Working with Tweens

What's up with these "inbetweeners"?

Christa Funke

Senior Librarian, Family & Children's Services, Tweens

Pikes Peak Library District

Who are Tweens?

"Preteen"
Merriam-webster.com/dictionary

Who are Tweens?

"A tween is a child between the ages of 9 and 12. A tween is no longer a little child, but not quite a teenager. They are in between the two age groups and their behavior and emotions reflect that."
Verywellfamily.com

Who are Tweens?

Pikes Peak Library District defines tweens as **ages 9-12.**

Who are Tweens?

Tweens are the age group too old for the library play area but not quite or barely old enough for the teen space.

Why focus on serving Tweens?

- Think fast! Type one reason you think the library should focus on serving Tweens.

Why focus on serving Tweens?

- Ages 9-11 in the library without an adult (at PPLD)
- Tweens and libraries are a great fit
- Ease transitions and maintain loyal library patrons

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT

ppld

Understanding Tweens

Physical Development

- Rapid, but not consistent, growth
- Puberty!

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT

ppld

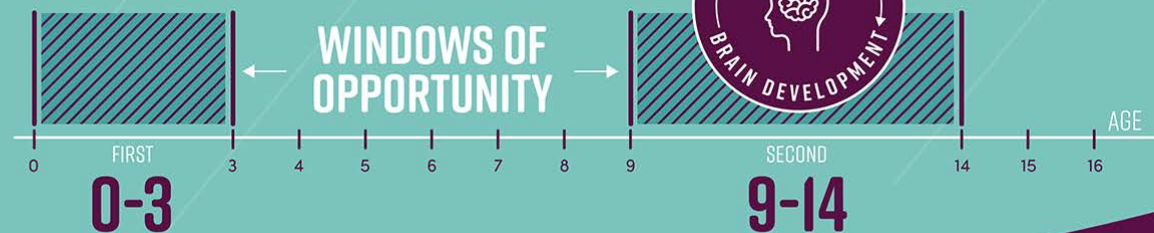| Tanner stages in girls	Age at the start	Noticeable changes	Tanner stages in boys	Age at the start	Noticeable changes
Stage 1	After the 8th birthday	None	Stage 1	After the 9th or 10th birthday	None
Stage 2	From age 9–11	Breast "buds" start to form; pubic hair starts to form	Stage 2	Around age 11	Pubic hair starts to form
Stage 3	After age 12	Acne first appears; armpit hair forms; height increases at its fastest rate	Stage 3	Around age 13	Voice begins to change or "crack"; muscles get larger
Stage 4	Around age 13	First period arrives	Stage 4	Around age 14	Acne may appear; armpit hair forms
Stage 5	Around age 15	Reproductive organs and genitals are fully developed	Stage 5	Around age 15	Facial hair comes in

Brain Development
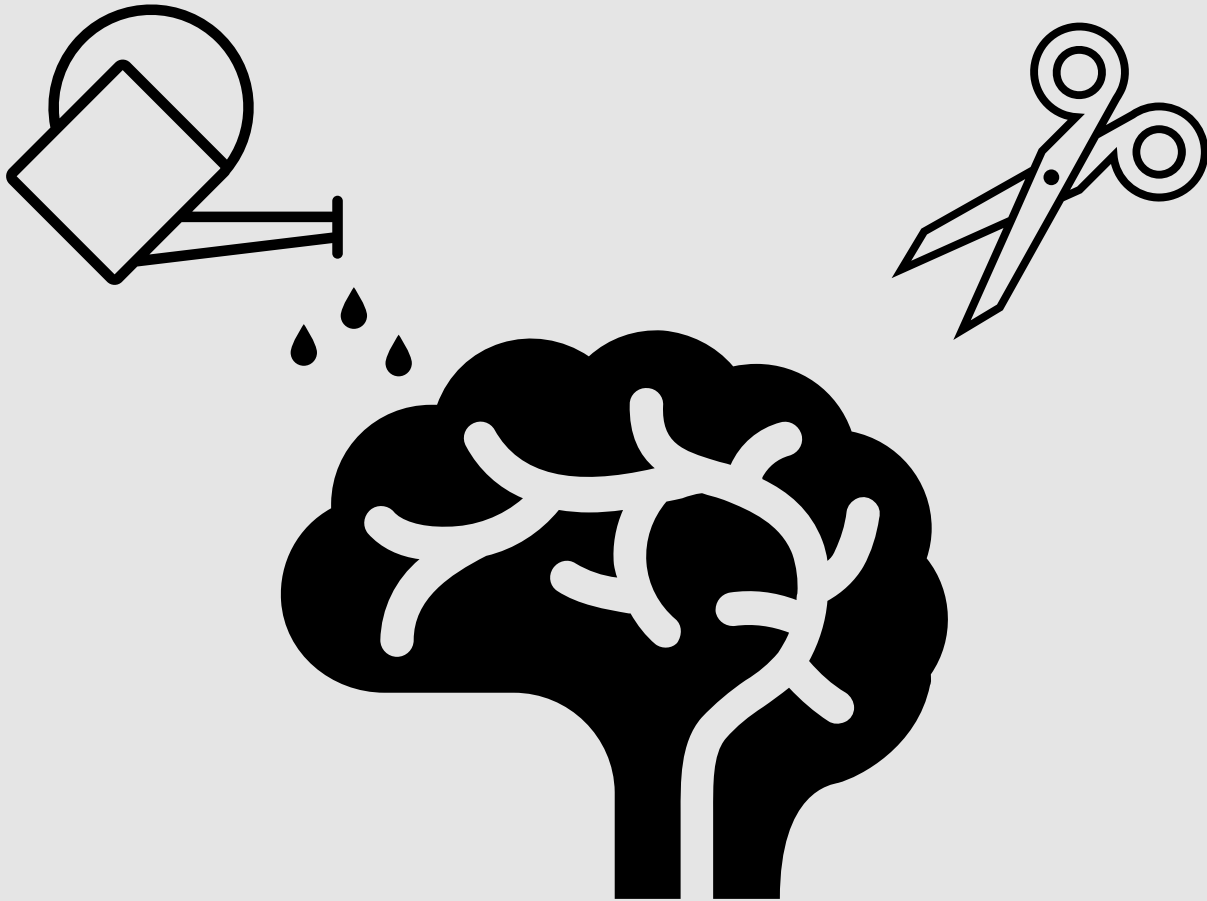
THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN
A SECOND WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

