

### **Adolescent development**

Adolescence is a time for emotional, physical, social and cognitive development. Early adolescence begins around the age of 10 and late adolescence ends around the age of 21. During the middle school years, you will begin to notice changes in your child's emotions and behaviors. While the emotions and behaviors tend to be normal for this age, they can also feel challenging. You may observe the following changes:

Personality and identity become more developed.

- Adolescents may become more self-centered as they begin identity development. This can be observed in how they relate to others or how they view themselves.
- They develop more interests, but are more focused on the present than the future.
- They may express themselves and their opinions more as they develop.

Physical development

- Body image and appearance become important.
- Self-esteem may be related to this.

Social development

- Friendships and social connections become more important
- Peer influence occurs and relationships shift and fluctuate.

Independence develops

- They seek more independence away from parents and guardians.
- They may show more emotional separation or begin to test limits.

Cognitive development

- Adolescents think more critically and move away from concrete thinking.
- They may argue their points more as they develop reasoning and logical thinking skills

Parents can find helpful information on adolescent development at the following sites:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

[https://www.aacap.org/Mobile1/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Fact\\_for\\_Family\\_Mobile.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/Mobile1/Families_and_Youth/Fact_for_Family_Mobile.aspx)

ACT for Youth

<http://actforyouth.net/adolescence/>

References:

"Facts for families: Adolescent Development Part 1." American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2015, [www.aacap.org/Mobile1/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Fact\\_for\\_Family\\_Mobile.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/Mobile1/Families_and_Youth/Fact_for_Family_Mobile.aspx)

Spano, Sedra. "Stages of Adolescent Development." ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence, May 2004, [www.actforyouth.net/resources/rf/rf\\_stages\\_0504.pdf](http://www.actforyouth.net/resources/rf/rf_stages_0504.pdf).