

Realistic Behavioral Expectations

What to Expect from 10 to 14-year old's

The tween and teen years often feel to parents and teachers like they are back at the "terrible twos" stage. The challenges of working with children at this age can be frustrating. They are very smart but their emotions are all over the place. This can make it difficult for adults to be patient and allow them to work through this process. Knowing what to expect, though, is key in helping everyone get through this transition.

Children ages 10 to 14 years old are highly intelligent. They are even smarter than most adults! These tween/teen years are a time when they begin discovering more of who they are and where they fit in. They are gaining more control over their growing bodies, so they typically excel at physical challenges. This is also a time when friends become more important to them and choices in activities are made based on friendships.

But with all of this exciting growth comes some challenging times for parents and teachers. Children between the ages of 10 and 14 years old begin thinking that they know it all and, although their intelligence supports this, they don't have the experience to act like an adult. They often make "bone-headed" decisions. At this age, children are also experiencing a roller coaster of emotions due to puberty ruling their bodies. They may feel happy and smart one minute and then sad and dumb the next. And one of the biggest challenges for adults when working with the age group is that the combination of intelligence and strong emotions lead to arguments.

One of the best ways that adults can best work with these tweens and teens is to have them be actively engaged in the process of this very important transition time. Giving them choices is vital to this. It is also important to allow disagreements and use open ended questions to help them discover why they have a certain opinion and how they differ from others. Remembering that the strong emotions they have are not personal, they are just trying to figure out how to navigate the changes they are experiencing.

The Extreme SKILLZ program was developed with this age group in mind. This age group is so focused on what is socially acceptable that they have a hard time keeping themselves emotionally driven. When working with the age group, the highly trained instructors of this program make connections with these students. They also use Teaching SKILLZ in each class to work towards the goal of nurturing their social and emotional instability while building skills that set them up for success. Giving them choices in class and working on tapping into their intrinsic motivation are just two of the important Teaching SKILLZ that are used.

Engaging with tweens and teens can be fun and exciting because their personalities are becoming more established. They can participate in more in-depth conversations when allowed to express their opinions without being mocked for them. Parents and teachers that allow safe, open discussions will reach this age group far better than someone that lectures them. Building these children up will ensure a brighter future for them.