

Eleven-Year-Olds

General:

At this age, there is an accelerated growth pace. The eleven-year-old's activity level increases; energy and appetite also increase. There is a tendency at this age to forget manners, to be loud, rude and boorish, and to take unnecessary chances as a mean of defying adult authority. Riding bicycles in heavy traffic is an example of this kind of behavior. Eleven-year-olds quarrel a good deal with adults and lack emotional control although they can be cooperative and friendly with strangers. They need firmness and understanding from adults.

A number of girls have begun their period of fast growth leaving the boys behind. Eleven-year-old children require less sleep and hence like to stay up a bit later. Surprisingly, they are less likely to resist bathing, and will brush teeth very carefully. Some eleven-year-olds are quite concerned about money.

Self Concept and Independence:

They can be belligerent because of their high energy level. This pushes them toward activities which sometimes leads to carelessness. The eleven-year-old is looking for new self-definition. They will often confront others with criticism in an effort to get attention. They can, however, admit faults. Eleven-year-olds are unwilling to help around the house. Even teachers begin to observe some of the rebellion. His unpleasant nature is largely due to early pre-adolescence, self-assertiveness, and self-absorption.

It is suggested that parents maintain their sanity through these turbulent times by just relaxing prior expectations and trying to enjoy the energy of this child. Eleven-year-old children recognize their feelings but are not aware of why they are feeling that way. Support them at this time by giving positive attention to their emotions and feelings. They may need to have a night light for sleeping.

Relating to Other Children:

Boys are likely to have a single best friend and they may also have a gang or group of friends. Girls may have a clique of three to five friends, selected because of common interests and temperaments. Both boys and girls admit to being interested in the opposite sex and show their interest by teasing, joking, and showing off. Even though the eleven year old may deny a boyfriend or girlfriend relationship, a shy smile or smirk is a dead give-away that relationships are not far away.

It is hoped that reports of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use are exaggerated. More than 50 percent reported that either they or their friends smoke cigarettes, about 25% claim that they or their friends drink and/or use drugs. Eleven-year-olds like to quarrel with others, but do not like others to argue with them. Eleven-year-olds can feel left out of the peer group.

Games and Activities:

Outdoor activities indicate a high degree of motor skill development of the eleven-year-old. These skills allow such activities as skiing or skating with a high degree of grace. However, these children still enjoy watching television and listening to music a great deal. They do not like to work with materials that are complex, but they do like things that show off their skills.

Eleven-year-olds have trouble understanding relationships and the complex combinations of events. Some eleven-year-olds like school, others do not. They do not like a teacher who treats them like "babies", but do prefer one who is tough and has expectations of them. The eleven-year-old child is in the middle of all family activities for fear of missing out on something. This child would never withdraw to his room - - that would provide relief for his family.