- Research shows that "Grade configuration is not a predictor of student academic success" (McKenzie et al., 2006).
- "More grade levels per building (i.e. fewer transitions to new schools) is related to higher achievement and improved behavior regardless of SES" (Offenberg, 2001; Wren, 2004).
- "Middle-level schools should 'contain at least three grade levels' and 'be structured to create close, sustained relationships between students and teachers' " (Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs, 2000).
- "Educators believe that at least three years in one setting helps to increase continuity of program, students affiliation with the school and it's staff, and a more personalized learning experience" (Toepfer, 1982 and Viadero, 1993)

Where Does Sixth Grade Belong?

might be of interest to administrators. Before reposting, we update all links and add new resources to the article. We hope you find this archived article to be of value

Should sixth grade be in the middle school? the elementary school? a school all its own?

The trend is clear: A growing number of communities are moving sixth graders out of K-6 elementary schools and into middle schools. Not every parent or every community, however, endorses the move!

In Cupertino, California, more that 200 parents signed a petitiion opposing a plan to convert junior high schools for seventh- and eighth-graders into middle schools that include sixth-graders. "I want my kids to stay young, to grow at their own pace," said Sherrie Karleskind, a parent in Cupertino, California, quoted in a *San Francisco Chronicle* story.

Opposition to putting all sixth-graders in middle school also raised alarm last winter in Austin, Texas. "Many sixth graders are ready for middle school, but many are not," Diane Singleton, a parent, told the *Austin-American Statesman.* Singleton and other parents voiced concern that some sixth-graders were not emotionally mature enough to attend school with older children.

Some parents also fear that their children will get the worst of it in fights with older children who are more physically mature.

Another parent, Debbie Hanna, holds a different point of view. She spoke of her fears when sixth grade was eliminated from her children's school. "It was very difficult for me," she said. But, she continued, "I have come to the conclusion that sixth-graders in middle school is a very age-appropriate grouping. Physically, socially, and emotionally, the average sixth-grade child is more closely aligned to an eighth-grader than to a first-grader." Most educators and researchers would agree that sixth-graders are physically and psychologically closer to seventh- and eighth-graders.

GRADE CONFIGURATIONS

Yet many parents still ask the question: Are our sixth-grade children ready to attend school with seventh- and eighth-graders? In the debate over where sixth grade belongs, it is parents who often prefer that their children remain within the protective walls of an elementary school.

Grade Configuration: Who Goes Where?
What is the best configuration of

Experts say many sixth-graders are ready for middle school and some are not. But, these experts continue, the question of how schools should be configured (K-6 and 7-8; K-5 and 6-8; or yet another configuration) cannot easily be answered.

A report, *Grade Span Configuration: Who Goes Where?*, from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, looked at eight different schools with seven different grade configurations. The report zeroes in on communities' reasons for particular configurations as well as the plusses and minuses of each approach. (See the end of this article for information on how to obtain a copy of the report.)

The report utilizes available research to conclude that the effectiveness of various groupings varies from community to community and school to school. Many factors, the report states, must be considered when determining which grade configuration suits the needs of a community, including:

- number of students;
- transportation spending;
- socioeconomic background of the student population;
- school system goals for student achievement;
- effects on other schools;
- number of transitions for affected students;
- school building design; and
- effects on parent involvement.

The essential viewpoint of the report is that what is effective for one community or in one school situation might not work well for another. Each community has to examine the above factors and other relevant factors to determine what grade configuration will work best.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

How the transition from elementary school to middle school is handled will influence how well students make the transition, whether those students are fifth-graders going into sixth grade or sixth-graders entering seventh. But for fifth-graders entering sixth grade a smooth, helpful transition is especially critical.

What makes the transition to middle school difficult includes these changes:

- academic demands tend to be tougher than in elementary school;
- middle schools tend to be larger than elementary schools;
- students are accountable to different teachers in each subject;

grades for K-12 schooling? Is it an elementary school, followed by a middle school, followed by a four-year high school? Or are there advantages to a K-8 school, followed by a four-year high school? Which middle-school configuration better promotes social adjustment?...

A Smooth Transition Can Mean a Smooth Year
Gone are the days -- thankfully -- when students were dropped into middle or high school with a schedule and left to self-navigate their way into the next level of academia. Sending and receiving schools are working harder and more cooperatively to help students make the passage from one school to another. Included: Educators share their thoughts about easing transitions.

Be sure to check out our A-to-Z Glossary of School Issues.

