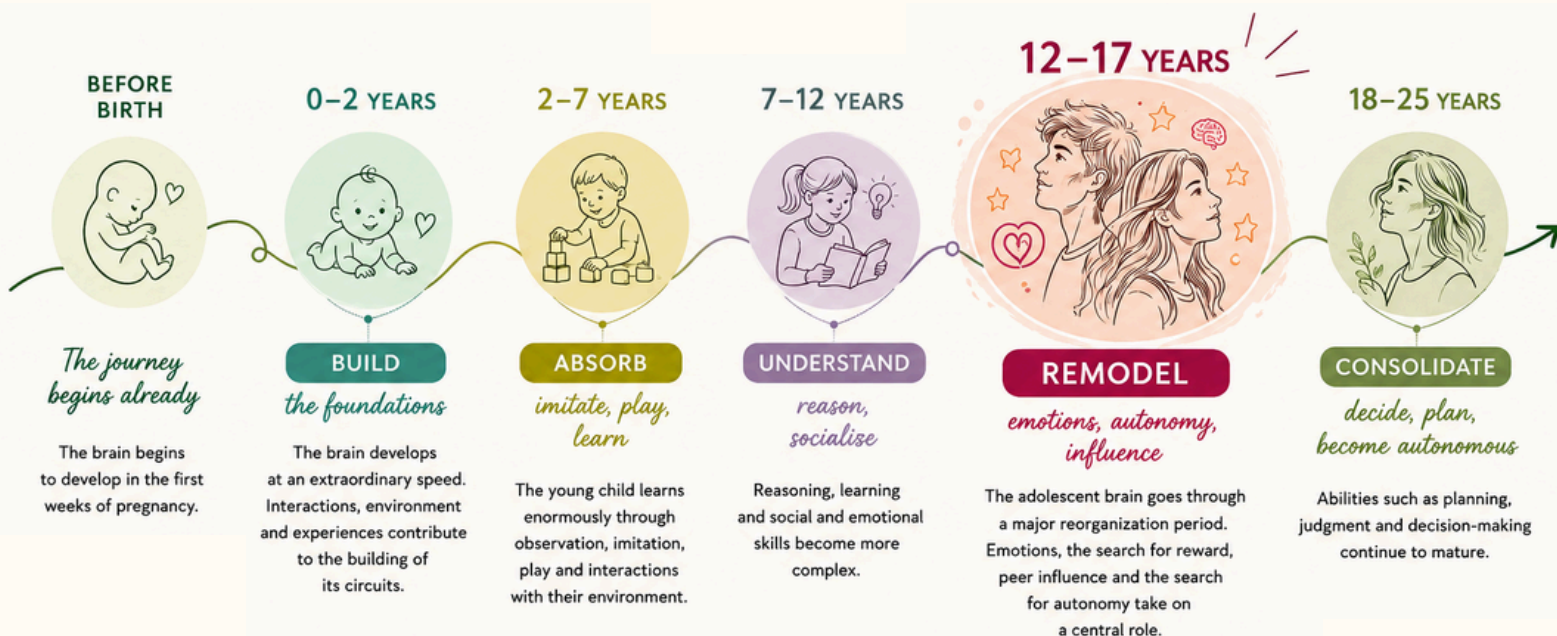


0 TO 25 YEARS OLD *The Great Brain Journey*

Understanding adolescents differently!



At 18, your child legally becomes an adult. But their brain's journey is far from over.

Understanding brain development also means learning to see our children—and ourselves—in a new light.

The adolescent brain isn't simply an adult brain with added hormones. The various brain regions and networks continue to reorganize and mature. Functions related to planning, prioritizing, and impulse control, in particular, continue to develop well into early adulthood.

The emotional brain and the reward system can be highly reactive, while the capacities for control and planning are still developing.

This explains why a 15-year-old can be capable of extraordinarily mature reasoning in one situation... and make a completely impulsive decision in another.

During adolescence, several things happen at once:

 **The brain reorganizes itself:** Brain regions and networks do not all mature at the same rate.

 **The body is changing:** Puberty, hormones, body image, and sexuality are disrupting established norms.

 **Emotions are taking center stage:** Young people can experience certain events very intensely while their regulatory capacities are still developing.



*The brain is not a finished product.
It is built, transformed, and adapted through experience.*



A closer look at secondary school

Why can my teen be so intense?

Other people become extremely important:

The need for belonging and the influence of friends can take on considerable importance.

 **And their environment has changed:** Social media, video games, notifications, constant comparison, exposure to content that previous generations didn't encounter.

Physiologically...

The amygdala takes over: The limbic system (the seat of emotions, impulses, and the pursuit of pleasure/dopamine) is in overdrive and operating at full capacity.

Hormonally: Sex hormones (estrogen, testosterone) and growth hormone are activated, altering body structure. Furthermore, melatonin (the sleep hormone) begins to be secreted later in the evening, which biologically shifts their sleep rhythm.



The result: The teenager feels everything in an amplified way. Mood swings, risk-taking, and emotional intensity are not due to ill will: their emotional accelerator is at full throttle, but their rational brakes are not yet in place!

What if it wasn't simply "the difficult age"?

A teenager is not a miniature adult. Their brain is still developing. Understanding this period can help us look at certain behaviors differently—without excusing everything.

Behind the mood swings, the risk-taking, the need for freedom, the "I don't care!" and the slammed doors, there is a brain that is transforming and an identity that is being built. The teenager is no longer the child they once were, but they don't yet have the self-regulation skills of a fully mature adult.

They experiment. They test their limits. They are searching for their place. They want to belong... all while becoming independent.

And in this process, his environment can become an extraordinary influence—his family, friends, school, social media, and surroundings all contribute to shaping the person he is becoming.

Because before trying to change a behavior, sometimes you have to start by understanding what causes it, and that can sometimes completely change how we react.

And this is just the beginning...

What's really going on in a teenager's brain? What role do sleep, diet, stress, screen time, friends, school, emotions, hormones, and the environment play?

Why are some young people more vulnerable to alcohol, drugs, or other risky behaviors?

And how can we support a teenager without trying to control every aspect of their life?

My new book on this topic will be available this fall. A guide to better understanding... rather than simply trying to manage!

Health begins with understanding.



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