



# BECOMING A TEENAGER



This booklet has been produced to accompany the BBC One series *Child of Our Time*. The programmes were made in partnership with The Open University.

In addition to the information in this booklet, The Open University also has a wealth of free online information and resources about the family and child development.

Visit [open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime](http://open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime)

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY FAMILIES



By watching *Child of Our Time*, or thinking about your family and your neighbourhood, it is clear there is no simple way to define family. Father, mother and 2.4 children is no longer a typical family composition in the UK today. Lead academics and policy makers acknowledge the differences in family composition by using a range of terms to describe the family such as blended families, lone or single parent families, nuclear families, dual heritage families, ethnically diverse families, and extended families. However, families may also share similarities such as living in the same community, children going to the same school or sharing the same religious beliefs. This can foster a sense of connectedness with other families living in the same community and cultivate a spirit of community cohesion.

Governments are responsible for providing healthcare, schools and other facilities for children and families, and invest a lot of time and money generating statistics about family life. Sometimes these statistics confirm our common sense knowledge about how we live and the nature of family life. On other occasions the statistics might challenge what we think we know.

According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2012 there were 7.7 million families with dependent children and, of these, almost two million were lone parent families - a figure that has grown steadily but significantly



from 1.6 million lone parent families in 1996. The number of dependent children in each family is interesting. According to the statistics, which offer a snapshot of the population at that specific time in history, 47 per cent of these families had only one dependent child, while the percentage of families with two or more dependent children decreased. This does not necessarily mean that the average number of children born is decreasing; it could be explained by women having children at a later age. An alternative view is that families are making lifestyle choices over the number of children they can afford to support.

The types of family in which dependent children live has also changed significantly. In 2012, 62 per cent of dependent children lived with a married couple family, a decrease of 11 percentage points from 1996. The percentage of dependent children living with opposite sex cohabiting families has increased to 14 per cent; the percentage of dependent children living in lone parent families has increased to 24 per cent.

Stories about the families of the rich and famous often dominate the news. This is especially true where celebrities have done something that is unusual or differs from how society might define what makes a family. For example, on 14 September 2009, *The Guardian* reported on Elton John's failed attempt to adopt a Ukrainian orphan who was HIV-positive. The reason given for this decision by the Ukrainian government was

that Elton John was 'too old and not in a heterosexual marriage'. This decision appears to have been supported by Save the Children UK, which is reported as saying that celebrity adoptions of foreign children might give the wrong message to parents who may 'abandon children in the hope of giving them a better life'. By comparison, a representative of Ukraine's Gay Forum said that this decision was 'depriving the boy of a chance to find a family and love'. Elton John and his partner David Furnish went on to successfully adopt another child, Zachary, in 2011.

Some celebrities appear to welcome stories in the media about their family lives and provide details of their having children, adopting children, being separated from children or even losing their children to illness and





disease. Others work hard to protect their children from the challenges of growing up in the media spotlight. Either way, many of us like reading about the family lives of celebrities, because this provides us with an opportunity to see how our own ideas of family compare.

Whatever our family composition, it is important that children can grow and develop secure in their relationships with family members. Much research has been undertaken looking at how children develop. The importance of babies forming secure early relationships impacts on how children develop life skills such as confidence and effective relationships with others. The social interactions that babies and young children experience within their immediate family are important influences on their development both cognitively and socially. Changing childhoods



mean that children now frequently engage with the environment through a variety of social mediums such as Facebook rather than experiencing outdoor activities enjoyed by previous generations of children.

No matter what the composition, the family is an important starting point in children's exploration of the world. Family are the first to influence and support the development of an infant. Positive experiences provide children with a sense of security and stability that they need to help them discover and explore the world outside of their immediate family environment. Families need to support young people in their decision making and help them to develop resilience to deal with adversities they encounter such as bereavement. As children develop and grow older, influence extends to the wider environment; family influence declines and friendship plays an increasingly dominant role during the period of becoming a teenager.





