

What's Special about this age...

Character building

Youth gain knowledge by helping someone and they should not always expect to get paid to get something for themselves out of it. The maligait is working for the common good and not self-interest. This is a time of showing other what you are able to contribute. This is a time when adults will notice abilities and how well a youth can reason and act in a tight spot.

Communication

Youth often have a good memory for songs and stories. This is an age when the stories also take on new significance. Youth can now understand the metaphors and meanings and the terms used and also the older language.

Skill Building

You hope that youth have a real willingness to learn because they realize that this is when to build skills and to seek specialized knowledge.

It was expected that at this age the youth would volunteer to help others and care for others so they could learn and build skills.

At this age, youth should be proficient at a skill such as making a fishing hole. Chiseling ice needs to be precise, you need to conserve energy by doing it properly and making clean cuts. The youth needs to understand the balance required between applying force and being exact. These skills are highly developed so that it is not just about getting a job done, but doing a job well and with expertise.

Definitions of Terminology



Being skilled and able will ensure survival. Survival requires a committed and thoughtful approach as well as quick reactions to situations that rely on skills and past learning. One must be well prepared in order to survive difficulties.

Description of processes

Inuit talk about continually planning and preparing youth for the future because nothing is ever certain. This view of training that builds expertise and capability in an individual is a lifelong process that starts in early life, but is perfected in youth at this age. Becoming highly skilled, being able to operate independently, showing the ability to solution seek and to think deeply, and being respectful and careful of the environment and of those around you are indicators of strengths for survival.

Reminders for parents...
Youth are still going through puberty and experience many physical and emotional changes. Make sure that your child has a full physical examination.
It is an important time of life to get calcium from milk, cheese, yoghurt, caribou broth or bone marrow.

Inunnguiniq

Advice from Inuit Elders



13 years old



The profile of the child at this age...

Youth are now able to do things that are a really significant help to the family. They may still try things out of curiosity because they still will launch into some things without really thinking them through, but generally, they have enough skills that parents do not have to worry too much about them.

At this age, youth will want to show independence and ability and do things on their own. They want to test their skills to see how well they have been prepared to become independent. This is the time of initiation into adulthood.

This is a very happy age with a lot of enjoyment because they sense a new freedom and an ability to be independent and to show who they are as a person.

If a youth is not sure of themselves or has not developed skills that will serve them well, this can be a time of insecurity and fearfulness. In this case, the youth will become vulnerable and may become negatively influenced or become involved in sub-culture activities trying to search out where they belong. They may become involved in using drugs, alcohol or develop relationships with the opposite sex that are based on dependence.

The consequence could be that is called sammuktuq- giving up wanting to do things. Sometimes this occurs when a youth has been discouraged or put down by others so s/he stops trying. This can be a turning point when a person is either crushed or enabled in life.

Youth at this stage of life need encouragement and acceptance by adults. They may seek this out in negative ways.

What parents can do...

- Taking on responsibilities must begin at a young age and added to as the child grows so these things will not be a burden when they have to live alone and be entirely responsible for themselves. Make sure you give your child tasks and have him/her take full responsibility for carrying them out.
- Have expectations of how things are done. Expect a good job that does not involve waste or take a long time to complete. Expect that equipment is cleaned and returned to where it is stored.
- If youth complain about expectations make sure s/he understands that this is all life training and it does not become a burden if it is understood that this will help others to consider the youth as an adult.
- Keep talking to your youth, even if s/he tries to be distant or withdrawn. Never stop talking and making sure that the teachings are being explained and understood.
- Some youth do not mature properly and always rely on the parents without learning to take responsibility or take initiative. They can never stand on their own.
- It can be very worrying for the parents when the youth do not learn independence. Today we worry whenever a person is delayed on the land because their abilities are not trustworthy. This is a great burden in the community and to a family.
- Another burden is young women having babies because parents have not instructed/protected their daughters well. This is the parents' responsibility, but it starts early in life and must be very actively enforced at this age- both for boys and girls.

Learning with your child

Typically, this is a time when youth find it hard to communicate openly, and to express some of their thoughts and concerns. They may also be shy to share their opinions or to let you know what is concerning them. Make opportunities to talk opening with your child about life, becoming an adult and both what to expect and what is expected in order to live a good life.

Share the teachings. These are still important today. When they are repeated often they will be learned by youth and will help them in life.

Make sure you are continually training and explaining to your youth. If training is done a little bit at a time and considered part of the natural order it will be better accepted.

Tips for Parents

For Inuit there are things that we need in our everyday life such as preparing skins. Other things are changing, but some things will probably not change. We need to hunt to supply food to families, we need to know the weather and the water for this. We need to raise children and make them into human beings. This has not changed—the basic principles of good parenting—over thousands of years. We have relied on these teachings and will always continue to rely on these—this is IQ and it must always be here for Inuit to remain Inuit. Do not be afraid to actively parent as your child becomes an adult.