

LATENCY

- Start teaching about body changes; answer questions openly and honestly
- Give specific information and facts. Adjust learning opportunities to child's interests and increased attention span.
- For example, trips to museums, aquariums and/or zoos provide for learning and the child may also have a good time.
- Provide opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. Be careful not to burden the child.
- Be loving and accepting even when the child seems to challenge your knowledge.
- Set limits and give opportunities for independence whenever possible.
- Provide some space for privacy; understand child's needs and choices for friends, and feeling "in."

ADOLESCENCE

- Sudden and rapid physical and sexual development.
- Abstract thinking appears. May start planning for the future.
- Needs less family companionship and interaction
- Usually has a gang of friend with less intense relationships.
- Worried about grades, appearance and popularity.
- May appear moody, angry, lonely, impulsive, self-centered, confused and stubborn.
- May develop strong interest in single, romantic relationships.

ENHANCING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

- Provide access to accurate, age-appropriate information about physical and sexual changes.
- Allow some privacy and time in front of the mirror for the young person to explore and get used to bodily changes.
- Reassure the adolescent that intense sexual and aggressive impulses are normal, but that they do not have to be acted on.
- Provide some limits, supervision, and protection for the adolescent whose impulsiveness may lead to taking chances or to accidents.
- Allow space for the adolescent's mood swings, providing reassurance that they are normal, without pressuring them to change or explain why they feel that way.
- Help teens to develop self-care habits of grooming and hygiene, a balance of exercise and rest, and opportunities for good nutrition.
- Help the adolescent learn decision-making skills.
- Allow for the making of mistakes.
- React honestly to the adolescent's experimentation of roles, but avoid labeling them.
- Communicate respect and worth to help the adolescent gain confidence.
- Encourage participation in activities within the agency, at school and in the community.
- Help the adolescent who has developed a negative self-identity to begin to explore alternative definitions about who they are.
- Help them to set realistic goals and limits.
- Try to keep rules at a bare minimum - but enforce them consistently. Set clear, firm but flexible limits; try not to revert to childhood restrictions.
- Let the adolescents have the last word -- ignore their muttering.
- Let them help you set rules and consequences.
- See to it that the teenager finds an acceptable group with which to identify.
- Let the adolescent have some say in their choice of companions.
- Allow more opportunities for independent social activities. Provide the adolescents with dances, outings, teen centers and other group activities where they can interact with peers of the opposite sex.
- Recognize and compliment physical maturity; understand adolescent's concern with appearance.
- Recognize and accept their interest in romantic relationships. Provide accurate information on consequences of sexual activity. Discuss birth control.
- Encourage talking and planning for the future; don't put down their ideas.
- Encourage reading to develop ideas.
- Avoid disapproval and accept feelings; discuss needs and expectations jointly.