

Teacher Education Institute (TEI)

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Child Development - The Child from Ten to Fourteen

Children now have to handle experiences in a different way. Before children could fantasize or imagine their way out of difficult adjustments. Now they have to face up to their own feelings concerning the outside world. On many occasions they will be filled with doubt and apprehension and be particularly vulnerable.

They will want a close relationship with teachers and parents; this supportive role will be even more difficult if inner development has not occurred in the right way in earlier years. Children will often assert themselves in a militant and dogmatic manner especially if they do not possess the inner security they need.

Teachers will still be regarded as authoritative figures and respected for their opinions and knowledge. Children come to recognize their own individuality and they can be substantially helped through different subject matter and curriculum. For example, children can, through the teaching process, obtain a perspective of their own identity and culture in relation to other people's cultures in both a present and historical context.

Before this age children recognize, through their own feelings, the basis for a moral order. Now they are able to perceive it through their thinking process albeit as children in an adult world. In reaching and educating the inner nature of children it is crucial that content needs to relate to their paradigm especially in reaching the creative and artistic.

Parents and teachers need to fully appreciate that children want to learn about the adult world but that knowledge must relate to creative, artistic and imaginative faculties. Children's imaginative shields need to be carefully dismantled not crushed or broken.

Whereas in the first stage of child development, the will forces were very much in evidence; and in the third stage the thinking/cognitive will be; part of the process in the second stage is to bring about a process of mediation, through the development of the feeling/affective.

We can observe many manifestations of this growth process. At a physical level we observe the rhythmic and graceful movements of children; at a mental level it is expressed in creative and artistic format.

At around the ages of twelve to fourteen children are in the preparatory stage of adolescence and will soon reach the stage when they will be able to reproduce themselves. Soon the graceful child will turn into the clumsy and self-conscious adolescent. At a mental level children will start to develop the adults' mental faculties and the world of childhood will soon be over.

Yet even now intellectual growth should not be forced. After the mental adjustments that occurred a few years earlier this is a comparatively quiet time in childrens lives. The creative and artistic still need to play major roles in the teaching process although new specialist subject matter will be introduced.