## FRIENDSHIP



As young people grow up, parents can feel that their child is more interested in talking and socialising with friends than with them. The earlier significant attachment between parent and child is replaced by a need to talk and socialise with friends - not only at school, but after school as well! Many parents begin to feel they know less about their teenager's life, both in and out of school, than their friends do. While such situations can cause tension between parents and young people, they are a part of the growing up process.

### Peer groups and friendships

You may think that young people are with their friends all day at school, but is this really true? At school, young people are usually grouped together in classes with their peers. For most young people, friends do come from their peer groupings - but not all their peers are their friends. The significant difference that distinguishes a peer from a friend is the development of a close relationship that is valued by both parties. Think back to when you were at school or any situation where you mixed with a large number of people. Why did some people become your friends while others remained peers?

### Qualities that young people look for in a friend

Below is a short account written by a 12-year-old girl. In it she describes and reflects on the qualities that define her relationships with friends.

*I have loads of wicked friends! We all went to primary school together and then moved up to secondary school. It was a bit scary but I was lucky that my best friend from primary school ended up in my class. Secondary school is way bigger than our little village primary school. It was cool to have her and some of our other mates in the same class. It made it easier, you know? We felt like we were all in the same situation.*



There was a new girl in the school who moved from another country. I felt sorry for her and luckily she also joined the basketball team, so we had loads in common! I did not tell my old friends this but she is also mixed race like me, so I felt like we had something that we already shared, you know? My friends are my friends because we share lots of our interests, we all like to listen to the same type of music, we like dancing, basketball and having a laugh at school. They understand me – I would be very bored at school if it was not for my friends!

This account suggests that the qualities that young people look for in friendship are generally positive qualities, including support, closeness and understanding. Trust and not being judgemental are other important qualities that define friendships within groups of young people.

### **Friends as part of identity formation**

Becoming a teenager is a period when young people are developing their own identity. The simplest way to think about identity is to ask yourself who you are in relation to someone else. During identity formation, young people start to question and examine the values and moral codes that they grew up with and start to consider who and what they want to be. The major influence and input of parents and close family members on children's decisions and actions decreases, while the range and strength of other influences becomes more diverse and further removed from the family environment. Children of parents who, for example, have a strong faith or whose jobs are in the armed forces, may start to question if this is something they would choose themselves.

Such questioning, however difficult for parents to accept, is part of young people 'spreading their wings' and becoming more independent in their own thinking and actions. All the previous input and values that

parents imparted to their children during earlier years will be drawn on and questioned in the young person's quest to find their own way forward.

Researching into child development, Eric Erikson (1968) produced an eight-stage theory about human psychosocial and identity development. ('Psychosocial' refers to the psychological and social aspects that influence personality and behaviour from birth onwards.) Infants learn about trust based on experiences during infancy: for example, did someone respond when they cried because of needing to be changed or to be fed? During adolescence, young people experience what Erikson referred to as 'identity versus role confusion'. He believed that as young people progressively assert their independence, their most significant relationships are with their friends. This interaction with friends is increasingly important for young people in order for them to decide what is important and who they want to be, rather than who they have been told they are in the years preceding adolescence.

This interaction with friends is therefore a crucial part of identity formation. During adolescence, children also begin to experience new responsibilities in terms of their learning and opportunities for decision making. They become more aware of their individuality and their confidence grows as their sphere of influence increases beyond the family. In Erikson's view, if a young person is unable to develop 'identity' during adolescence, then role confusion will be the end result. In other words, his research concluded that when young people reach adulthood, they will not have a clear sense of who they are - with the potential to be unsuccessful in developing and maintaining relationships.

The spider diagram overleaf illustrates the many influences that impact on young people which play an important role in a young person's identity formation or psychosocial development. The shorter lines are influences closer to the young person and the longer lines



illustrate influences that are more likely to be further removed.