- many students are experiencing the onset of puberty and awareness of the opposite sex;
- often students leave behind one group of friends to mix with a new group;
- students move from being the most oldest students in their environment to being the youngest; and
- behavioral standards are different than among elementary students.

"Kids go through more changes between the ages of 10 and 14 than at any other time of their lives, other than the first 18 months," stated Sue Swaim, executive director of the Columbus, Ohio-based National Middle School Association, in a *Christian Science Monitor* news story. "What we're seeing is more schools developing a structured transition program for the students and parents after seeing the success of it in other schools."

To help students make the big switch with fewer problems, many middle schools launch the transition beginning in spring of the previous school year. In March, many middle school principals meet with sixth graders in the elementary schools that will send students to the middle schools. In August, a more nitty-gritty orientation occurs at the middle school, where students can use the day to find their lockers and meet with teachers and counselors.

Many middle schools also treat sixth-graders a bit differently from seventh- and eighth-graders, having them eat lunch separately and work with two or three different teachers instead of the five or six teachers teaching each seventh- and eighth-grader.

TRANSITION FOR PARENTS

Sometimes, experts say, parents have more of a problem than their child with the child's transition to middle school. Yet parents can play a key role in their child's period of change. The following suggestions for parents come from the National Association of Secondary School Principals:

- meet the school teachers, principal, counselors, and others who work with their children;
- help their children navigate around the new school; a larger building may be intimidating at first;
- make sure their children understand that they are held responsible for knowing school rules and following them;
- help their children realize that inappropriate actions in school have consequences;
- know their children's friends, and help them choose friends intelligently;
- foster engagement in school activities;
- make sure homework is being completed.

Yet there is more to middle-school adjustment than appropriate parental involvement. A top-notch middle school, experts say, offers incoming students more than just an orientation day in August or September. As Marian White-Hood, principal of Kettering Middle School in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, told the [set ITAL] Christian Science Monitor: "Getting students properly adjusted requires constant monitoring throughout the year."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Making the Transition from Fifth to Sixth Grade

For ideas on making the transition from elementary to middle school, this essay offers a

number of solid suggestions, from having fifth-graders spend a few hours at the middle school while eighth-graders are off on their field day to identifying students who may need extra help in sixth grade and having guidance counselors meet with them frequently throughout their first year in middle school.

Middle School Malaise
An analysis from the American Psychological Association examining "middle school malaise," or problems some students have in the transition from elementary to middle school. The paper discusses which students do the best and what parents can do to help.

Welcome to Sixth Grade
Middle school is a time of many changes for both students and their parents. The staff at Aplington-Parkersburg Middle School (Iowa) provide a structure to make the transition to middle school as smooth as possible.

Grade 5 in the Middle School
Most studies of school-transition target grade 6 for the sample population and do not address the appropriateness of grade 5's inclusion in elementary or middle schools. Aside from district considerations of building capacities, zoning, and enrollments, research centers on the match between the developmental status of fifth/sixth graders and the setting of the host school, the effects of transition on the students, and school programs to familiarize the student with the new school environment.

Supporting Students in Their Transition to Middle School
This position paper was jointly sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Middle School Association (NMSA).

The Transition to Middle School (ERIC Digest)
This Digest presents a brief overview of some of the issues involved in the transition from elementary to middle school and provides suggestions for transition programs and activities.

Transition to Middle School
Most schools provide some sort of transition program for students in their final year of elementary school consisting of a parent/student night, followed by a tour of the school for students sometime in the spring. These are excellent activities, but they do not address the questions and anxieties these students have.

Article by Sharon Cromwell
Education World®

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13-Year-Old Child Development Milestones

Your child's growth and development at age 13

By Amy Morin, LCSW Medically reviewed by Joel Forman, MD Updated on June 24, 2019

When your child shifts from being a 12-year-old kid to a 13-year-old adolescent, you're likely to see some interesting changes. The mental shift kids make as they begin to see themselves as teenagers, combined with the physical changes their bodies experience, can make early adolescence an interesting time.

Your 13-year-old will be sensitive to their changing bodies and take notice of the changes in their peers. Your teen may worry that they are different or may wonder if they are abnormal because they aren't growing body hair or because they haven't hit a growth spurt yet.

This can be hard for parents because your young teen's worries aren't always sensible, but they are real worries to your teen. Assure your teen that everyone develops at different rates and that it's normal for some teens to mature faster than others.

Illustration by Emily Roberts, Verywell

Physical Development

Most 13-year-old teens are dealing with the emotional and physical changes that accompany puberty. It's normal for your teen to feel uncertain, moody, sensitive, and self-conscious at times. And during this time, it becomes more important than ever to fit in with peers.

