

Learning in

Emerging Adults

Today's young adults are delaying marriage and parenthood while extending their stay at home and in school.

Karen DeBord, Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialist, Family and Human Development; Reviewed by Crystal Tyler-Mackey, Extension Specialist, Community viability, Virginia Tech



Parenting Secrets

- The exploratory phase in the life course is referred to as emerging adulthood. It includes the ages from late adolescence (about ages 16 to 19) through the mid-20s.
- Many changes in women's roles — the economy, birth control, and the vast number of life choices — have led to these changes.
- Job changes are frequent because young people look for work that will not only pay well but will also be personally fulfilling.
- Nowadays, most young people delay marriage while still having serious sexual relationships.
- Young people today see adult obligations as an end to independence and spontaneity.

Together Time

Emerging adults are exploring their identities and feeling unstable and "in between" — neither an adult nor a child.

- Expose young adults to many experiences to help them decide next steps. Allow freedom with parameters.

Growing Time

Emerging adults seem self-focused, and they are, at least temporarily.

- If young adults still live at home, let them be responsible (and learn responsibility) for their own laundry, dinner, and schedules. Be available as a sounding board. This is the time for them to learn skills for daily living.

Learning Time

Adulthood is no longer defined as being a parent or being married. It is gradually defined by making independent financial decisions, being financially independent, and accepting responsibility for oneself.

- Young adults carry their family's influences with them.
- Continue to build traditions and family rituals together.