

# Gonzalez family case study children and young people essay

[Family](#), [Children](#)



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## **Luz Gonzalez, Early Adolescent Stage of Development – 13 years of age**

### **Biological Influences**

Luz is a thirteen year old Mexican American, living with his parents and two older brothers. He is experiencing many different changes in his body that are influencing his development during the early adolescent stage. This stage can be one of the most challenging times in a child's life. Biologically, Luz is developing at a healthy rate of growth, which means he is experiencing rapid spurts of growth in height and weight. This begins in boys around age twelve, along with other biological changes such as puberty (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010).

### **Psychological Influences**

Luz is experiencing psychological challenges that are an indicator of emotional unrest and instability. He has become withdrawn from the other kids and non-interactive in class. The Adolescent years are characterized by cognitive development and information processing. Luz's mental actions during this development phase have developed into formal operational patterns. This age is governed by global evaluation of one's self, which has caused Luz to evaluate himself in relation to his peers. Adolescents gain new levels of awareness of themselves, and others as they mature and develop cognitive growth (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Luz's shyness is a way to avoid rejection among his peers because he has become increasingly self-conscious to how he may appear to others. Luz sees himself differently from the other kids,

and his weak self concept is psychologically damaging to his academic achievements. Although Luz is a bright child and has always done well in school, his grades have fallen due to the psychological issues he is undergoing in his adolescent development.

## **Social influences**

In the middle childhood stage of development, children prefer to spend more time with their peer groups in more formal social gatherings. At this age there are distinct roles that govern the children through rigid social rules. Children learn to regulate their emotions to fit into specific groups and to avoid rejection (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Luz, however, is not able to join these social groups due to his family's financial situation and has not been able to participate in after school programs that could enhance his social acceptance. His social groups are confined to his brothers and grandparents in the afternoon. This has been extremely damaging to Luz on different levels. When Luz is put under the care of the older brothers, it can cause conflict between them, because they may not want to take this responsibility at their ages. When put under the care of his grandparents, it can cause him to feel as though he is being treated like a "baby." Luz's conflicting feelings, without an adequate social group, has caused him to feel insecure and to turn his negative feelings inward and made him withdrawn.

## **Cultural influences**

Luz's cultural background plays a vital role in his integration into social settings. Because Luz's father and mother come from immigrant families, Luz has been raised by a distinct set of values and traditions from other

countries. Since Luz's mother emigrated from Mexico as a small child with her parents, her culture is most likely deeply rooted in the family microsystem. Although, Luz's father's family emigrated from Columbia, he was born in the United States and therefore may have integrated more to the surrounding culture. Every culture has rules for rearing children, some view leaving a thirteen year old unattended as inappropriate (Rogoff, 2003). Luz's culture obviously holds to this view. This is contrary to American culture where children are left alone for long periods from early ages (Cole & Rodman, 1987). This difference may be a catalyst for Luz's inferiority issues. He may not feel trusted, causing him to feel as though he is incapable of caring properly for himself, decreasing his confidence, and causing him to withdraw from the other kids at school.

## **Jose Gonzalez, Later Adolescence Developmental Stage – 19 years of age**

### **Biological Influences**

Jose is a healthy young adult male. He is at the peak of his physical development at nineteen years old, as body performance is the strongest during the early 20s (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). This feeling of maximum physical potential has empowered Jose to assert his rights against his parent's wishes and make harmful decisions for his future economic earnings.

### **Psychological influences**

As an emerging adult, Jose is experiencing identity confusion (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Jose dropped out of school in tenth grade against the wishes

of his parents and has been unable to transition to an adult lifestyle as defined through social and economic factors (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). He is now nineteen and still has no positive career choices available, working only in low wages positions for short periods of time. Studies show that students from racial-ethnic minority groups have a higher dropout rate. It is also, known that students from lower socioeconomic environments have a higher dropout rate (McNeal Jr., 1995). The psychological connection between the Jose's having to drop out of sports was likely a strong factor in his decision to drop out of school. Jose was a star athlete in school and most likely had dreams of playing professional sports. These kinds of dreams are instrumental in the psychological growth of a later adolescent development. According to Levinson, dreams give focus and high self-worth even if the dreams begin unrealistically (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Jose's spirit was crushed and because of this, he exhibited poor decision making. Jose is making an effort to become independent from his parents yet psychologically this has been a problem, because he is still financially and emotionally dependent upon them. This kind of dependency can lead to problems developing intimate relationships with women (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010).

