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ADOLESCENCE DEVELOPMENT

Follow Jesus. Embrace His Mission. Change the World.

EARLY ADOLESCENCE



- Starting point of adolescence.
- Distinguished from middle and late adolescence. (Steinberg, 1996)
- Beginning of one's growth process into becoming an adult.



ADOLESCENCE

“Transforming Adventist Students Into Campus Ambassadors”

ADOLESCENCE

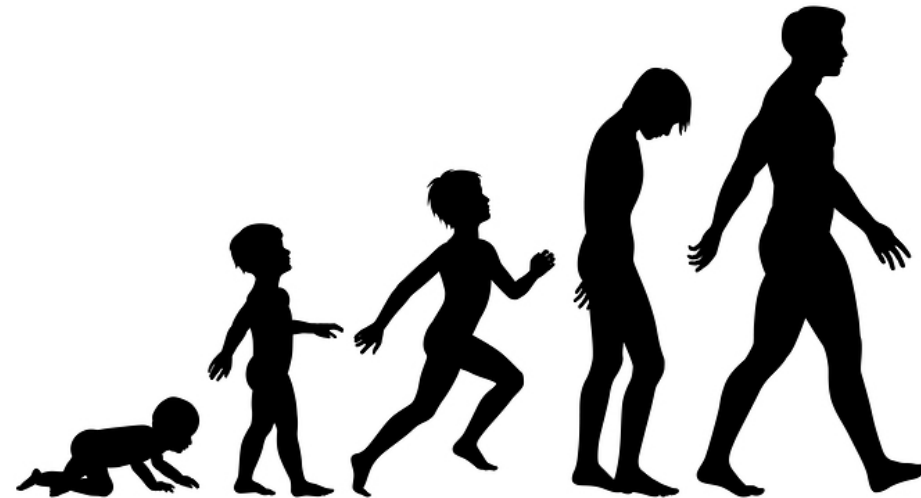


- Between the end of childhood and adulthood or “womanhood” or “manhood” is that “ambiguous time of life we have come to refer to as adolescence”. [[Kaplan, 1984, p. 27](#)]
- “A phase of life beginning in biology and ending in society”. [[Lerner, 2002](#)]
- Much of adolescence is about “a child becoming his or her own unique person”, becoming more independent, autonomous, different and distinct. [[Balswick et al., 2005, p. 178](#)]

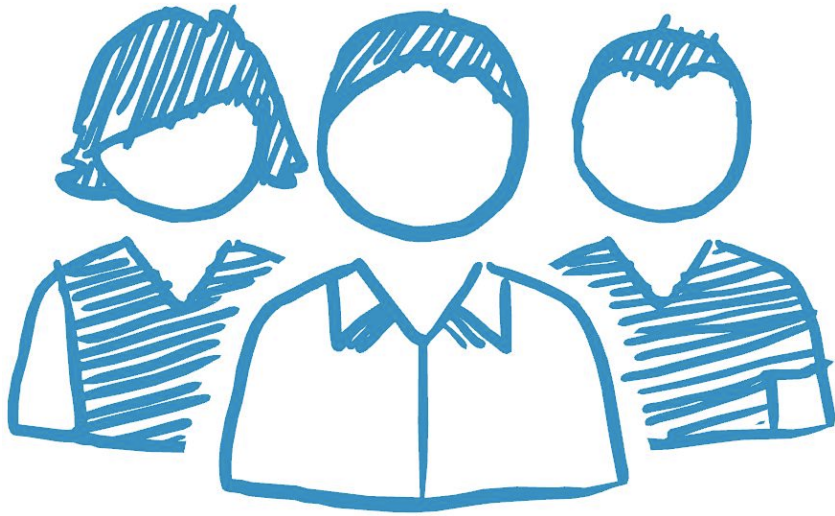
ADOLESCENCE



- Developed by G. Stanley Hall, “the father of adolescent psychology”
- Originated from the Latin word, *Adolescere*
 - Meaning, “to grow up” or “to grow to maturity” or “to grow into adulthood” or “to still growing”
 - Refers to the transition period between childhood and adulthood.

