



CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, Family Voices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health.

www.familyvoices.org and www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org.

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Love—and Desire to Care for—at First Sight

There's something irresistible about babies, and now a research study has shed some light on why we react that way. Scientists showed men and women pictures of infants and measured the adults' brain activity. The adult was asked not to move or speak, but the brain patterns were similar to the kind seen just before someone speaks or moves. Amazingly, this happened even in adults with no children of their own. The adults also reported that they felt happier looking at infant pictures than at adult pictures. These reactions only happened with pictures of human infants—looking at cute puppies or kittens did not trigger the same brain reactions. The researchers concluded that humans are biologically programmed to care for their young, and that adults are “hard-wired” to take action in the presence of a baby.

To read more, go to: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/03/120316094532.htm

Self-Centeredness—A Normal Developmental Stage

Young children are naturally self-centered. As their brains mature, they begin to learn ways to interact with others so that everybody benefits. Children between ages 6 and 13

learn to bargain and control impulse behavior. Scientists in a recent study designed games that looked at how willing children were to share rewards, and noted differences based on age and maturity. To read more about this study, go to: www.humanhealthandscience.com/self-centered-kids-blame-their-immature-brains/general

Teens are Still Developing

We sometimes forget that teenagers are still growing and developing as younger children are. Just as it is important to know what a young child is ready to do, it is also important to have this understanding for teens. It is typical for 15-17 year olds to:

- Show self confidence and make his or her own decisions
- Engage in activities that promote health and wellness
- Develop caring relationships with family, friends, and other adults
- Take part in community life
- Cope with stress in constructive ways and take increasing responsibility
- Feel periods of sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug use, unsafe sex, or other problems

Remember that each child develops at his or her own rate. For parenting tips to help with the teen years, go to: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/nce2.html