

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

**SKILLS REQUIRED FOR
SUCCESSFUL PROGRESSION
FROM CHILDHOOD TO
ADULTHOOD**

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Teenage years are a time of growth and development. Major personal changes occur in many areas that the teen must come to terms with. Robert Havighurst, an educator and behavioral scientist, has described what he calls the "Developmental Tasks" that society has come to expect of people at various ages. These tasks need to be completed during the teen years for optimum effect. When these tasks or skills are met successfully, contentment and success follow. If these tasks are not completed, the teen will enter his/her adult years without achieving age appropriate maturity levels.

Every individual matures at a different pace. It is commonly accepted that young women mature at a faster rate than young men in certain areas. Within gender groups, maturation speeds are different depending on several factors. Environmental factors such as family structure, birth order, peer group involvement, stress factors on the individual or family, geographic location, genetic make up, and physical health can have an impact on the rate at which the teen matures.

Havighurst's eight tasks for the teen years include:

- 1. Develop mature relations with peers of both genders.**
Begin to appreciate the roles of both men and women and to work with groups for the common good. The personal emphasis shifts from self to group, thus allowing the selfish nature of the child to step aside for the needs of others.
- 2. Adopt a socially approved gender role.**
In the past this has been easy due to well-defined roles for men and women. People could adopt the appropriate role for their gender. Today, sex roles are not carefully defined, so young people must carefully determine the roles they will adopt.
- 3. Accept your body as it is, and make the most of the body you have.**
Most people do not see themselves as having the perfect body. There are changes most people would make if they could. While you may not be able to change certain features, you can always make the most of your positive features and be proud of what you are. You need to take care of your body to insure your health throughout life.
- 4. Become emotionally independent from parents and other adults.**
As teens learn to analyze alternatives, and make more decisions independently, they become less dependent on parents and other adults. Relations with adults may become more intense as the dependency of childhood is replaced

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with mature friendships. Now, these adults are in the life of a teenager by choice, not by necessity.

5. Prepare for marriage and family life.

First, determine personal feelings about marriage and family. Most people want to marry and raise children. If these roles fit one's personal goals, learn as much about marriage and family living as possible.

6. Select and prepare for a career.

Analyze aptitudes, abilities, interests, and lifestyle standards, then assess careers that will satisfy personal needs and desires in each area. Choose courses and electives that are preparatory for a career that interests you. A part-time job, or volunteer work in a related field may assist you in making a career choice.

7. Adopt priorities in keeping with personal goals and societal expectations.

Reflective questions such as, "Who am I? What do I really want?" will help establish priorities. It is also necessary to analyze those priorities in terms of societal expectations. For instance, having a carefree lifestyle may be a personal priority. As part of such a lifestyle, work may not be a priority; however, to support your carefree existence money is required. It would not be socially acceptable to expect others to support your lifestyle.

8. Adopt socially responsible behavior.

First, determine how socially responsible people behave and model their behavior. When you demonstrate responsible behavior, most people will accept you and you will become a recognized resource in your community.

The following concepts are from Claudia Jewett's book, On Adolescence.

Adolescence is a time of changes in several areas of the young person's life. There are physical, conceptual, psychological and societal differences. During the period of adolescent development, the individual has areas of mastery. It is the task of adolescence to establish the following: (1) Who am I? (2) Who are others? (3) What can I do or be? (4) What do I value?

The concept of recycling occurs during adolescence. The young person is reliving years and phases of development. The 13 to 14-year-old is much like a 1 to 2 -year-old with

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heightened hungers, frequent boredom and impatience. The 14 to 15-year-old is compared to a 2 to 3-year-old with 2-year-old stubbornness and rebellion and 3-year-old compliance, whining and messiness. The 13 to 15-year-olds have the same temper tantrums as 1 to 3-year-olds except that they stand up. The 15 to 16-year-old is like a 4-year-old--mouthy, argumentative and hassling over doing it his/her own way.

At 15, a person has many traits similar to a 5-year-old; an internal balance is established, there is more cooperative play, and it is a time to reach out beyond the family. By 16 to 18 years of age, the young person can sometimes say that parents are okay.

Major concept: The important part of this recycling is that if needs were not satisfied during the 1 to 5-year-old period, there is a second chance to meet these needs. Of course these ages are not rigid and will vary from individual to individual.

Finally, this is a time for putting distance between the adolescent and the immediate family. The peer group is extremely important. Any young person can easily identify members of a specific group within his/her school or neighborhood.

