual interests
- Challenges to authority figures (parents, teachers) regarding rules & boundaries
- Wide and frequent mood swings
- Identity formation by exploring clothes, hair styles, music, hobbies, alcohol, and drugs
- Youth start to push limits to assert their independence
- Mixed feelings about separating from parents; one day they want you - the next day they don't



DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

- Puberty can begin during a wide age range (8-13). Youth are often embarrassed about their bodies and concerned they are not developing like their friends
- Academic problems can become greater and students who have frequent failure may become less engaged in school activities
- Adolescents seek out peers whose values are like their own and who will give them recognition and status; Issues of bullying or being bullied become greater
- Curiosity regarding risky behaviors such as sexual exploration, cigarette smoking, even drugs and alcohol



Key Points for Early Adolescence (11-13 Years Old)

- Adolescents at this stage are establishing themselves in the world as independent individuals. For the first time adults may not be treated as the all-knowing, all-giving individuals.
- Adolescents will reject some of the tactics that worked with younger children.
- One of the greatest challenges for adults is how to accept an adolescent's need for independence while reassuring them that their relationships are secure.
- This is the time when strong hormones begin to produce extreme mood swings and leave caregivers confused about what's going on with the adolescent.



Effective Engagement

- Calmly provide rationales and avoids verbal battles. Adolescents at this stage are quite insecure. It is sometimes better to ignore verbal refusals or grumbling.
- Praise is crucial at this stage, especially when they are not being argumentative. The more good things they hear about themselves from the significant people in their lives, the better they will be able to integrate the mixed reviews they might be getting outside of the home.
- Early Adolescents are very sensitive about taking directions. They think they can do anything without help. Even gentle directions are often perceived as criticism or a lack of faith in their abilities.
- Speak to Early Adolescents in ways that expect mature responses from them. Adolescents at this developmental stage can be very sensitive to being seen or treated as "little kids." Because they can now understand cause and effect, things can be explained to them.
- Early Adolescents begin listening to reason if it is presented in a non-judgmental way. They are especially cooperative if you offer choices as much as possible and use "If/Then" examples.

MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE: 14-16 YEARS OLD

AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Girls are gradually reaching physical and sexual maturity
- Boys can continue greater physical growth
- Increased awareness of physical strength, and interest in exercise and health
- Development of specific eating habits (skipping breakfast, eating junk food)



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Increased interest in specific school subjects
- Consideration of career tracks, college, life beyond school
- Thrives on arguments and discussions
- Increasingly able to memorize information, think logically about concepts and examine their own thinking patterns
- Searches for success, importance and things to believe in



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Peer influences are great
- Dating
- Increasing independence: sports, outside of home activities, first jobs, driving
- Still can be moody, sulky; verbal anger directly toward authority figures
- Needs less family interaction; annoyed by younger siblings
- Frequent questioning of existing rules and social norms
- Knows right from wrong; tries to weigh choices and make their own decision



DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

- Middle adolescents can make poor choices regarding peers; their need for acceptance helps them overlook potential risks
- Middle adolescents begin looking at differing educational and career interests
- Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to stay in school until graduation
- Some teens become sexually active, believing they have found "love"
- Allowing teens to help develop family rules and boundaries can be challenging and rewarding

- Key Points for Middle Adolescence (14-16 Years Old)
- Although it has been mentioned that adolescents may seem increasingly adult-like, they will remind you frequently with their behavior that they are not. Teens once again want to do everything on their own, resenting rules, saying "No" to any suggestion that comes from an adult.
 - Middle adolescents have a continuing need for independence.
 - Hormones continue to produce extreme mood swings and leave caregivers confused about what's going on with the adolescent.

- Effective Engagement
- Help adolescents set realistic goals and limits. Youthful enthusiasm may lead them to believe that they can do anything. Adolescents may have new and large goals and will need to learn some new skills that might make their goals possible. Keep these interactions practical and focused on achieving success. That way, you are on their side rather than appearing to impose rules and restrictions.
 - Reason with adolescents, but keep it brief. When you have to present a limit or barrier that the teenager disagrees with, be prepared for arguments and emotional outbursts. Adolescents can be reasoned with, but keep it brief. Talk through consequences. Avoid "lectures". Offer choices as much as possible.
 - Adolescent egos are very fragile, and it is very important to let them save face. Keep in mind that verbal expression of disagreement doesn't mean they won't comply with limits or boundaries.
 - Let adolescents help set the rules and consequences when possible. Their increased cognitive ability can and should be used when deciding on rules and consequences. Since most adolescents understand cause and effect, let them make as many decisions as possible. This increases their sense of control over their environment and themselves, and allows them to balance their time and commitment among family, school, and friends.

LATE ADOLESCENCE: 17-19 YEARS OLD

AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Has essentially completed physical and sexual maturity; physical features are shaped and defined
- Likelihood to act on sexual desires increases
- Engaging in healthy or unhealthy eating, sleeping and exercise habits



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- May feel self-assured and competent, or insecure about their knowledge, skills and abilities
- Seriously thinking about the future: education, career, relationships
- Continues to seek out those who provide knowledge and validation of their beliefs



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Relationships with caregivers range from friendly to hostile
- Has conflicting feelings about dependence vs. independence
- Worries about the future
- Usually has many friends with a wide range of maturity levels
- Actively dating, or may be in a single, romantic relationship; even thinking of marriage; or may still be somewhat uncomfortable with dating relationships



DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

- The more positive adult relationships a youth has in their life (teachers, mentors, coaches), the more successful they are likely to be
- Provide many opportunities for youth to visit educational and work/ career sites
- Accept the need for separation by many older youth, but be ready to listen and talk when needed
- Times of great change can produce great stress and youth will seek comfort in positive and negative ways (caregivers and positive friends vs. negative friends and bad habits)



Key Points for Late Adolescence (17-19 Years Old)

- The stage of Late Adolescence can be one of great change. Often the adolescent feels entitled to make adult-like decisions based solely on their chronological and legal age status, even if they do not have the knowledge or experience to understand how those decisions may impact the rest of their lives.
- When adults try to give advice or direction, the adolescent often perceives this as overbearing, harassing, nagging, or not trusting them.



Effective Engagement

- This stage is a balancing act of allowing independence, yet keeping essential rules intact. We must be open and available when needed, but understand that supporting adults will often be kept at a distance.
- Create "check-in" times where you can ask about their life or their case and allow them to ask questions (or for help). Most of all, just listen. Youth often just want to vent their frustrations, not necessarily have someone solve their problems (until they are ready for help or the problem is critical, then you can be ready to advocate!).
- Also, understand the importance of their relationship choices. The more you know, the better your advice and advocacy will be.