It is clear that some influences are given - that is, they cannot be changed, such as race and the country we are born in. Other influences are fluid and might be relevant for some young people and not for others, such as having siblings or being an only child. A reality of our time is the huge number of families that experience the upheaval of moving between countries, such as immigrants or asylum seekers. This is a major influence on how young people view themselves and whether they feel if they belong or not.

### At home – family life

As children become teenagers, parents may feel that they are losing control of what their children are doing

and experiencing, and can find it difficult to adjust to the changing relationship with their children. Parents can best understand by knowing that everything a child experienced up to this point does influence this identity formation period. For example, parental values and parenting style all contribute to a teenager's life experiences and therefore will play a role in how a young person sees themselves in relation to others. From early childhood onwards, the positive (and negative) examples and experiences that babies and children form with their parents, siblings and other extended family and family friends are all influences that will impact on their identity formation.

Young children are mostly told what to do. As they move into their teenage years, this shifts to 'what do I want to do?' They will draw on all the experiences from their past and either build on them or decide to experiment and find out for themselves if they agree with the values and ideas that they grew up with. This can be a very anxious time for parents - Stanley G. Hall (1904) did not describe adolescence as a time of 'storm and stress' without reason! Hall attributed the 'storm and stress' of adolescence to three different factors:

- **Conflict with parents:** Hormonal changes often get the blame for conflict with parents during adolescence. However, young people's search for their identity, their experience of peer pressure and their desire for increased independence and freedom in movement and thought leads to potential contrasting views of what is appropriate behaviour and what is not. Sensitive communication between parents and their teenagers based on trust and respect can help to overcome some of this conflict.
- **Mood disruptions:** Adolescence is a time of upheaval and change for young people, and a lot of the changes that take place are given changes that are outside their control, such as the onset of puberty. Early or



late physical maturers might feel especially out of control as their bodies are changing, or not changing, out of sync with the rest of their friends. Hormonal changes create mood swings that can make young people experience a whole range of emotions during a very small time period. Hormonal changes add to young people becoming interested in more intimate love relationships that can cause uncertainty and upheaval.

- **Risky behaviour:** Risk taking behaviour can increase during adolescence. This is partly due to the search for identity and pushing against parental boundaries in the search for independence. However, risky behaviours can have long-term negative outcomes for young people, for example the risks of alcoholism, self-harm, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. It is

important for parents to be able to distinguish between young people asserting their independence in a positive manner and engaging in risky behaviour.

Even though a parent's direct influence decreases during the teenage years, they do still have an indirect influence on the peer group and subsequent friendship groups that their child will access. Parents shape children's peer groups through their choice of where to live, which school their children attend or membership of organisations or community groups. All these are significant places where young people are able to interact with peers and develop friendships. Positive parent-child relationships are important because they provide children with a supportive start in life and a valuable platform to launch the exploratory teenage years.



## RESILIENCE



Becoming a teenager is a time of change and development for young people physically, emotionally as well as socially. Teenagers begin to spend more time away from the family home and outside the direct care or control of parents. They will want to make decisions for themselves that may be influenced by their friends and peer group. For parents, this can be one of the most worrying times - but it is important that parents are supportive and positive about the challenges young people face as they move towards adulthood. How can parents best understand and support young people in the latter part of this journey, as they move from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood?

During this final stage of 'growing up', children will face new challenges and meet with new opportunities. By the age of 12, the vast majority of young people will have moved to secondary school and this can be a daunting experience for both young people and their parents. It can mean a change in friendship groups, especially where young people are allocated to different schools depending on catchment areas or by parental choice.

For many young people today, the make-up of their family life may change several times throughout their childhood - for example, they may have experienced moving between homes when visiting separated parents and living with step-brothers and sisters. The growth of the European Union means that many children at school today were born in other countries, and there are others who may be immigrants or asylum seekers. What we do know is that resilient children cope better with any stresses and adversities that they encounter, and are also able to recover faster from them.