Boys who physically mature the earliest may be more confident. But girls who mature earlier are often more self-conscious of their bodies.

They grow taller, gain weight, and become physically mature. Girls become fully physically developed during middle adolescence and boys reach physical maturity during late adolescence.

Their rapidly changing physical appearance can lead to self-conscious feelings. Sometimes teens struggle with appearance-related issues, such as acne or being overweight. Body image issues, such as eating disorders, may also develop during the teen years.

Key Milestones

- Experiences rapid changes in physical appearance
- Changes in appearance happen at different rates which can create anxiety for many your people
- Exhibit a wide range of growth patterns between genders

Parenting Tip

It's important to talk to your teen about body image and how they feel about the changes they're experiencing.

Emotional Development

Thirteen-year-olds are dealing with hormonal shifts that can contribute to mood swings. Add school stress or peer problems and their moods may seem to shift from minute to minute.

Your young teen is starting on the road to becoming an independent young adult who "has a say" over their space, their body, and their need for private conversations with their friends.

At this age, most teens feel like the world revolves around them. They might think everyone is staring at them or they may assume everyone else's behavior is somehow because of them (for example, thinking their friend didn't text back because they are mad rather than assuming the friend is busy).

Most 13-year-olds experience great fluctuations in their self-esteem. They may feel good about themselves one day and feel extremely inadequate another.

They also tend to seek affirmation from adults that they're on the right track, even though they claim to want to do things on their own.

Key Milestones

- Concerned about physical development and appearance
- See themselves as always being center stage
- Strive for independence yet want and need adult approval

Parenting Tip

While mood swings are usually normal, it's important to keep an eye out for mental health problems. Depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues may emerge during this time.

Social Development

As they desire increased independence from their parents, 13-year-olds rely more on friendships. They confide in their peers more and want to spend more time with friends than family.

Peer pressure can be an issue as teens often want to experience a sense of belonging. Teens often switch peers groups throughout the teen years as their interests shift.

Rebellious behavior is sometimes common during the teen years. A teen may develop different personas or go through various phases. Sometimes teens try to shock their parents or want to dress or wear their hair in new ways to express themselves.

Dating and romantic relationships often become important during the early teen years. It's normal for teens to develop sexual interests.

Key Milestones

- Seeks trust and acceptance from peers
- Questions authority figures
- Tends to reject solutions offered by parents

Parenting Tip

Be direct with your child when talking about sensitive issues, like drinking, smoking, drugs, and sex. In order for your teen to see you as credible, acknowledge the slight upside that tempts teens to try these things. Say something like, "Kids usually think they're more fun when they're drinking alcohol," and then explain the consequences.

Cognitive Development

While 13-year-olds have fairly good problem-solving skills, they also have difficulty thinking about the future.

They may also struggle to think about the consequences of their behavior before they act. This has to do with different parts of their brains developing at slightly different rates.

It's common for 13-year-olds to think they're immune from anything bad happening to them. As a result, they may be more likely to engage in risky behavior.

Thirteen-year-olds develop the ability to think abstractly. Instead of only thinking in terms of tangible objects, they begin to understand concepts such as faith and trust.

They may also think they're unique and think no one understands them. As they mature, they begin to develop a better understanding of the world and how other people perceive them.

Speech & Language

Most 13-year-olds communicate similarly to adults. They comprehend abstract language, such as figurative language and metaphors. They may become less literal and more figurative.

They may become concerned with moral issues as they are able to grasp abstract concepts. They are likely to recognize that breaking rules under certain conditions isn't always wrong.

Play

While most 13-year-olds have given up their childhood toys, they still play with their friends in a variety of ways. From slumber parties and camping out in the backyard to board games and sports activities, most 13-year-olds want to be active with their friends.

Having fun with peers can be an important social outlet. It can also be instrumental in helping your teen manage stress.

Key Milestones

- Developing skills in the use of logic
- Can solve problems that have more than one variable
- Find justice and equality to be important issues

Parenting Tip

Talk to your teen about the many ways you might solve a single problem. Encourage your child to brainstorm several solutions to a problem before taking action. This can improve your child's judgment and give them opportunities to practice their critical thinking skills.

Other Milestones

By this age, many teens have their own social media accounts and they're able to communicate with their friends privately. For some teens, this provides a sense of relief as they often talk to their friends in a slightly different manner than they speak to their parents.

