



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY®

Youth at the Secondary Level (ages 12 – 18)

This handout will give you a general idea of the characteristics of youth ages 12 – 18 and their “sensitive periods,” along with thoughts about what you, as a parent, can do to support them at home.

Sensitive periods are the times during human development when children and youth are biologically ready and receptive to acquiring a specific skill or ability, and are therefore particularly sensitive to stimuli that promote the development of that skill. A Montessori teacher prepares the environment to meet the developmental needs of each sensitive period.

Main Characteristic/Sensitive Period	Implications for Home
<p>Social Consciousness - Developing an awareness of the different ideas held by their peers and the problems of the society they live in.</p>	<p>Do: Ask them thought provoking questions “why do you think....” and “Tell me more about that...”</p> <p>Do: Watch documentaries with them about something they care about (e.g., <i>Chasing Coral</i> if they care about the ocean). Ask them what they care about or what makes them upset.</p> <p>Don’t: Ask yes or no questions or leading questions.</p>
<p>Social Adjustment - Learning how to accommodate the demands, restrictions, and mores of society, including how to live and work harmoniously with others.</p>	<p>Do: Ask them what they are interested in learning more about. For example, maybe it’s cooking. Let them plan the menu for dinner one night. Ask them what they need to prepare (finding a recipe, gathering the ingredients, assembling the cooking tools, etc.).</p>

	<p>Do: Try to incorporate 1 thing a week where you are doing something for someone else, or to support an organization.</p> <p>Don't: Criticize them, especially publicly, if they aren't adhering to a norm. It's possible they aren't sure that it is a norm, or they don't understand the value of the norm enough to follow it.</p>
<p>Economic Independence - The desire to work for financial compensation and to make decisions about how to spend the money earned.</p>	<p>Do: Talk to your children about budget. Here are some resources you might find helpful:</p> <p><u>Financial Literacy for Teens</u> <u>High School Financial Literacy</u></p> <p>Do: Make up a fake budget, or share your real one, and ask what they think they can live on.</p> <p>Don't: Make a habit of just giving them money when they ask for it. Make sure you establish an allowance or some norms around earning money.</p>
<p>Emotional Independence - Developing an inner resilience that lets you know you can meet, solve, and be with any circumstance you face.</p>	<p>Do: Encourage journaling as a great way to have students get their ideas and struggles on paper.</p> <p>Do: Ask them to share what they are grateful for.</p> <p>Do: Tell your adolescent stories or watch videos about them when they were young. Tell them how they were brave, resilient, and funny. This will boost their image of themselves.</p> <p>Don't: Force them to share. Create time for them to share their feelings or thoughts, but know that there are times when they won't be ready to share them with you.</p>