

Human growth and development

Much of the following was extracted from:

http://www.ehow.com/about_6666697_human-growth-development-stages.html

The stages of human development before birth:

- Zygote – newly fertilized egg
- Embryo – multicellular, growing and organizing major organ systems
- Fetus – after about 9 weeks of development – has recognizable human body form

Stages after birth: Infant, Child, Juvenile, Adolescent, Adult

The stages are divided by psychological and motor abilities that normally occur.

Most growth and development of mental and physical capabilities occur prior to adulthood.

Infants:

A baby is considered an infant from birth through the first year of life. During this first year, babies develop skills that will be lifelong resources. Pediatricians look for specific markers of growth and development during this time. Learning how to control the head, move by crawling and sit are called gross motor skills. Using the thumb and finger to pick up pieces of food and hold a pacifier are called fine motor skills. Sensory skills are measured by observing a baby's ability to see, hear, taste, touch and smell. Language skills are evident the first year of life when a baby makes sounds, learns some basic words and responds to the spoken word. Finally, social skills include how a baby interacts with family and peers.

Child:

After age 1 year, a child's physical growth slows down considerably. The toddler years are more mobile and exploratory. Middle childhood occurs about age 6 years, and children have a better sense of right and wrong then. They also tend to become more independent as they begin dressing themselves and spend more time at school and with friends. Cognitive changes include rapid mental growth with a greater ability to talk situations through and focus on the environment around them instead of being self-centered.

Juvenile:

As children approach the ages of 9 and 10 years, they become more independent and might start noticing the physical changes of **puberty**. A major growth spurt can occur at this time as the body begins sexual development. This also can be a time of stress for children as peer pressure takes its toll. Body image along with emotional changes often cause children to feel less confident. Juveniles also start preparing for middle school by taking on more academic responsibilities and focusing on goal-setting and accomplishment.

Adolescent:

From ages 12 to 18 years, children experience distinct mental and physical changes. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the beginning of a girl's menstrual cycle typically occurs 2 years after the onset of puberty. The NIH reports that boys do not begin puberty with a distinct marker and tend to mature with adult genitalia about age 16 or 17 years. During this time of physical change, adolescents may become more self-centered. In middle to late adolescence, teen-agers are often characterized as becoming more comfortable with their body sexually and ready to have romantic friendships. Adolescent behavior often includes the teenager's need to pull away from parents and authority figures to establish their own self-identity and make decisions on their own.

Adult:

Adulthood is often noted when a person is considered chronologically, legally and behaviorally ready to hold responsibilities such as operating a motor vehicle, voting, taking the vows of marriage, entering into a contract and serving in the armed forces. The process of becoming mature does not end with adolescence but continues throughout adulthood as psychological, safety and self-actualization needs are met. Adulthood is often divided into three categories: young adulthood, middle age and old age.

Adulthood is also characterized by progressive **senescence** – a decline in physical and mental abilities. Many diseases are inborn and are commonly expressed late in life.

More information and detail:

http://www.matsuk12.us/cms/lib/AK01000953/Centricity/Domain/2738/HO_Unit_7_Human_Growth_and_Development.ppt