

Developmental Needs of Adolescents

1. **Self-definition:** In the midst of all the changes of adolescence, young people need opportunities and experiences that help them define and accept who they are as persons.
2. **Competence and achievement:** Young people need opportunities to learn new skills, to demonstrate the skills they already possess, and to master the skills by which they can define their self-worth.
3. **Physical activity:** Some energetic adolescents need opportunities for physical activity through which to burn off excess energy; lethargic young people need such activity to stimulate them.
4. **Positive interactions with peers and adults:** Young people need positive relationships with people of all ages to prove to themselves that they are "okay" and "normal."
5. **Creative expression:** Because of their varying rates of development and differing skills, young adolescents must be given diverse ways to express themselves. For example, some may express themselves best through art, poetry, or music and others through verbal skills or interpersonal skills.
6. **Structure and clear limits:** Despite their pleas for freedom and independence, adolescents need and want direction and structure in their life as guarantees of personal security and protection.
7. **Meaningful participation:** Young people need to feel that they have a voice in decisions that affect their life and to experience a sense of contributing significantly to the lives of others.
8. **Personal religious experience:** As their capacity for abstract thought and deeper personal relationships grows, adolescents yearn for opportunities to explore "the big questions" in life, questions whose answers can only be comprehended within the context of faith and religion.