

Adolescence

Psychology

What changes physically, cognitively and socially, and the timing mismatch.

A developmental period marked by puberty, substantial brain reorganisation, and a shift of social orientation from family toward peers.

REWARD SYSTEM
early

CONTROL SYSTEM
mid-20s

SLEEP
shifts later

- The limbic reward system matures in early adolescence.
- The prefrontal cortex continues developing into the mid-twenties.
- This maturational gap increases risk-taking, especially with peers present.
- Sleep phase shifts later; early school starts conflict with it.
- Identity formation is the central psychosocial task.
- Peer influence peaks in mid-adolescence.

LOOK FOR IT

Adolescents take more risks when peers are watching; adults do not show the same effect.

Adolescents are not poor at assessing risk in the abstract. The difference appears under emotional arousal and peer presence.