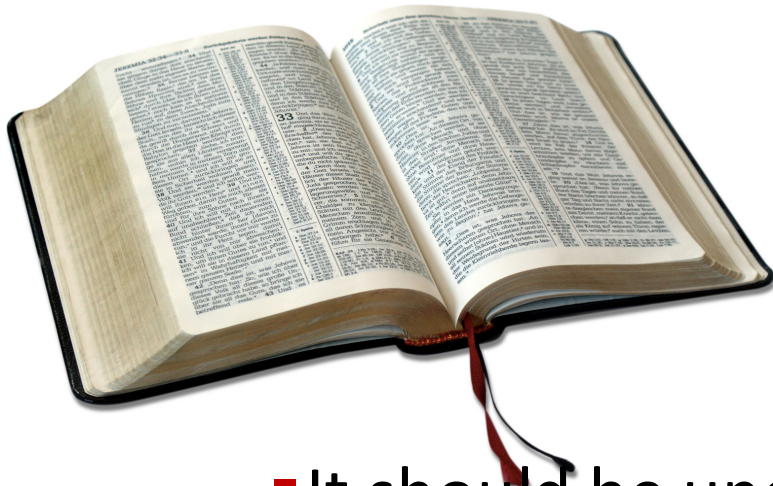


ADOLESCENCE



- By product of a culture, a Western phenomenon, a social construction which does not exist in other cultures or in other, countries outside the West ([Hine, 1999](#); [Kelcourse, 2004](#)).
- The existence of adolescence as a period of development is an invention of society. ([Fasick, 1994](#)).

ADOLESCENCE



[Biblical Context]

- It should be understood as a period when a child begins to exhibit behaviors and characteristics that are more “**adult-like**” than “**childlike**”.
- Impossible to anticipate at what age adult-like behavior and characteristic will show in preadolescents due to culture and society’s role in children’s individual growth.

WHEN DOES EARLY ADOLESCENCE BEGIN?



- In early 1900s, the term *adolescence* referred to “the age span of 13 to 20”, marking the beginning of early adolescence at the age of 13. [[Dayringer, 2000, p. 91](#)]
- Age 12 for boys and 11 for girls. ([Dacey & Travers, 2004](#)).
- Some says, it begins at 10. [[Berger, 1988](#); [Brinthead & Lipka, 2002](#); [McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#)]
- “Consequently, adolescence in the Western world is now recognized as beginning between the ages of 9 and 10”. [[Balswick et al., 2005, p. 168](#)]

WHEN DOES EARLY ADOLESCENCE BEGIN? (CONT...)



- In Australia, according to the Department of Education and Training (Government of Western Australia), early adolescence begins as early as 8 years old making it much more difficult to pinpoint exactly at what age early adolescence really begins.
- This change is due to children starting their puberty much earlier in the twentieth century than 100 years ago due to complex social and biological changes and factors
- [Dusek \(1991\)](#) suggested that age does not define adolescence and stated that adolescence should be defined as “a stage beginning with the onset of puberty” ([p.6](#)).
- [Guest \(2009\)](#) agreed that “Adolescence is a distinctive stage in the lifespan because it is marked by a clear biological change: puberty” (p. 205).
- Puberty is one of the “transition-linked turning points” ([Graber, Brooks-Gunn, & Petersen, 1996](#)) that marks the beginning of early adolescence.

WHEN DOES EARLY ADOLESCENCE BEGIN? (CONT...)



- Even though puberty is one of the “transition-linked turning points” and often used as the beginning of early adolescence, and since adolescence is “the period as being composed of a series of passages—biological, psychological, social, and economic—from immaturity into maturity” ([Steinberg, 1996, p. 6](#)), the beginning of early adolescence should not be determined solely by the start of puberty.
- Identifying the age or event at which early adolescence begins or ends is not a simple matter given that it all depends on the boundaries one uses to define the period ([Dacey & Travers, 2004](#); [Steinberg, 1996](#)). Since society groups young people in educational institutions ([Steinberg, 1996](#)) and the U. S. Department of Education uses the age of 10 as the beginning of early adolescence, for the sake of the project and this paper, I will use the age of 10 as the beginning of early adolescence.

WHEN DOES EARLY ADOLESCENCE END?



- Age 15 [[Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002](#); [Kelcourse, 2004](#)]
- Others have claimed it ends at 14 [[Capps, 2008](#); [McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#); [Steinberg, 1985, 1996](#)].
- Others suggest at 18, to be followed by late adolescence which ends at 23. [[Feldmeier \(2007, p. 109\)](#)].

EARLY ADOLESCENCE BEGINNING & ENDING?



- Determining the beginning and ending of early adolescence is more of a matter of one's opinion than absolute fact as “adolescence has undergone a social, evolutionary transition throughout recorded history” ([Dusek, 1991, p. 6](#)) and has evolved in the Western world and culture over a century.
- For the sake of this presentation, I will use the **age of 15** as the ending of early adolescence.
 - [Brinthaupt and Lipka \(2002\)](#) also used the ages 10 to 15 as the early adolescent ages.



CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE



- Begins from ages 10 to 15 as suggested,
 - But some preadolescents may reach early adolescence earlier than 10 since “adolescence in the Western world is now recognized as beginning between the ages of 9 and 10” ([Balswick et al., 2005, p. 168](#)).
 - “Adolescence is a period of dramatic challenge, one requiring adjustment to changes in the self, family, and peer group...[and] institutional changes as well” ([Lerner, 2000, p. 5](#)).
 - Changes and developments includes:
 - ✓ Biological and physical changes
 - ✓ Physical development
 - ✓ Emotional changes
 - ✓ Academic changes and transitions
 - ✓ Social and sexual and psychological changes
 - ✓ Cognitive development, and
 - ✓ Spiritual development
- [\(Brinthaup & Lipka, 2002; Feldmeier, 2007; McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004\).](#)

CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE



“Early adolescence, ages 10 to 15 years, is a time of drastic and superimposed changes in all spheres of functioning (biological, social, and academic).

It is a time of maximal discontinuity with the past. Therefore, it represents the developmental period of highest stress and challenges but also a time of maximal opportunity. It is a time of heightened susceptibility to influence and there are possibilities for better or for worse....”

[\(Brinthaupt and Lipka, 2002, p. 30\)](#)

CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE



- In early adolescence, children slowly lose their childlike bodies and make strides towards reproductive maturation, going through the process of puberty and faced with the need to revise their sense of self in relation to a body that is sexually maturing ([Dacey & Travers, 2004](#); [Kelcourse, 2004](#); [McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#)).
- Early adolescence is the period in life where biological changes are most intense and evident as the human organism becomes reproductively mature and capable of reproduction. ([Brinthaup & Lipka, 2002](#); [Steinberg, 1996](#))
- Biological changes occur earlier than social or intellectual changes in adolescents, and consequently, “early physical maturers” are often treated as more socially and emotionally mature than they are, which may have lasting effects on personality development. (Dusek, 1991, pp. 10-11).

BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

PUBERTY

- Onset occurs during early adolescence where significant growth spurts happen i.e.
 - ✓ First become noticeably heavier
 - ✓ Grows taller, between 6 and 12 cm in one year. ([Berger, 1988](#); [Brinthaup & Lipka, 2002](#); [McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#); [Steinberg, 1996](#)).
- Timing can vary greatly
 - ✓ Girls reach the onset of *menarche* on average around 13 to 14,
 - ✓ while some girls experience *menarche* as early as 9 ([Brinthaup & Lipka, 2002](#); [Kelcourse, 2004](#)).
 - ✓ Today, society would agree that girls reach the onset of *menarche* much sooner than ever before, on average, around 11 to 12.

BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

PUBERTY

- Activation of hormones responsible for pubertal development which prompts a significant growth spurt and other biological changes resulting in “the onset of fertility and the experience of increased sexual libido” ([Balswick et al. \(2005,p. 171\)](#)).
- Hormonal changes occurring in early adolescence affects changes in behavior commonly associated with adolescence ([Adams, Montemayor, & Gullotta, 1989](#); [Balswick et al., 2005](#); [Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1993](#)).
- Physical changes of puberty are orderly and predictable, but early adolescents often experience them as puzzling and disconcerting, looking and feeling awkward ([McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004, p. 21](#)).
- “Biological changes in adolescence are not a single event but indicate a complex and long-lasting process that physically transforms the child into an adult” ([Brinthaupt and Lipka 2002,p. 31](#)).

Hormonal changes and fluctuations in early adolescence affect adolescents' emotions and make them have mood swings ([McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#)). Early adolescents also go through negative life events and situational changes because they are associated with adolescent moodiness due to hormonal changes ([Berk, 1998](#)). [Brinthaupt and Lipka \(2002\)](#) refer to early adolescence as a “period of social turmoil” ([p.33](#)).

BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- “New research revealed that the brain undergoes important growth and changes during adolescence” contrary to how it “has typically been understood to be completed within the early years of life” (Balswick et al., 2005, p. 172).
- The brain continues to grow and develop during adolescence. Balswick et al. (2005)
- “Neurologists think that the frontal lobes of the brain, the part of the brain responsible for functions such as self-control, judgment, emotional regulation, organization and planning may undergo the most significant amount of change during adolescence” (p. 172).
- Continued development in the front part of the cortex enables adolescents to be able to think about the future, and make rational judgments, have new passions, imagine the future, and temper impulses with thoughts of long-term consequences ([McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#))

ACADEMIC CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS

- Early adolescents go through many school transitions i.e. moving up to elementary school to junior highschool or highschool which places serious stress and anxiety.
- Moving from different classrooms, adolescents find their new environment less personal and their teachers less friendly, less supportive, and less caring than teachers of the previous year in elementary school as their teachers address them as a whole, rather than as small groups or individuals ([Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002](#)).
- When early adolescence begins, there is an increased need for close relationships and friendships as early adolescents become more socially aware. However, the changing school environment can have a negative impact on early adolescents because students do not have the opportunity to form close friendships or relationships with friends or teachers as they did in elementary schools, since they may find themselves in an unfamiliar environment with unfamiliar people ([McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004, p. 397](#)). Therefore, academic problems often become more pronounced during early adolescence and those who encounter frequent failure become less engaged in school activities ([McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#)).

SOCIAL, SEXUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES

- When children reach early adolescence, they go through many social changes. One of the most important changes is how much their friends and peers mean to them, and building relationships with them becomes very important to early adolescents. They spend more time with their friends and peers than being with their families, their parents in particular (Larson & Richards, 1991). Berk (1998) stated, “Puberty is accompanied by psychological distancing between parent and child” (p. 384). Puberty is accompanied by major physical and emotional changes that alter an adolescent’s relationship and patterns of interaction with others (Grenell, 2007). Social relationships outside the family become more important, including romantic and sexual relationships, as early adolescents seek social recognition and approval by others, wanting to belong to a popular group, because they are a major concern for them (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002).

As preadolescents reach adolescence, they have distinct beliefs about themselves in at least eight domains: cognitive competence, behavioral conduct, physical appearance, romantic appeal, regard from peers, relationships with close friends, athletic competence, and job performance (Harter, Whitesell, & Junkin, 1998). Dayringer (2000) stated that before early adolescence, preadolescents are egocentric and self-centered, and when they enter early adolescence, their sense of self-centeredness slowly evolves into an interest in developing relationships with others than with just their parents. They become more aware of themselves as social beings, often imagining that everyone is watching them and judging them and that they are the center of everyone's attention (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004). McDevitt and Ormrod (2004) called this self-centered aspect of the adolescent self-concept as "the imaginary audience" (p. 398).

Another noteworthy phenomenon in early adolescence is called the personal fable, when they “feel invulnerable and immortal, believing that they are not susceptible to the normal dangers of life” (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004, p. 398). This is why early adolescents engage in risky behaviors such as experimenting with drugs, doing dares that compromise their safety, having unprotected sex, and more. There are positive aspects to the personal fable because this sense of invulnerability may encourage young people to venture out into the world and try new things (Bjorklund & Green, 1992; Lapsley, 1993).

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

[Kelcourse \(2004\)](#) stated, “The early adolescent is becoming a person who is capable of increasing level of abstraction (Piaget’s *formal operational thinking*), able to get and ponder and critically reflect on the cognitive construct we call an idea” ([p. 210](#)). There are a number of studies on cognitive development in early adolescence, and the early adolescent’s ability to do abstract thinking (formal operations) was found to be the most significant cognitive development in early adolescence ([Balswick et al., 2005](#); [Berger, 1988](#); [Berk, 1998](#); [Bornstein & Lamb, 1999](#); [Brinthead & Lipka, 2002](#); [Dayringer, 2000](#); [Feldmeier, 2007](#); [Gumbiner, 2003](#); [McDevitt & Ormrod, 2004](#); [Steinberg, 1996](#)).

Jean Piaget, the first theorist recognized what many psychologists now consider the distinguishing feature of adolescent thought, the ability to think abstractly, as “the capacity to think in terms of possibility rather than merely concrete reality ([Inhelder & Piaget, 1958](#))” (p. 339).

[Colarusso \(1992\)](#) pointed out that early adolescents are now able to reflect—critical assessment and logical evaluation—on the ideas and beliefs of others, especially parents and friends, so as to decide what is “me” and what is “not me”.

[Balswick et al. \(2005\)](#) explained abstract thinking in the following,

Abstract thinking includes being able to think hypothetically as well as consider the real and actual, to process information in a sophisticated and complex manner, to consider multiple dimensions of a problem at once, to take other people’s perspective and to reflect on oneself. Such abstract thinking is the cornerstone of Piaget’s formal operational thought, assumed to begin during adolescence. ([p. 172](#))