

Adolescence is the transition period from childhood to adulthood. It begins with puberty (a period of sexual maturation, a surge of hormones and rapid development).

Physical Development

Primary sex characteristics: body structures that make reproduction possible develop rapidly

Secondary characteristics: non-reproductive sexual characteristics such as female breasts and hips, male voice and body hair

Landmarks of puberty *the sequence is more predictable than timing
Boys - first ejaculation at about 14
Girls - first menstrual period (menarche) at about 13

Mar 22-3:26 PM

Psychological Consequences

Boys - early maturation is usually good (stronger, more athletic, confident, independent)
Girls - initially stressful (teasing, may begin to associate with older adolescents) but positive effects as peers catch up increasing self-confidence

Self-focused reasoning
Many adolescents feel that their experiences are unique, no one understands them, worry about what others think of them, may become critical of parents, society, self
Gradually most achieve Piaget's formal operations with the ability for abstract logic, hypothetical reasoning and the ability to spot hypocrisy and inconsistency in others reasoning.

Mar 22-3:27 PM

Social Development

Kohlberg's Moral Ladder

Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) attempted to describe how we developed morals
Six stages of moral reasoning clustered into three basic levels:

1. **Preconventional morality** (before age 9)
Children obey to either avoid punishment or to gain concrete rewards; If you do the dishes, you can have dessert.
2. **Conventional morality** (by early adolescence)
Morality evolves to a more conventional level that upholds laws simply because they are laws and rules; since they are now able to see others' perspectives. They follow actions that gain social approval or maintain social order; if you steal, everyone will think that you are a thief and untrustworthy.

Mar 22-3:27 PM

3. **Postconventional morality** (may develop from adolescence on)
Those who develop abstract reasoning of formal operational thought follow what affirms people's rights or what one personally perceives as basic ethical principles; Stealing is wrong but Robin Hood is a hero because he stole from the rich for the poor.
(favors one's own goals/ individualism)

As we move up the 'ladder' behavior become less selfish and more caring

Read Eriksons ideas on developing the sense of self/identity. As identity is formed separation from parents occurs. This is followed by the development of the capacity for intimacy (the ability to form close loving relationships). This is the primary developmental task in late adolescence and early adulthood.

Mar 22-3:27 PM

Developing Intimacy

Carol Gilligan is a well known researcher in this area.

->The search for a separate identity describes males more than females.
-> This is seen in early child's play and how adults use conversation.
-> As adults, women often emphasize caring, family ties, keep family together.
-> As adults men often emphasize freedom, self reliance.
-> Difference diminishes by age 50.

Mar 22-3:28 PM

Mar 22-3:28 PM
