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## Parenting Education for Adolescent Development

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### Abstract

*The transition from childhood to adolescence exhibits an array of developmental challenges that are significantly affected by parenting. Positive parenting is needed by this stage and it can be acquired through parenting education as it helps the parents to acquire necessary skills required to deal with the complexities of adolescence phase. This paper focuses on the challenges faced by adolescents due to developmental changes and the role of parenting and parenting education in this phase. It emphasizes that parenting skills and strategies can be learned through parenting education which can effectively support physical and psycho-social development by reducing the occurrence of behavior problems. This paper advocates for the widespread implementation of parenting education programme within communities' to ensure holistic and healthy development of adolescents.*

**Key Words:** *Parenting Education, Adolescent, Healthy Development*

### Introduction

In the continuum of human growth and development, adolescence emerges as a crucial period of development characterized by rapid change, transition and challenges. It is a transformative phase of life spanning from ages 10 to 19 years and lies between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents experience various types of stresses associated with developmental changes occurs in physical, social, cognitive and emotional spheres of life which leads to constant adjustment difficulties. Expectation of high academic achievement, peer pressure, desire to experience new things, search for self-identity, seeking balance between autonomy and family norms etc. creates stress and storm among the adolescents. These challenges may cause low self-esteem, doubt in self-efficacy, sense of inadequacy, feeling of helplessness and ineffectiveness. Here comes the role of parents to support their adolescent in the process of development by making them able to

deal with the challenges of adolescence. In home, parents may establish a supportive environment by promoting open communication, providing emotional support and non-judgmental space. By modeling they can develop healthy lifestyle like good food habits, regular exercise and maintain a schedule etc.

### **Challenges Faced by Adolescents**

Adolescence manifests with the onset of puberty usually around 11 or 12 years of age. Adolescents experience overall change in physical appearance due to rapid physical growth, sexual maturation and development of secondary sex characteristics. Physical changes occur due to fast growth of skeletal tissue, muscles and glandular tissues. They become taller and stronger than earlier. Physical changes related to fertility and reproduction is started in this stage. Facial features also shows remarkable changes like facial hair growth in boys and change in skin texture in both girls and boys. Changes in voice are quite noticeable in this stage especially among boys. Due to these hasty physical changes adolescents become more conscious about their physical appearance because they consider it one of the most significant criteria of acceptance by others around them. Often, dissatisfaction for once physical appearance may cause feeling of insecurity, lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem and anxiety.

Along with physical changes, adolescents encompass various psychosocial changes and challenges as they transiting from childhood to adulthood. It is marked as a period of identity crisis, as they strive to explore their self through experimentation and experiences. Often, these identity exploration and hormonal changes leads to experience intense emotions like anger, anxiety and depression.

Adolescents are more inclined to risk-taking behavior such as taking drugs and alcohol due to peer pressure, reckless driving for fun etc. Peers acceptance and validation is very crucial for adolescents as they find peer group more beneficial and influential for their psychosocial need fulfillment. Peer pressure has both positive and negative impact on development of adolescent; positive outcome may include high academic achievement, practicing healthy lifestyle and promoting pro-social behavior and negative outcomes leads to substance abuse and delinquent behaviour etc.

Conflict with parents become common in this period due to assertion for autonomy by adolescents. Demand for decision making related to academic choices, social involvement and personal choices create friction in parent-adolescents relationship. They often challenge the rules and boundaries set by parents, as they wish to experience the world in their own terms and conditions.

One more challenge faced by adolescents is academic and professional growth. In late adolescence, academic pressure increases due to requirement to achieve high grades to secure

admission in renowned institutions of higher education. Sometimes performance anxiety and high aspiration for success leads frustration, anxiety and stress among them and adversely affect their performance. This is the crucial time to understand the interest, aptitude and abilities of oneself regarding the career to be chosen. By this time foundation of career is laying down.

