

**Ages 13 to 15 years old****The Facts**

Understanding the stages and behaviors in your child's development is an important step in parenting. Due to children maturing at their own rates (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally) they need all the support, love and encouragement you can provide. As a parent you can help!

Developmental Stages & Behaviors**13 to 15 year olds**

- Individual differences between boys and girls and between same-sex vary greatly
- Girls are usually taller than boys
- Bone growth exceeds muscle development affecting coordination
- Move from preadolescence to developed puberty
- Hormones move toward sexual maturity
- Learn best when active (learning by doing)
- Can reason with hypotheses involving two or more factors
- Able to anticipate future happenings
- Learn better when interacting with same-sex peers during learning process
- Can express math logic into symbols
- Show insights into attitudes, behaviors, values and moral decisions
- Depend on positive social relationships with same sex peers
- Are troubled and worried when friendships are shattered
- Are loyal to friends; can be insensitive to those outside peer group
- Need to be told and shown by friends and family that they are valued
- May become rebellious against parents
- Look to peers as sources for models of behavior
- Certain behaviors may be unusual or drastic at times
- Will test the limits of rules
- Boys are generally good natured
- Girls will have mood swings as hormones begin to accelerate
- Are easily offended, sensitive to criticism
- Exaggerate simple occurrences
- Are easily provoked
- Feelings shift between superiority and inferiority
- Often feel self-conscious

*Not every child develops the same, that's what makes us all unique. The previous listing contained general behaviors

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Helping Your Child's Development

Helping your child learn right from the start makes a big difference. Here's what you can do:

- Try not to expect your child to act like an adult. It's important to remember he/she is not.
- Teach your child decision-making skills so he/she is ready for anything he/she must ponder.
- Help your child get organized with calendars and planners. Teach him/her how he/she can manage deadlines, dates and meetings.
- Be available for your child. It's important that you are always available for advice and help, though you're not running his/her life anymore.

How To Handle Discipline Problems

Even good children have bad behaviors. The following is an example of how to handle a discipline problem that occurs within the ages of 13 to 15 years:

Scenario: Your child calls you from his/her friend's house wanting to stay longer though he/she was expected home an hour ago. He/she denounces you for being controlling.

Goal: To teach your child how to respect you as a parent and negotiate normal assertion of autonomy.

Don't sentence your child to a harsh or impossible punishment. Don't participate in a shouting match with him/her. Try not to start a sentence with, "When I was your age..." How children behaved when you were the same age has changed quite a bit.

Do express and state your fear and worry. Settle down and configure a reasonable punishment. Do try and keep up-to-date on the current norms for reasonable behavior in your community. Once you have talked to other parents and teachers use these norms as guidelines for developing your expectations. If you have not already done so, set your own reasonable curfews with consequences. Do follow through them. Talk to your child about safety issues and appropriate ways to get together with friends.

Begin by understanding that your child is still in need of your guidance and approval. Friends are an important part of his/her life at this age. Yet, they will never take your place. Get together with other parents and form a network in which you can share ideas as well as frustrations.

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