Stages of Development

Prepared by
The National Youth Programme Committee
Scouting Ireland
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Scouting Ireland

is built on a shared respect for the uniqueness of young people.

We believe in the abilities of young people and their wish to discover and harness their own potential.

We help them achieve this by providing them with the support and encouragement they need.

"We accept each young person as he or she is – a unique human being with his or her own personal background and experience of life thus far, variations in needs, capacities, interests and pace of development."
'Scouting: An Educational System' WOSM 1998

Youth Programme

Stages of Development

The child is a busy active explorer and develops from within, based on their own innate capacities.

- The young person's sense of wonder and curiosity is a motivating factor in learning.
- The young person's existing knowledge and experience forms the base for learning.
- Each individual has a different capacity for learning.
- Each individual has a different learning style.
- The young person is an active agent in his/her learning.

Generally young people reach each developmental stage in their own time. Community, culture and family situation all have an impact on the acquisition of developmental stages. The young person's immediate environment provides the context for their learning.

- Young people need support in order to develop social and relationship skills.
- Young people are looking for ways to assess and express their uniqueness.

Scouting Ireland is a non-formal educational movement and as such we aim to teach people how to learn. When referring to education BP stated that it is "drawing out the individual boy and giving him the ambition and keenness to learn for himself". How one learns to be in the world and how one learns ones values, is about a process of interaction with others. The Law and Promise provides us with the framework to achieve this aspiration.

As part of the RAP process a number of professionals were invited to present on the developmental stages in a child's

life. Members of the National Youth Programme Committee added their own experience of the development of young people through Scouting. As this information was presented, it was grouped according to the various areas of growth from the aim of Scouting Ireland and against the approximate ages that the various developments occur. This information is presented in condensed form in the charts that follow.

The professionals pointed out that theory lags behind the lived reality and is often taken out of context, that when considering any theory one should be aware of when and where it was developed and then it should be used in light of the lived reality and should be time and culture specific.

Pre-Adolescence

Age	Character	Physical	Emotional
7 – 9	Young children need boundaries and stability imposed.	Form constancy and depth perception maturing. Can see the parts and the whole of an object but not at the same time.	Ego centric
	Creative thinking can be suppressed (if it is not developed before 11 it will never fully develop).	Spatial Perception beginning to mature.	
	Exploring the external world. Seeing the potential.		Beginning to be less egocentric more able to relate to others as different to ourselves.

Pre-Adolescence

Age	Intellectual	Social	Spiritual
7 – 9	Concrete operations (Piaget). Are able to engage in co-operative play and act on instructions. Can understand and work in a team. Attention and concentration are very important for learning and the development of the perception of events.	Before the age of 7 the child's ability to interact in social groups is limited therefore one of the key elements of the scout system the team/patrol system cannot be implemented.	
	Need to develop reasoning skills. Also need to encourage learning through movement. Becoming more independent in school, can look up own facts and reason through own decisions. Can give instruction based on own experience depending on task.	Ego centric, Social Interaction is important for development. Scaffolding (Vygotsky). More involved in extracurricular activities.	Communion Year. Beginning to understand family relationships.
	Encourage to develop critical and creative thinking skills.	Beginning to be less egocentric. Begin to develop boundaries.	Starting to learn respect for others

Early Adolescence

Age	Character	Physical	Emotional
10–13	Begin to make the decision to stay or go. (Our numbers historically drop at this age)	Onset of puberty. Motor and perceptual abilities mature. Gravitating towards same gender groups.	
			Social groups become fragmented. New schools.
	Self understanding and self esteem really develops at 12.		Intimacy and loneliness are an issue.
	Beginning to develop and maintain personal boundaries and sense of stability.	Interest in own bodies developing.	Concept of rebellion starting, slang language etc. identity with a group. Emotionally Labile. Esteem issues can be misinterpreted.

Age	Intellectual	Social	Spiritual
10-13	Concrete problem solving.		
	Transition from primary school. Looking for approval from peers.		
		Extracurricular school based activities take up more time. Self Confidence is a big issues.	Confirmation / Bah Mitzvah Year.
	Beginning to think in a more abstract and idealistic way. Future oriented thought problem resolution.	Fascination with idols.	

