

# 15-18 Years

## *The Development of Language and Conceptual Abilities in Children*

<b>What the typical child might say and do:</b>	<b>What the typical child knows or thinks:</b>	<b>What you should say or do:</b>	<b>Cautions:</b>
<p>Thinks and discusses issues and concerns much like an adult</p> <p>Uses abstract reasoning</p> <p>Is able to test new ideas and opinions verbally</p> <p>May be argumentative</p> <p>Makes strong push toward independence</p> <p>Displays inconsistent behaviors</p> <p>May be very critical of self and others</p>	<p>Develops greater understanding of and preoccupation with the future</p> <p>Emphasizes relationships with friends and peers over relationships with family</p> <p>Recognizes and accepts responsibility for how his/her opinions may affect others</p> <p>May fluctuate between having adult opinions and ideas and acting on childlike (or hedonistic) impulses</p>	<p>Join and engage with the youth as with an adult, conveying the core conditions of empathy, respect, and genuineness.</p> <p>Be a good listener.</p> <p>Be willing to be a “sounding board” and offer your attentions and responses as appropriate.</p> <p>Extend your understanding of the reality that the young person is somewhere between the (liberated and scary) world of adults and the (stifling and theoretically safe) world of childhood.</p>	<p>Don't rush into the relationship.</p> <p>Don't be easily persuaded that everything is “just fine” when the youth seems reluctant to talk.</p>

# 15-18 Years *(cont.)*

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### **Indicators of possible developmental problems:**

Regresses in language use/skills

Doesn't speak or stops speaking

Cannot sustain conversations with adults or peers

Has a short attention span

Is inhibited; withdraws

Experiences extreme isolation, even from peers

Doesn't make any attempts toward independence

Doesn't plan for the future

Shows no interest in social relations with peers of the same or opposite sex