### **Role of Parenting in Development of Adolescents**

The adolescent period is the most challenging phase among all developmental stage. Adolescents need positive environment and parental support to manage the challenges set by the rapid physical and psychosocial changes and to explore their own identity. Despite of more demand of autonomy and freedom by adolescents, parents hold key influence over critical aspects of development like emotional stability, social competency, poised interpersonal relationships and career choices. Here comes the role of parenting in the healthy development of adolescents. A healthy relationship among parents and adolescence creates a positive environment to enhance desired developmental outcomes. The relationship with the parents shifts as the needs of adolescents changes with their maturity. Although adolescents exert more independence, they still need enduring affection and support from their parents to manage their rapid ongoing physical, social, mental and emotional changes and explore and accept their own identity. Adolescents demand more equivalent and reciprocally supportive relationship with their parents characterized by collective decision-making and authority. Parenting affects every areas of adolescent's development, which are as follows;

1. Neurological development, especially brain development of an adolescent is significantly affected by parenting. Appropriate and healthy brain development is evident in a nurturing and supportive environment created by parents.
2. Cognitive areas like problem solving skills, decision making, critical thinking, creativity and reasoning abilities etc. are fosters through stimulating environment with access to books, digital library, education games provided by parents. Higher order thinking skills are developed by encouraging curiosity and exposure to problem solving situations provided by parents.
3. Emotional development of adolescents is significantly affected by parent's behavior as they emulate the emotional responses of their parents. Consistent and unconditional emotional supports, positive reinforcement, validation of their emotions without judgment by parents' foster emotional health and resilience and ability to navigate complex emotions in adolescents. On the other hand, witnessing or experiencing violence, alcohol or substance abuse by parents or marital conflict between parents leads to emotional instability, insecurity and depression in adolescence.

4. Too a large extend social skills of adolescents develop by observing their parent's behavior in social situation. Modeling of positive behavior, effective and empathetic interaction with others, calm and constructive handling of conflicts by the parents helps adolescents to form healthy relationships and navigate social environment effectively. Adolescents may stand back from unsafe environments and protect themselves from potentials harms, if the parents keep track on their friends and other social circle.

## **Parenting Education**

Parent plays a pivotal role in the development of a child. Parenting is a dynamic process that implicates instinctive responses and learned behaviors to fulfill the needs of a child. Natural instinct of parenting instigate the parent to provide basic needs , such as care, comfort and protection to their child. However, the nuances of parenting, such as discipline, communication and educational strategies, are often learned through observation, experience and social influences, and here lies the importance of parental education.

Parenting education is a cornerstone in the foundation of a child's comprehensive growth and development. It is an ongoing process which shapes the child academic trajectory, develop social skills and promote overall well-being. Parenting education helps to create a supportive home environment and providing support for fostering a positive attitude towards life.

The process of providing guidance, information and skills required for parenting comes under the umbrella of parenting education. It equipped the parents with the knowledge needed for proper raising and nurturing of their child.

Parenting education provides opportunities for parents to explore their own strength, to enrich their skills required for parenting and enhance the life competencies. It also gives opportunities to learn more about specific features at each developmental stages of child.

## **Importance of Parental Education in Raising the Adolescents**

Due to rapid developmental changes and altered needs, adolescents set new challenges to their parents, which can be faced more effectively through parenting education. Parenting education helps to acquire new developmentally appropriate skills and strategies to meet the needs of adolescents. Parental education benefits the parents of adolescents in following ways:

1. It helps to understand ongoing developmental changes and related issues take place in adolescents, which further helps parents to respond more appropriately and empathetically.
2. It encourages practicing of positive parenting, like using positive language while addressing their adolescents, encourage disciplined life style, indulge in nurturing behavior to connect with their adolescence, spend quality time and allow to grow

independently. These develop feeling of security, understanding of boundaries in the adolescents which helps to reduce conflicts and misunderstanding among parents and adolescents.

3. Often, parenting education helps to establish a social network among parents. This network is used to interchange parenting advices, share resources for academic and vocational drive and provide emotional support to resolve challenges.
4. Parenting education helps the parent to develop pro-social behaviours like compassion, sharing, empathy etc. in their adolescents. It also prevents negative externalizing behaviours like bullying, hyperactivity and aggression etc.
5. It focuses on improving parent's communication skills. Through parenting education, parents become more active listener, able to express clearly and also constructively resolve conflicts which develop better understanding among them.
6. Parenting education also concentrate on mental health of parents because it directly affects adolescent's psycho-physical wellbeing. It equipped the parents with stress management techniques and encourages healthy life styles that help to handle their own fear, anxiety and stress levels along with their adolescent's psycho-social issues.
7. Excess use of digital media by adolescents is setting new challenges for the parents. Parenting education programme can equip parents to understand how to use age appropriate useful content. It helps to promote positive digital habits like reducing gaming time and using digital platform for access to educational resources.

