

# Toddlers and teenagers

Business



Human development is a process that begins from the time of birth to adulthood.

Before the start of the twentieth century, world societies paid very little attention to the development stages of children and adolescents. This included their cognitive development, language use and their general physical growth. Interest in the study of child development erupted at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even though all children and teenagers share many developmental needs and objectives, such as the need to develop trust in their parents, peers and the world at large, their specific ages and developmental stages are major factors that determine their reactions to different situations. Therefore, it is very important for parents to understand the developmental stages of their children and teenagers in order to understand their behaviors and the kind of support that they require.

A toddler may be defined as a young child between the infant stage and the childhood stage, who has just begun to walk. This stage usually commences between the ages of twelve and eighteen months and extends to two years. During this stage, a child begins to learn about social roles and the use of language, and also starts developing motor skills. On the other hand, a teenager is a young adult between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. Puberty is often associated with the teenage stage and more specifically, with the beginning of the adolescence stage.

However, the adolescence stage often extends past the teenage years. According to existing evidence, just as the parenting of toddlers seems to be

a very challenging task for many parents, the parenting of adolescents may also be an exceedingly frustrating task that may give many parents a very hard time. Researchers agree that teenagers need enough support at the ages of thirteen and fourteen years just as toddlers do because these are very critical stages where both of them experience cognitive and physical changes (Bruner, 1966). According to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, toddlers fall within a stage referred to as the pre-operational stage. During this stage, the child's intelligence is exhibited through the use of symbols and language.

This is also the stage where the imagination and the memory of the child begin to develop. However, the thinking of the child is egocentric. In addition, it is done in a non-logical and non-reversible manner. On the other hand, this theory states that adolescents fall within the formal operational stage, and that their intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols which are associated with abstract concepts. In the early stages of adolescence, the teens are also egocentric in their thinking.

It is quite clear from Piaget's theory that there is a relationship between a child's behavior and goals at the pre-operational stage and during the formal operational stage and consequently, they need similar amounts of support and guidance from their parents so as to enhance their development (Piaget, 1972). During the toddling stage, the child quickly learns to understand what is being said and what is going on within its environment. The child is also undergoing physical development and changes which bring a sense of independence in it. Nevertheless, the child is still too young and therefore relies so much on its parents. Toddlers usually become upset when the

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parents who take care of them depart because they have developed a strong attachment with them.

This departure, even if it is for a few hours, often makes them to undergo a lot of stress. In addition, they need a lot of loving attention and stimulation during this stage. Any significant changes in routine and parental conflicts may create a lot of confusion and pain in them. Separation of their parents often makes them upset and confused and this may affect their general development. It is important for parents to learn to cope up with the inquisitive and highly charged minds of their children during this stage, and their exceedingly unreasonable demands and highly irritating behaviors. Apart from that, they should learn to understand their children's atrocious demands and temperaments that have no reasoning at all.

As aforementioned, the child is so much attached to the parents during this stage and if there is separation from them, it forms a very strong attachment to other main caregivers. Maintaining a very strong bond with both parents is therefore very significant for toddlers (Piaget, 1972). On the other hand, during the adolescence stage and more so at the ages of thirteen and fourteen, teenagers behave almost in the same way as toddlers. At these ages, teenagers start becoming wild and rebellious and most of them start becoming moody. This is the stage where teenagers also seek to become independent and so they start pulling away from their parents. Nevertheless, they require a lot of parental support and guidance because they are in the process of identity formation.

Researchers have established that continued parental conflict may affect the development of toddlers and adolescents very significantly. Parents may assume that toddlers are very young children who do not understand anything because they do not understand the arguments that they hear, but in reality, they do understand these arguments because they are able to feel the surrounding emotions very adequately. It is therefore important that parents keep their environments very calm and exhibit positive attitudes in the presence of their children (Bruner, 1966). On the other hand, teenagers view both the positive qualities of their parents as well as their faults and limitations and this creates a very big impact in their lives. For instance, a separation or a divorce may make teenagers view their parents negatively.

Nevertheless, they have access to greater amounts of resources to deal with these challenges as compared to toddlers. When parents separate or divorce, teenagers often feel very disappointed because their parents failed to maintain the family together. They might end up forming a negative opinion concerning one parent or even feel like that parent does not love them. This situation affects their development to a very large extent.

Teenagers also often learn most behaviors from their parents just as toddlers do. For instance, they may learn from high tempered parents that uncontrollable expression of their anger is tolerable.

In conclusion, it is quite clear that teenagers need adequate support from their parents at the age of thirteen and fourteen just as toddlers do because these are very critical stages where both of them experience cognitive and physical changes in their bodies. The absence of enough support and care might affect their future lives to a very great extent.

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