

Teen Tips! - 2021 DIY Conference

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Teen Development:

1. Social/Emotional Development – The “why” of “why should libraries want to serve teens?” They are figuring out who they are and where they belong, as well as how they relate to others. Developing their personality, likes, and dislikes. Libraries can help with this through programming (exploring interests) and giving teens a place to hang out with peers (developing interpersonal skills).
2. Biological Development – Onset of puberty begins ages 10-12 for girls, 11-13 for boys. Remember – it’s difficult to determine age at first glance during this time because they mature at vastly different rates, so don’t assume maturity levels.
3. Cognitive (brain) Development – Teen brains are not fully developed! The areas of their brain that helps with impulse control, setting priorities, and organizing; planning and adapting to the social environment they are in; and putting situations into context via retrieved memories connected to gut reactions may not be fully developed until the age of 25. Meanwhile, the area responsible for acting on impulse, fear, and aggression develops early. **KEY TAKEAWAY: Mistakes are inevitable. Be patient and understanding, and give them second chances.**

Teen Tips - General:

- Establish relationships – learn names
- Empathize and listen
- Cut them slack / don’t stereotype
- Be accepting/non-judgmental
- Treat them like adults

Teen Tips – Behavior Management:

- Keep your cool
- Don’t take it personally
- Give them a reason/explain why
- Criticize behavior not person
- Be flexible
- Be firm, fair, and consistent
- Have an Appropriate Library Behavior Policy you can point to for support.