unicef
Office of Research–Innocenti

EARLY ADOLESCENCE IS
A TIME OF RAPID LEARNING AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

THESE INCLUDE INCREASES IN SENSATION-SEEKING, MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SENSITIVITY TO SOCIAL EVALUATION.

A PERIOD OF
VULNERABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

PUBERTY INITIATES INTENSE LEARNING & BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, WHICH LEAD TO STRUCTURAL REMODELING AND NEURAL RE-CONFIGURATION OF KEY BRAIN SYSTEMS. IT'S A CRUCIAL TIME TO INVEST IN ADOLESCENTS.

LEARNING
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

AGE

0   FIRST   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   SECOND   14   15   16

0-3

9-14

Social/ Emotional Development

- What are some major milestones tweens will reach socially and emotionally?

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT
ppld

Social/ Emotional Development

- Pleasing adults vs. developing independence
- Importance of peers
- Big emotions
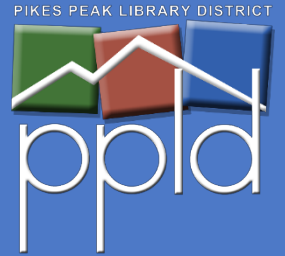- Developing sense of self
- Middle School!

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT
ppld

Social/ Emotional Development

It's real to me.

Addressing Problematic Behavior

- Be Clear
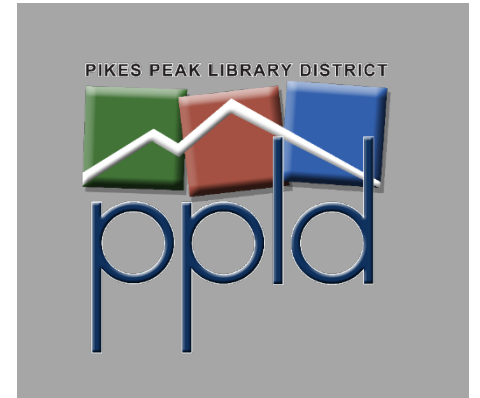- Be Consistent
- Be Respectful
- Stay Positive
- Be Patient
- Be Kind

Programs Just for 9-12

- Do you have programs just for tweens at your library?

Programs Just for 9-12

- Allows staff to provide developmentally appropriate programs for tweens
- Gives tweens a sense of community and allows them to interact with peers
- Makes tweens ages 9-12 feel special and appreciated by the library
- Helps library staff build relationships with patrons ages 9-12
- Gives younger kids something to look forward to

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT

Ideas to Expand Tween Services

Provide

- Staff Training
- Tween Spaces – physical and on the website
- Tween programs

Examine

- Tween use of spaces & materials
- Ways to meet tween needs
- Outreach opportunities

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT

ppld

Thank You!

