

Key: * = how this applies
to hockey/teaching

Adolescence/Puberty

Motor Development:

Muscle growth and size:

Between the ages of 5-16, males experience approximately a fourteen fold increase in the number of their muscle cells. Cell size continues until the mid-thirties.

For females, the number of muscle cells increases about ten times, with the maximum cell size occurring between ages 10-11. (Garbarino, 1985)

Mental Development:

Formal and concrete thinking:

Based on Piaget's Model:

Formal thinking is the highest level of thinking. It is characterized by abstract thinking, or the ability to understand that which cannot be seen. The ability to perceive relationships between two ideas, the ability to perform complex tasks by oneself, the ability to grasp information beyond the obvious so as to offer interpretation and application. They are now able to think about the past, present, and future. They can deal effectively with hypothetical problems. And when confronted with a problem, they can think of a number of solutions.

Concrete thinkers have trouble seeing relationships between ideas, need to have things explained exactly, tend to interpret information literally, and cannot go from one task to another without explicit directions.

* Now is when "systems" really come together. Before this time you often observed systems run at incorrect times. That is because the child mentally could not foresee the proper circumstances where one system would be more appropriate to use over another. Or the child could not perceive how to modify the system to make it work. At the formal thinking level, kids can now put it all together and respond appropriately.

*Keep this in mind especially at the 2nd year PeeWee and 1st year Bantam levels where there can be a big difference in the levels of understanding from one child to the next. It is easy to assume that because everyone is clearly entering puberty that each kid is mentally functioning at the same level and this is not true. Especially when you take into consideration that it is estimated that only 40-60% of all college students and adults reach the formal thinking stage.

Adolescent egocentrism:

This is a form of self-centeredness characterized by teens' concern about what other people are thinking about them.

At this age teenagers are now able to conceptualize their own thoughts while also being preoccupied with the thoughts of others. This can result in a heightened level of self-consciousness.

Egocentrism promotes two types of thinking:

1. Imaginary audience. Teens' feel that they are always the focus of attention. This perceived existence of an imaginary audience usually intensifies during potentially threatening social situations.

*Be careful not to put too much added pressure on your players that they are not ready for.

2. Personal Fables. Stories that teens make up and tell about themselves. Convictions of personal uniqueness that may contain mistaken beliefs such as one will not die/get hurt or that one lives a "charmed" life.

* Stress the importance of safe play and consequences that could occur if safety rules are not followed.

Personality and Social Development:

Personal relationships intensify because it is important for teens to be accepted by their peers and because teens need to share their new feelings and experiences.

Teens begin to form their own identity. They begin to examine values and attitudes and experiment with new ones. It is at this time that teens start to question their parents/other adults values and determine whether or not they are right for them. Sometimes their questioning of adults can come across as being rebellious when in fact the teen is just looking for their own identity. If teens fail to discover who they are the price is lifelong immaturity/adolescence. How many of these adults do you know!

* Your players are constantly observing how you respond in situations. They then compare your behavior to that of their parents or other adults and ultimately form their own options of what they believe is right/socially acceptable. Be a good role model for them by respecting the refs, speaking positively to others, speaking to players in private about issues instead of in front of the entire team, not drinking during out of town tournaments, etc.

*On or off the ice you can help teens identify who they are by offering up multiple scenarios or giving them choices when it's appropriate to do so. This helps the teen to see things from other views and shows respect for them as a person.

Coach Influences:

Teens respond most favorably to those coaches who are self-controlled, warm, and friendly in their coaching interactions.

Democratic (where coaches treat players in a mature fashion, but retain the final authority) systems of control tend to encourage cooperation, sensitivity to others, and task-oriented behaviors.

If the teen feels as though he is being treated like a child, he/she often respond with behaviors such as apathy, passive resignation, and rebellion. The most favorable attitudes and greatest learning readiness evolves when students perceive that their coaches are interested in them as well as the subject material being taught.

* this seems self explanatory...respect your players and show them that you are interested in them not only as a player but a person. In some instances, of poor parenting, you may be the only adult who treats him/her this way.