

What's Special About Me at this Age?



Character Building

- I am learning to be mature and self-reliant.
- I am learning about interdependence. I am finding a balance between doing things by myself for myself and doing things with others, to help each other.
- I am learning about reciprocation. This means giving to others and allowing them to give back to me.



Communication

- I am learning how to ask for help when I need it and who to ask.
- I am learning to build relationships outside my family.



Skill Building

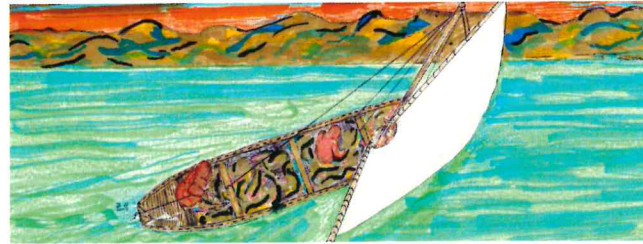
- I am learning how to keep and maintain my own things, so that I don't have to borrow from my parents. This is preparing me to live independently.

Commentary

In the past, youth had to make their own equipment at this age. Others would notice if a young person needed something. They would go out of their way to teach the young person how to make the thing they needed or to give them something extra they could offer. Young men would feel very motivated when older men offered to help them in this way. It is still important for us to help youth in this way today.

Applying Inuit Values

Mastery



Definition

Mastering a skill means that you can use the skill independently and at a high level of expertise.

Example: Mudding Sled Runners

Mudding your sled runners was an important skill. It made our sleds run faster and easier for the dogs to pull. We needed to know the basic principles of mudding to do it well. We needed to know the right materials and consistency, making sure no sand is mixed in, how to shape the mud on the runners, and how to make a smooth surface with water at just the right temperature. Then, we had to polish it perfectly.

To do this well, we had to commit to learning it and then always do the job with great care. And, the job did not end there! We had to protect the runners by sheltering the sled from sunlight and having well trained dogs that could avoid rocks. This is an example of mastery.

Reminders

- ✓ Make sure 16-year olds have information about sexual and reproductive health and relationships. The school and health centre might provide information and programs. Parents should also talk with youth about healthy and respectful choices.

Inunnguiniq

Childrearing Advice
from Inuit Elders

16 Years



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CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

About this Age

At 16 years, youth start to think like adults. But, they are not adults yet. They are eager for independence, and they still need guidance and support.

Parents often worry about 16-year olds because they are harder to control. They go out on their own. They have new experiences and many choices to make. They try to look fashionable, like people on TV.

Many do not want advice from parents and elders. They talk back, testing their independence. They may not show respect.

At the same time, brothers and sisters often become closer at this age. They rely on each other more.

16-year olds worry often! They face many stresses from home, school and peers. Sometimes, they sit around or stay in bed to escape the stresses.

They worry about who will help them do what they want to do in life. Our extended family relationships are not as strong these days. So, they feel insecure about who they can rely on.

At this age, youth need reassurance. They need to know they are valued. They also need patience and support. This is why families are so important.

What Parents Can Do

- **Support youth to master the skills they need to live on their own.** This is an age of mastering skills, planning, and preparing for a bright future.
- **Teach safety.** Many youth seem to be more careless with safety these days, including safety in vehicles and on the land. Teach them to be aware of the many dangers today.
- **Be strict about chores and work.** Make youth do things that need to be done, even if they don't want to. For example, tell young men to lift heavy things to build strength, to work long hours, and to spend time in the cold. Also, be sure to treat them like adults when they work hard.
- **Invite them to contribute like adults.** Don't treat them like the younger children and have the play with younger children. Speak to them as adults and include them in adult tasks and activities.
- **Encourage them to wake up early and start useful tasks (such as preparing for the day or fixing equipment).** Encourage young women to be good workers, so they will be strong partners and be able to support others who cannot support themselves.
- **Talk with them about good relationship habits.** Many youth are already in relationships these days. Prepare them to handle compromises and face hardships well. Teach them not to cause conflict. Teach them to resolve conflict as a team.

Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

- Always support youth to take their skills to the next level. This way, they will continuously improve and grow into their roles as adults.
- At 16, youth should be developing a desire to help others. This is an important aspect of becoming an adult. Provide your 16-year old with opportunities to help others. Explain the importance of serving others.
- Today, many things get in the way of traditional childrearing in the family. Our children and youth are learning many new things from others. But, they still have much to learn to from family members, especially Inuit skills. For example, all women still need to know how to make an amautiq, warm winter clothing, kamiit, and mittens. We still need to know how to live in our severe climate, to hunt well, and respect the land.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ Embrace Your 16-year Old's New Independence
- ✓ Sometimes this is a harder age for parents than it is for youth! Your role is changing. Your child is relying on you less and becoming more capable. But, as she becomes an adult, she needs help in many new areas of learning. Learning to be a human being and live a good life is a lifelong process. Support your child's increasing independence. Welcome the change in your relationship. This will keep you close and strong as a family.