Adolescence

Age	Character	Physical	Emotional
14–16	Questioning themselves (what do I want to be like) trying out different roles and beliefs.	Sexual maturity. Interest in own and other bodies really kicking in.	Esteem issues play a major part of daily life.
	More reliant on friends than family. Hanging out.		Autonomy and attachment very important. Parents beginning to lose some control.
	Adolescent problems become a real issue (drugs drink etc). Achieving identity is the MAIN task of adolescence.	Sexual intimacy beginning to play a bigger part in their lives. Physical maturity kicking in bringing physical identity issues (good and bad).	Depression and suicide, eating disorders, interrelationship difficulties.

Age	Intellectual	Social	Spiritual
14-16	Begin to hypotheses make plans, form an objective point of view, see things from another's point of view. Can see the validity of others point of view.		
	Reflective thinking should be encouraged. Metacognition (thinking about thinking) begins.	Have the ability to contribute and work within teams.	
	Pressure of exams, which college to go to will I get the points etc can be significant. Beginning senior cycle in school, taking responsibility for own learning.	Other clubs age groups become more important. Friends becoming more important than family.	Develop a concept of their own uniqueness. Uncertainty regarding their own identity.

Post Adolescence

Age	Character	Physical	Emotional
17–20	Instances of interpersonal complexity and their ability to deal with them has increased.	Physical Growth Completed. Sexual intimacy playing a huge part in their lives.	Relationships founded on intimacy and complementarity

Age	Intellectual	Social	Spiritual
17-20	Abstract thinking maturing. Ability to make plans etc. maturing. Ability to make mature and independent Judgements and decisions.	Recognition of enrichment due to accepting individual differences. Problem of Social and Professional integration.	Building a respect for the concept of spirituality.
	Transition into college or working environment etc.		

Profiles of Stages of Development

The following profiles of young people at the various stages of development are derived from the characteristics previously outlined –

- ## Pre-Adolescence

    The Pre-Adolescent stage of development is also known as "late childhood".

    It is characterised by a certain level of stability. Physical growth is slower. The child is at ease in their body. They have acquired the capacity for logical reasoning on concrete data, and demonstrate intellectual curiosity.

    It is the stage at which children learn to co-operate, to adapt to a group and be appreciated. They have the capacity to develop reciprocal exchanges in a group. They can imagine themselves in another person's situation. They accept the authority of adults.

    Cooperation is the main theme of this stage of development.

- ## Early Adolescence

    The stability of Pre-Adolescence is disturbed in the Early Adolescent stage of development. This is a period of transition (earlier among girls, later among boys) characterised by the occurrence of numerous changes, both on a personal level (an acceleration in physical growth, the onset of puberty, a new stage of logical reasoning) and on the social level (the end of primary

school and the beginning of secondary school in many countries).

This is sometimes called "the crisis of early adolescence", which is shown by the rejection of childhood rules, the challenging of adult authority, the attraction towards smaller social groupings, etc.

It is a period of opposition and rejection of previous identifications. Childhood rules and regulations are called into question. However the ability to create new rules through mutual consent appears. That announces the development of moral autonomy and the acceptance of moral principles as a way of sharing rights and responsibilities within a group.

Transition is the main theme of this stage of development.

- Adolescence
  The Adolescent stage of development is reached with the acquisition of sexual maturity, the establishment of gender identity and the development of abstract logical reasoning.

  However, the restructuring phase which started with puberty continues with a search for identity. It is a fairly unstable stage during which development rhythms vary widely depending on sex (maturity is reached more quickly by girls) and under the influence of social and cultural factors. It is at this stage that problems such as

depression, suicide, eating disorders and interrelationship difficulties can start to occur.

Identity is the main theme of this stage of development.

- Post Adolescence

  The Post Adolescent stage of development, also known as "youth", is characterised by the completion of physical growth. Relationships are now founded on intimacy and complimentarity.

  The young person now has the ability to make mature and independent judgements and decisions. It is therefore at this stage that they face the challenge of taking on adult roles and becoming fully integrated into society.

  Maturity and Departure is the main theme of this stage of development.