Christa Funke
Phone: 719-531-6333
Ex 6331
Email: cfunke@ppld.org

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT
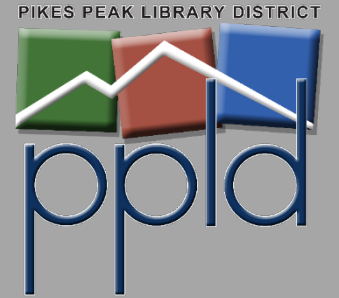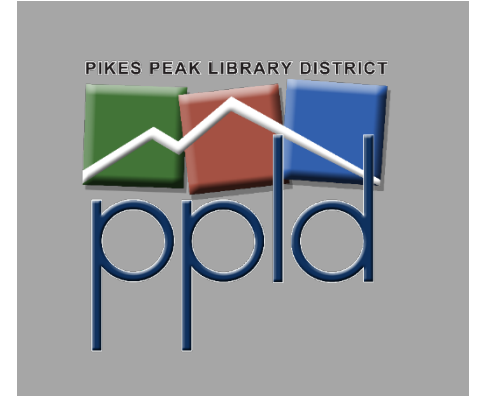ppld

References

- advocatesforyouth.org
- cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment
- childmind.org
- medicinenet.com
- nimh.nih.gov
- scholastic.com
- understood.org
- verywellfamily.com
- wnyc.org/story/being-12-intro/

unicef-irc.org
healthline.com

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT

References

- *Middle School Matters* by Phyllis L. Fagell
- *Planet Middle School* by Dr. Kevin Leman
- *Too Old for This, Too Young for That* by Harriet S. Mosatche and Karen Unger
- *The Library in the Middle: Serving Tweens Through Change and Self Discovery*, ALSC class taught by Kylie Peterson

Scenario One

Tween:

You're 11-years-old and you just started middle school a month ago and you still can't get used to your early lunch period or all of your homework. You walked from school to the library to try out the tween program that afternoon, but you have an hour to kill. You know you need to get cracking on your homework, but you're so HUNGRY. You've been told multiple times you're not supposed to eat at the computers, but if you're quiet, nobody will notice right? What harm could it do anyway?

Library staff:

You just vacuumed up crumbs from the children's computers fifteen minutes ago and as you're walking past you see a tween sneaking chips out of their backpack while working on the computer. You know there's a tween program that afternoon, but it's not for another hour and you know this tween has been told not to eat at computers before.

Scenario Two

Tween one:

You've barely turned 10 and you're developing much quicker than most of your peers. You get a lot of rude comments from your classmates and are starting to get self-conscious. You've started going to the library after school to hang out and do homework and the really cool librarian invited you to a program just for tweens this afternoon. You're really excited to attend, but while you're waiting for the program to start, some of the older tweens start making embarrassing remarks about how "developed" you are.

Tween two:

You're twelve and feel really insecure because some of your friends are already entering puberty and you haven't. You and some friends from school are trying out this new tween program at the library and you see a girl who looks like she's at least 13. When you find out she's only 10, you get really jealous and start to make mean comments to cover up your embarrassment. You even goad some of your friends into joining you. It gets a little out of hand when the boys join in.

Scenario Two Continued

Library staff:

You've been planning to start a monthly tween program for a few months now and have been talking it up to every tween you see, including at the middle school last week. You're super excited to see several tweens waiting for the program to start, especially some seventh graders you recruited just a couple of days ago. You walk up to the group eager to welcome them all to the program when you overhear a couple of inappropriate remarks being made by some of the boys. You're not entirely sure who they're talking about or what's going on and you really don't want to discourage anyone from attending.

Scenario Three

Tween:

You're nine years old, just old enough to be at the library without an adult! You feel so grown-up, but you quickly get really bored. You have to stay at the library after school every day until your mom gets off work, so you run out of things to do fast. Today you feel bouncier than ever – you've been sitting in class all day and don't want to just sit and read at the library! You suddenly decide that a game of 'stack-the-library-chairs' is the world's best idea for passing the time.

Librarian:

You're sitting at the information desk minding your own business when you see a younger tween moving furniture around. Suddenly, to your utter astonishment, they pick up a chair and place it on top of another chair! You can all too clearly see the disaster about to happen and as you speed walk over to the tween, you wonder how on earth they thought this was a good idea.

Scenario Four

Tween:

You've been waiting all day to log onto the library computer and play Minecraft. But when you get there, all the computers are in use. You decide to make the best of the situation and hang around to watch the kids who are playing. They don't seem to mind. This one kid is playing some game you've never seen before, and it starts to get really exciting. Next thing you know, you're cheering them on to victory.

Librarian:

You notice an uptick in noise when the afterschool crowd comes in and you see that all of the computers are taken. The noise gradually increases until you realize you can distinctly hear shouting. Happy shouting, but loud none-the-less. You look over at the kids computers and see a group of tweens huddled around them chattering excitedly. You also see some adults starting to give the tweens death glares and one particularly obnoxious patron starts to walk towards you, most likely to complain about the noise.

PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT

ppld