### **What is resilience?**

Resilience means being able to resist or 'bounce back' from adversities. As well as the challenges mentioned above, children will often cite the deaths of parents, grandparents or siblings, accidents, abuse, abandonment,



and homelessness as adversities that they have faced. For parents, it is important to remember that it is not whether the adversity would or would not be challenging for us, but how it is experienced by the young person. The ability of young people to develop resilience will help them to meet with both adversity and opportunity from a position of security and strength. The factors that help young people gain resilience have been identified and grouped in three ways:

- in the young person themselves
- in their family
- in their environment.

Some of these factors are bio-genetic, which means that they are determined by genetics or parentage and are therefore fixed. Most of the factors are variables, which means that they can be imposed or withdrawn, but once identified and acknowledged, can be useful in supporting young people to cope with difficult situations and aid decision making.

Resilience in a young person refers to the qualities or factors they have at their disposal to help them deal with a difficult situation. These could be internal factors, such as their nature, personality, age, gender and sense of humour. Young people's communication and problem solving skills add to their resilience, as do their social



connectedness, level of independence and hobbies. Resilience in young people develops when they feel they have control over their actions and behaviour, as well as control over the things that happen to them. Resilience will develop poorly in a situation where a young person feels without control or helpless regarding things that happen to them.

The second set of resilience factors relate to the family. Parents who are warm and supportive towards their children help them to develop resilience, and a close relationship with at least one parent adds further to this. Parents who have a positive relationship with each other also helps develop resilience, as the young person grows up feeling safe and secure. Interestingly, a valued social role such as looking after younger siblings





or having some care duties for a grandparent also adds to resilience, as young people feel they are a trusted and valued member of the family and are contributing positively to family life.

The final set of resilience factors relate to the wider environment outside the immediate family. Factors include a supportive extended family that might be living close by or even across the world and can be contacted through the internet. Other factors include successful experiences at school and within friendship groups.

Resilience can be further developed by the young person having a close relationship with someone who can give advice and support who is not a member of the family, such as a family friend, godparent or

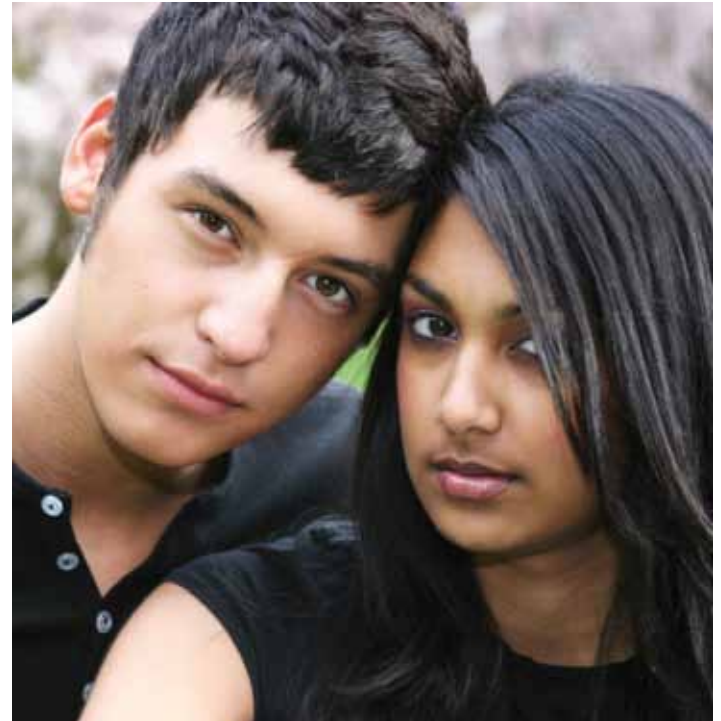


a practitioner. Being a member of a sports club or a religious or faith community can also help to develop resilience by providing the young person with a further group of people who are interested in them or who are involved in their lives.