## **Social Influences**

Jose is working to become independent in his later adolescent development years. He is in the process of coming to terms with his identity as an emerging young adult. He asserted his right to independence when he defied his parents and dropped out of school. This is common behavior for later

adolescents, it is the time that young adults focus on strengthening their inner identity, and clarifies their values separate from their parents for the purpose of developing intimacy with others. During this stage of development, intimacy becomes a primary issue in their life. Later Adolescents begin to become concerned about commitment issues and career choices that will help them establish goals for a future family (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Jose continued loss of low wages jobs has disrupted his development maturity and has been a social handicap, because he has not been able to build long term work relationships.

## **Cultural Influences**

Jose's decisions are a result of his family's culture. Although Jose's father graduated from high school, his mother did not. In the Latino culture, a high school diploma is not as valued among its people, however in the United States, high school graduation among Latino students, has risen ten percent in ten years. The national rate is now seventy eight percent of Latinos students will graduate from high school (Garcia, 2013). Therefore it can be assumed that Jose's decision was dependent more upon his own family's culture than the American Latino culture which is in changing around him. Other cultural influences that are prevalent, is the historic system of Latino family's dependence upon each other for support. Jose most likely feels responsible to help out with the household expenses since his family is struggling to make ends meet. The Latino culture is strongly enriched the philosophy that family members should help each other in any way possible (Osher et al., 2011).

## **Luz and Jose Gonzalez's strengths**

Luz and Jose both have strengths they should focus on to increase their developmental processes. Jose is the oldest of three sons, has a sense of strong family values. He has gone to work to lighten the load off his financially struggling parents and is available to take care of the younger siblings when possible. He is sacrificial and supportive and should be commended because these are self-less character traits that are honorable in all cultures and are strengths for a healthy development into adulthood. He is young and physically fit and capable of doing many different jobs. He has had many different employment experiences and has been able to eliminate specific areas that he is not interested in for a career. Luz is the youngest of the three brothers, and has a great deal of support from his older siblings. He is very intelligent and has potential to graduate with honors and gain scholarships to go to college. He is self-reflective and never disruptive in school. Hector is in good health and growing physically at a reasonable rate in proportion to his peers.

## **Luz and Jose Gonzalez's Weaknesses**

Jose being the oldest feels an undue amount of responsibility for his age, causing him to feel stress and anxiety in a difficult economic family situation. The largest hazard to Jose's healthy development is the fact that he dropped out of high school. This limits his ability to find adequate employment (Garcia, 2013). Luz's position in the family can be noted as a hazard in the family structure, as younger children often emulate behavior of the older and his older siblings have and are making poor choices (Bank & Kahn, 2003). He

also has more people seeking to control his behavior, which can lead to frustration and intimidation. He has become withdrawn, exhibiting insecurities and dissatisfaction with himself. He is at an age where belonging to social groups is vital, and he has no outlet to participate, due to his family's financial situation. His grades are also falling due to his lack of interest in school and growing emotional instability. Immediate intervention is necessary for the healthy development of Luz to the next stage of growth.

## **Inferred family background or current family functioning Influences**

### **Marital issues**

Jorge and Maria are in a deeply stressful financial situation, these types of pressures often cause problems in marriages. Many couples cite financial problems as the reason they divorced (Wolcott & Hughes, 1999). Both partners are tired from long hours of work. Maria works at a low wage job with no health insurance or retirement benefits, causing a great deal of insecurity for the health of their family. They struggled to get Hector glasses and he needs medication for his recently diagnosed ADD but there are no resources. The parents were forced to have their son stop playing sports because of the cost, instilling guilt and feelings of failure. There may also be some residual effects from previous years that Jorge did not have a steady job. It is important for the social worker to explore these issues to verify that there are no marital conflicts that should be resolved for the good of the adhesiveness of the family structure.



## **Parenting issues**

Jorge and Maria Gonzalez have been married for twenty years with similar cultures but also very different experiences. They both have strong ideas about what is best for their children and there have been conflict within the family when Jose went against their wishes and quit school. This is an indicator that Jorge and Maria need to improve their parenting skills.

Although they did not want their son to quit school they obviously gave into his demands, because it would require the parent's signature. Jorge and Maria should have explored the deeper reasons for why Jose wanted to drop out of school. They also should learn skills to help their other sons learn to cope with the stresses they feel at school before they follow in their older brother's footsteps, through motivational techniques. Both parents should determine to affirm their children while demonstrating power and authority (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010).

## **In-law issues**

The Gonzalez family is a close operating unit and there is no doubt that each member is highly dependent upon the others, whether financially or emotionally Maria may be very dependent upon her extended family more than she should, relying upon them almost daily. In-law issues can be a cause of a great deal of conflict with a home. There should be clear boundaries set in place. Formal Organizations that can help the Gonzalez family