For other 13-year-olds, electronic communication means added pressure. They may feel compelled to join in conversations to be accepted by their peers or they may feel as though their friends are having more fun than they are when they view social media pictures.

When to Be Concerned

While all children develop at slightly different rates, it's important to keep an eye on how your child is progressing.

> Some emotional issues or mental health problems may emerge in the early teen years and it's important to see professional help if you see any red flags.

If your 13-year-old refuses to shower or has hygiene issues, it could be a cause for concern. By this age, teens should be able to care for their bodies without much prompting.

If your child is struggling academically, it could also be a cause for concern. Sometimes, learning disabilities or ADHD don't become apparent until the teen years. Talk to your child's teachers or discuss the issue with your child's pediatrician if you are concerned.

A Word From Verywell

The teenage years can be a bit of a rollercoaster, for both you and your teen. But if you lay the groundwork now—by giving your teen the skills he needs to make good decisions—the teen years don't have to be tumultuous.

When your teen makes mistakes, look at it as an opportunity to help them sharpen their skills. If they repeatedly make the same mistakes, or struggle with specific issues, seek professional help.

Read Next: How to Raise a Happy, Healthy Teenager

Article Sources

Verywell Family uses only high-quality sources, including peer-reviewed studies, to support the facts within our articles. Read our editorial policy to learn more about how we fact-check and keep our content accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

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14-Year-Old Child Development Milestones

By Amy Morin, LCSW Medically reviewed by Joel Forman, MD Updated on May 13, 2019

Fourteen can be a pivotal age. While some 14-year-olds start heading down the path toward becoming a healthy responsible adult, others begin to rebel and get mixed up with the wrong crowd. It's an important time to ensure you're giving your child plenty of guidance and helping your child gain the skills he needs for a successful future.

Illustration by Emily Roberts, Verywell

Physical Development

Most 14-year-olds have hit puberty by age 14. Both boys and girls tend to have pubic and underarm hair by this point.

Most females have started their menstrual periods and have experienced breast development. Boys have experienced enlargement of the testicles and penis enlargement. Some of them may experience nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) for the first time.

Their changing bodies can be a source of pride or a cause for concern. Some teens may be proud of their adult-like bodies while others may be embarrassed or confused by the changes they are experiencing.

Boys who hit puberty later may be more likely to feel bad about themselves. They may experience body image issues as they are likely to compare themselves to their peers.

Girls may experience body image issues as well. It's common for them to be concerned about their weight and appearance.

Key Milestones

- May grow several inches in several months followed by a period of very slow growth
- Changes in appearance occur at different rates which can be cause for great concern
- Exhibit a wide range of sexual maturity between genders and within gender groups

Parenting Tip

Your 14-year-old may be hungry almost all the time. Stock the house with healthy snacks and serve nutritious meals. Reduce body image issues by talking about health, rather than weight.

Emotional Development

Fourteen-year-old teens often start to grow convinced they know everything. So don't be surprised if your teen wants to argue with you about everything or if he insists you have no idea what you're talking about.

Most teens experience great fluctuations in their self-esteem. They may feel good about themselves one day and feel extremely inadequate another.

Although mood swings can still be common at age 14, they are usually less intense than in the past. Many 14-year-olds become more easy-going as they mature.

They have usually developed the skills they need to deal with uncomfortable emotions in healthy ways. They may rely on their own strategies, like journaling or listening to music, or they may turn to their friends for support.

It's normal for 14-year-olds to be embarrassed by their parents. They may not want to be seen being dropped off by their parents to a dance or sporting event. Or, they may insist their parents

embarrass them when they meet friends.

Key Milestones

- Generally happy and easy-going
- Recognizes own strengths and weaknesses
- Is embarrassed by parents

Parenting Tip

It's likely your 14-year-old will insist your rules are too strict or that you expect too much from them. Make it clear that they has some control over their privileges. Assign chores and expect them to do their school work. Make their privileges contingent on getting things done.

Social Development

It's normal for 14-year-olds to stop confiding in their parents. Instead, they're more likely to turn to their friends and seek advice from their peers. For many families, increased independence means a major shift in the parent/child relationship.

Fourteen-year-olds want to be accepted by their high school peers. Individuality is not as important as being part of the group.

Your teen may get anxious if they doesn't feel like they fit in. It could take a toll on their self-confidence and they may be at-risk of seeking support from unhealthy people if they doesn't find a healthy place to belong.

Many 14-year-olds develop an interest in forming romantic relationships. They may have crushes or they may consider themselves in a relationship.