### **Supporting young people with decision making**

During adolescence, it is important that parents give young people more opportunities to make decisions that impact on their lives. Young people's input into decision making helps them to develop the necessary



skills for adulthood, such as being able to make a valued judgement between different options or to negotiate risk taking behaviour. Some typical decisions that young people might encounter include the choices and conflicts that arise in friendship groups and whether to be 'more than friends' with someone of the opposite sex.

Parents can offer support through open communication, being willing to listen and, when appropriate, offering a cautionary word of advice. Support from parents is also valuable, not just during the decision making process but also to assist them when any decisions they make go awry. Assisting young people with their decision making, and supporting the impact of their decisions (whether they listened to you or not) is a strategy that parents can usefully employ.



## BEREAVEMENT



Death is a natural and inevitable aspect of life and one that the majority of young people will experience during their childhood. In the UK, 53 children are bereaved of a parent every day, and 13 per cent of children aged between 5 and 15 have experienced the death of a grandparent. This is a small proportion of all children; however, most children in the UK (and in many other societies) come into contact with death from a very young age through such media as television, film, storybooks, computer games and various forms of play.

In the UK, in the past, the reality of death was generally excluded from childhood experiences. Typically, children and young people were not included in funeral services and death was not discussed in front of them. However, in recent years, there has been significant development in understanding how children and young people both experience and understand death and bereavement. Many parents today adopt a different approach to family bereavement from that experienced during their own childhood.

A death in the family represents not only the loss of a close and valued person, but also the loss of a parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin. Depending on the significance of the relationship, this can have a profound effect on family members and can also change the dynamic of the family. The impact of bereavement on members of a family can be influenced by:

- the timing of the loss
- the concurrence of several losses, or of loss with other major lifecycle changes
- a history of traumatic loss and unresolved mourning
- the nature of the death
- the significance and function of the person in the family.

Bereavement is always going to be a difficult experience and the timing of the loss may add to the trauma. When young people experience bereavement close to birthdays (their own or that of the deceased

person), or when preparing for an exam, it can impact on the ways in which they experience loss, communicate their feelings or behave. Bereavement during a lifecycle change (such as moving school or when parents are separating) means that young people are coping with several major issues at the same time, and may need additional support from a range of adults with whom they are in daily contact.

Many adults struggle to come to terms with the loss of their own parents. When a young person has had a secure, early attachment with a grandparent, they too will have lost a significant person from their life. All of us can experience the decline of someone suffering from incurable disease and the eventual bereavement may be

no less traumatic than someone losing life through a fatal accident. Young people might experience bereavement in more age-specific ways and grieve differently to adults, and it can be helpful to recognise this. Becoming emotional and withdrawn is often an outcome for young people, but some can react by adopting risky or inappropriate behaviour such as experimenting with alcohol or staying out late.

In 2005, Paul O'Brien, then aged 12, carried out some research about how young people are affected by death. His questionnaire was completed by 160 friends and peers, and he interviewed a small number of them about their experiences. Paul found that the length of time young people grieved ranged from one month to five





years, and that the intensity varied a lot. It appeared that a young person could be as upset by the death of a pet as a grandparent. For some young people, the hardest part was before the death actually happened when they were in a state of knowing it was going to happen; for others, where death happened unexpectedly, it was the shock that was hardest to cope with. Most of the young people Paul interviewed felt that bereavement made them appreciate life more and want to live it to the full. As Paul comments:

*Death affects young people in all sorts of ways, but when it affects behaviour it is usually in a positive way. From my own experience of death I recovered in about six months. That was the time it took before I stopped getting upset. I went to my family instead of my friends for support. ... It changed me in a way that I wanted to be kinder to the people I love.*

You can read Paul's study on the Children's Research Centre website at

<http://childrens-research-centre.open.ac.uk>

Euphemisms for death can make the experience more difficult and confusing. Saying that a family member has 'passed away', 'passed on' or 'gone to sleep' are not easily understood and can cause misunderstandings. Practitioners who work with bereaved families advise that they should use clear and age-appropriate language in communications about death, and that families should talk openly about death in ways that are suitable and inclusive for all family members.

