

About this Age

At this age, youth think about having fun and being able to do what they want. They also want to build a good personal reputation, be an adult, and start a family. They have to decide between playing around for fun and taking on responsibilities, such as providing food for the family.

Becoming an adult means putting the needs of others first. Youth who have not learned this try to satisfy their wants rather than do what needs to be done for the common good. At this age, this difference becomes very noticeable.

The individual youth's attitude determines whether she is treated like an adult or a child, not her age. If she has a good attitude about learning and helping others, she will be treated like an adult. If she doesn't have a good attitude, she will be treated more like a child.

At this age, many youth have strong skills, strong character, and positive attitudes that will help them have a good future. But, some youth don't want to show their abilities because they want to blend in with their peers. They don't want to seem proud or competitive, so they might not want to use their skills when others can see them. They are still learning to be comfortable with their abilities.

What Parents Can Do

- **Talk openly about relationship skills.** Support your child to think about whether they are ready for a relationship. They need to be able to live independently. Encourage them to think about skills and knowledge they still need to be able to do that. Talk with them about being in a relationship. How will they handle arguments and problems? How will they show respect for a partner? Tell your child what is expected of them as an adult.
- **Continue to set expectations and have consequences.** Discipline makes your child's life more stable and helps them find balance. If you ignore the training of a child, you leave them drifting. Discipline does not need to be harsh and should not be done in anger. Use a calm, stern voice to express your disapproval. If necessary, take away privileges until your child shows they are responsible.
- **Encourage learning from Elders.** Encourage your child to value Inuit principles more than the desires of youth. Support your child to build relationships with Elders. Even though many Elders are less able physically, they have a lot of knowledge to share and can contribute to the wellbeing of others. Even those older people who are not wise or who have not lived good lives must still be respected, as all people should be respected. Teach your child to serve all Elders and learn from their experience. This will enrich your child's life and give her a solid foundation.

Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

- Observe how your child does tasks. Provide feedback so she knows what she did well and how she could improve.
- Point out role models. Draw your child's attention to individuals who have become highly skilled, accomplished something, or made a big contribution. Talk about how the person became that way. You could also draw attention to individuals who have not developed well. Talk about the consequences for how they live their lives.
- Observe how your child approaches things. Encourage him to be thoughtful and positive. Good thinking starts with having a good attitude. Teach your child that a positive attitude always has positive results.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ Keep communicating. Spend time with your child. Talk with him about things that interest him. Talk with him about his concerns. Do family activities together. Your child will want to spend a lot of time with his friends at this age, but insist that he spend some time with you and other family members. Remind him that he'll soon be off on his own.
- ✓ Help your child connect with mentors and role models, especially those who can teach her skills she is interested in.