Key Milestones

- Strong interest in romantic relationships
- Anxious to be liked
- Has a large social circle including friends of both sexes

Parenting Tip

Show an interest in your teen's activities. Ask questions that go beyond "yes" or "no" to open the door to more in-depth conversations. Rather than ask, "How was your day?" ask "What was the best part of your day?" and inquire about your teen's opinions and interests.

Cognitive Development

Most 14-year-olds find justice and equality to be important issues. They are ready for long-term experiences and their interests are less fleeting.

They often want to explore the world beyond their own community, and are interested in learning what exists beyond their school, hometown, or country.

Speech & Language

Your 14-year-old may seem less communicative at times. But this can be part of normal development as your teen begins solving problems and dealing with emotions on their own.

Your teen may prefer to stay in electronic communication with friends. Texting and social media are often very important at this age.

Most 14-year-olds make their preferences known. They often have favorite books and depending on how much they read, they can have extensive vocabularies.

Play

Play to a 14-year-old might include anything from playing video games to watching sporting events with friends. They are likely to enjoy making plans with their friends and they may spend time together working on goal-oriented projects with their friends.

Key Milestones

- Focuses on the future develops
- Starts to set personal goals
- May challenge the assumptions and solutions presented by adults

Parenting Tip

Respect your teen's opinions even when you don't agree with them. Show interest in learning more about what has shaped their ideas and why they have certain beliefs. Teens often just want to know that someone is listening to them.

Other Milestones

Many 14-year-olds show a strong interest in earning money but they're usually not able to obtain formal employment. You might assist your teen in finding odd jobs that help him earn some spending money, such as mowing lawns or babysitting.

By age 14, teens should be able to perform all of the basic chores you do around the house. You might consider paying your teen to do the jobs you might pay someone else to do, like mow the lawn or wash the car. Paying your teen can be a good way to start teaching your teen valuable life lessons about money.

When to Be Concerned

All teens develop at slightly different rates. So while some 14-year-olds will look and act more like adults, others may still be quite child-like. Usually, there's no cause for concern as kids will all catch up to one another in the near future.

If however, you are concerned about your teen's immaturity, it's important to talk to your child's physician. A physician can rule out any physical or mental health issues and may refer your child to a specialist if necessary.

Eating disorders can develop during the teen years as well. Keep an eye on your teen's eating habits. Skipping meals, purging, and crash diets are red flags that could signal your teen needs professional help.

A Word From Verywell

Age 14 is a great time to make sure your teen has the skills they need to become an adult. Get purposeful about teaching them life skills and give them opportunities to practice those skills on their own.

Keep in mind that raising a 14-year-old can be a little tumultuous at times and sometimes, you might feel like you've taken one step forward and two steps backward in terms of your teen's progress. But, overall, your teen should be showing they can handle greater responsibility as they approach age 15.

Read Next: How to Raise a Happy, Healthy Teenager

Article Sources

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15-Year-Old Child Development Milestones

Your child's growth and development at age 15

By Amy Morin, LCSW Medically reviewed by Joel Forman, MD Updated on July 27, 2019

The years between 15 and 18 can be instrumental in helping your teen mature and gain the skills she needs to become a responsible adult.

There's a good chance, however, that your 15-year-old will think she's ready to take on the world now. And she may insist she already knows everything. That know-it-all attitude with a hint of rebellion can be par for the course for 15-year-olds.

Understanding your teen's development can be instrumental to successful parenting during mid-adolescence.

Illustration by Emily Roberts, Verywell

Physical Development

Most girls have reached their full height by age 15. Many of them are insecure about their appearance, especially their weight. Nearly half of all high school girls diet to lose weight.

Fifteen-year-old boys may continue growing for another year or two. Usually, around this age, their voices become deeper and they may begin to grow facial hair. They gain muscle rapidly at this age.

Key Milestones

- Boys' voices grow deeper
- Boys begin to grow facial hair
- Girls have reached their full height

Parenting Tip

Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of eating disorders and other mental health problems. If you suspect your child has an eating disorder, body image issues, or mental illness, seek professional help.

Emotional Development

At the age of 15, teens start to think about what it would be like to live out on their own. While some teens may be imagining college, others may be thinking about getting their own apartment.

Your 15-year-old may become stressed about grades, relationships, and other teenage issues. And she may be very concerned with her appearance.

Most teens begin to engage in less conflict with their parents around age 15. They show more independence from their parents while also showing a greater respect for the rules when privileges are contingent on their behavior.