### **Designing Educational Programmes for Parents of Adolescents**

Over all, nine steps are followed to design parenting education programme for adolescents, which are as follows:

#### ***Step- 1:***

**Need Assessment:** Comprehensive need assessment creates a base for an effective educational programme. It portrays a clear picture of needs of parents and adolescents, identify available resources and map the gaps existing between needs and available resources. For need assessment, the information is not only gathered from parents and adolescents but it must include other stakeholders like school authorities, teacher, school counselor, government representatives and community leaders etc. Need assessments includes a wide range of components like; needs of the intended beneficiaries, nature and availability of existing programme, existing resources, potential entry points for programming, need of capacity building and funding resources.

**Step- 2:**

**Programme Aims, Objectives and Selection of Target Groups:** Each programme doesn't fit to each group. So after need assessment, target group is identified and on the basis of their needs, aims and objectives of the programme are decided. Broadly, these programmes are categorized in three categories based on the needs of parents and their adolescents; 1. **Universally delivered programmes** meant for all parents of adolescence and cover general issues related to adolescents, 2. **Targeted programmes** are especially organized for group at high risk, as their needs may differ, 3. **Indicated programmes** are usually delivered to parents and adolescents with having complex needs.

**Step- 3:**

**Support Strategies and Partners:** Interlinked and complementary strategies are required at different stages of programmes for its successful implementation. Supporting laws and policies are required for protecting adolescent's wellbeing. Adequate financial resources should be provided by the government to organize parenting education programme especially for the marginalized adolescents. Delivery system should be strengthening by developing the capacity of frontline workers to deliver, supervise and support parenting education programme.

**Step- 4:**

**Curriculum Development:** An appropriate curriculum for parenting education is required to achieve the intended outcomes. Sometimes curriculum may be chosen from existing programmes and in some context construction of new curriculum or modification of existing curriculum is required as per some specific target group.

**Step- 5:**

**Selection of Delivery Platforms:** These programmes can be delivered through various delivery platforms like educational institutions, community centers, sports academy, recreational center, media and digital platforms. The delivery platform should be aligned with the target group so that it becomes acceptable and accessible to parents. Parents are fonder of choosing the programme delivered by established sources like school.

**Step- 6:**

**Identification and Training of Programme Implementers:** The successes of parenting education programme are greatly rely upon efficiency and efficacy of the programme implementers. They should be skilled enough not only to understand adolescent's developmental challenges but also have command on resolving the problems evolve in this stage. In some context based on the needs of target group, facilitators can be identified from existing workforce with some hands on training. In others, recruitment of new staff members is required. Recruiting



them from the community of target group is more beneficial because they are well aware by the background of target groups.

***Step- 7:***

**Generating Demands:** Presently, parenting education programmes are not very popular as the parents are unfamiliar with the benefits of these programmes. For generating demand of these programmes among the parents, suitable marketing strategy is required to raise awareness by clearly articulated about its benefits. Linking the parents with partners is essential for easy accessibility of programmes to the parents. It also helps in retention of parents in the programme and maintains the quality of the programme. There is a need for dedicated outreach and planning for accessibility for parents or adolescents with disabilities, as well as other marginalised groups.

***Step- 8:***

**Scale and Sustainability:** Scaling up denotes to roll out the parenting education programme to the target group at a large scale. Strategies for scale-up should be conceived at the planning stage to ensure extended reach with effectiveness. Digital marketing, community outreach and media coverage are used to scale and sustain parenting education programmes. Ensure accessibility by engaging educational institutions, health care provider and NGOs. These programmes can be sustained with regular update of curriculum, supplementary resources and continuous training of programme implementers.

***Step- 9:***

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** A monitoring and evaluation system is used for observing the programme implementation process and its overall impact. An effective monitoring and evaluation system for parenting education programme needs detailed and comprehensive planning which includes; clear description of programme objectives, indicator framework to track resources, activities and outcomes, identification of resource person or agencies for collecting data and choosing suitable time. Development of feedback mechanism is very essential for continuous improvements. Regular reporting of evaluation outcome to the stakeholders remains the parenting education programme effective, responsive and continuously improving.

In conclusion, it may be said that for improved adolescents outcomes and fostering healthier family dynamics, parenting education programme must be integrated into community and education system. Contemporary challenges specifically pervasive use of digital media and rising mental health issues can be addressed strategically by the parents by using knowledge, skills and resources provided by such programmes.

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