Many 15-year-olds are dealing with a fair amount of stress. Some of them may struggle academically while others are dealing with romantic issues and perhaps even their first sexual experiences.

Key Milestones

- Go through less conflict with parents

- Show increased independence from parents
- Exhibit greater emotional regulation skills

Parenting Tip

Make your teen's privileges contingent on his ability to be responsible. Tell him he can earn freedom by showing you that he's able to handle more independence.

Social Development

Friends are very important to 15-year-olds. And it's important to know who your teen is spending time with because they often experiment with different personas and activities based on what their peers are doing.

By age 15, many teens have a strong interest in romantic relationships. While some relationships may mostly evolve over social media or text message, others will want to spend a great deal of time with their romantic interest.

Most 15-year-olds are aware of their sexuality and show a budding interest in sexual activity.

Don't be alarmed if your teen wants to spend a lot of time in his room by himself. Unless you see warning signs of mental health problems, an increased desire for privacy can be normal.

Key Milestones

- Have an interest in romantic relationships
- Have a deeper capacity for caring and developing more intimate relationships
- May struggle with peer pressure

Parenting Tips

At this age, most teens still struggle a bit with maintaining healthy relationships, with peers and in their budding romantic interests. Make sure your teen is hanging out with healthy people and establish clear dating rules.

Cognitive Development

It's normal for teens to be rather argumentative at this stage. No matter what you say, your teen may want to debate the opposite point of view. That's your teen's way of asserting his independence and showing off the fact that he can see viewpoints from another angle.

Many teens begin thinking more about their future during this time. They're usually able to start identifying potential career aspirations or college plans.

Most 15-year-olds are able to give reasons for their own choices, including what was right or wrong.

Speech & Language

Some teens at this age can talk to their friends all evening, despite seeing them all day at school. Yet when asked about their day by their parents, they may have very little to say.

Most 15-year-olds often prefer to communicate via text message and social media. They may find blogging or writing to be a helpful way to express themselves.

Reading and social experiences play a big role in a teen's language and vocabulary development.

Most 15-year-olds can communicate in an adult-like fashion and are able to hold appropriate conversations. They tell more involved stories and are able to use more sophisticated communication skills.

Play

Most 15-year-olds have specific interests or hobbies that they enjoy. Whether they like video games, sports, music, or movies, they can identify activities that bring them pleasure.

While some of them are content to be alone, they often prefer to spend time with friends. Their time together may range from playing video games together to going to the movies.

Key Milestones

- Show more concern about their future
- Exhibit more defined work habits
- Better able to explain the reasons for their choices

Parenting Tip

Show an interest in your teen's activities. Step inside your teen's world to learn about his favorite video games or to talk about the sports he enjoys. Your teen will appreciate your interest in learning about the things he enjoys.

Other Milestones

For many teens, 15 is the age where they get to take driver's education. Obtaining a learner's permit can be a big deal. And of course, it's a big responsibility.

Make sure your teen is ready to handle the rules of the road before allowing him to drive a vehicle. If he can't be responsible when it comes to chores or homework, he may be showing you he's not yet ready to handle the responsibility of driving a car.

Not all 15-year-olds are ready to drive. So think carefully about whether your child is emotionally and socially mature enough to get behind the wheel.

When to Be Concerned

Pay attention to any changes in your teen's mood or behavior. Difficulty sleeping, refusal to attend school, changes in appetite, or loss of interest in activities can be signs of a mental health issue.

Talk to your teen about her mood. Ask if she has ever experienced suicidal thoughts, particularly if she seems sad or depressed. Let her know you care about her and get professional help if she says she has been thinking about suicide.

If you are concerned about your teen's development, talk to the doctor. If your child's doctor has concerns, your child may be referred to a mental health provider for further evaluation.

A Word From Verywell

Fifteen can be a big year for teens. You're likely to see a big difference between your child's 15th birthday and his 16th birthday.

And while you might be thinking he's not ready for the rigors of the real world, keep in mind you've two years to prepare him for life after high school. Pay attention to the skill deficits that you see and proactively teach him strategies that will serve him well in his adult life.

Read Next: How to Raise a Happy, Healthy Teenager

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Additional Reading

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- Parents & Teachers: Teen Growth & Development, Years 15 to 17. California Teen Health | Teen Health Information.
- The Growing Child: Adolescent (13 to 18 Years). Stanford Children's Health - Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford.
- Normal Development: Middle Adolescence. Wayne State University Physician Group.
- Teenagers (15-17 years of age). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published October 24, 2017.