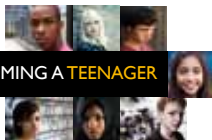
Parents may find their teenager has a different explanation as to what happens after death. This is a time when young people may well be questioning whether they share the same religious beliefs as their parents, and this can impact on the family's approach to bereavement. Regardless of individual beliefs about what happens, a degree of fear and uncertainty are inevitable. How well young people feel supported in their





grief will impact upon their ability to cope and further help them to develop resilience. Parents can sometimes be over-protective without realising this may do more harm than good. Adults can provide a safe and supportive environment where young people can grieve in ways that feel right for them.





## CHANGING CHILDHOODS



The earlier section about friendship discussed the developing importance of friendship in young people, both in the time spent with friends and the influence friends now exert. Young people still engage in group activities such as cinema outings or a school prom, which might remind parents of their own teenage years - but much is different. A concern today for many parents can be the amount of time that their children spend chatting and 'whatever else' with friends via the internet and other media. There are disturbing stories in the news about young people who meet with strangers they first met online and this is often referred to as grooming. They may insist that they only talk to friends, but how can parents be sure that this is really the case? And is all this chatting online good for any young person?

Many young people are involved in social networking. Most likely they will have a Facebook page and will always seem to be accessing it! The frequent news items regarding bullying via social networking sites are often a cause for concern for both parents and practitioners who work with young people. Young people from the age of 13 are allowed to have a Facebook page, in accordance with the website's current age regulations; but many young people find ways around this and have Facebook profiles from an earlier age. How can parents make sure their child is safe when accessing social networking sites?

Reflecting back on how, when and where you socialised with your friends when you were a young person may well highlight differences between you and your children. Thinking more about why your responses are different, and how parenting practices have changed through the years, helps to understand the ways in which children and young people socialise today.

Some differences may occur because of childhoods spent in contrasting urban and rural environments. A significant difference is the perceived safety of the community and wider world in which your family now lives.

## Let's compare

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) states that all children have the right to play. Learning through play-based activities is an established method in early years education and for children in the early primary years. Many adults have fond memories of playing 'out' and they would like to give the



same opportunities to their children. But playing 'out' has negatively impacted on the concerns and fears of parents when their children are not in their immediate sight or vicinity. Alongside this, a culture of 'health and safety' rules and regulations prevent many aspects of play that were common before. It's becoming more common to cancel outside break times if it snows and closing schools due to heavier snow. Today, some sports and games like rugby or dodgeball are only allowed in physical education lessons and under adult supervision.

From a young age, children are becoming limited in both their exploration and development outside of the family home and school environment. This continues into the teenage years as adults and children alike are sometimes left unsure about what is appropriate activity necessary for development and what is inappropriate risk taking behaviour. Inside the family home, this concern continues over appropriate use of the internet. Young people use the internet for a range of activities:

- Contact with friends using instant messaging and social networking sites. Social networking sites are designed to bring together groups of people/friends to share information and 'chat'. Social networking sites enable users to create a profile of themselves and then invite/accept people they want to interact with; they are then referred to generically as 'friends'. An additional communication feature is the instant messaging option, where communication is in real-time (synchronous) with other users who are friends.
- Online gaming, which involves playing games against another user in other countries, connected to the internet at that time.
- Researching topics for school work, searching and using internet databases such as Wikipedia.

Contemporary research on young people's use and access of the internet focuses on the risks attached to online interaction, most particularly when using social



networking sites and some online gaming. This has led to the development of internet safety campaigns, which are widely publicised within schools. Vulnerable young people such as those in care or those with low self-confidence are considered more likely to be at risk when using the internet.

It is important that parents have a clear understanding of the opportunities that the internet offers to young people. Online interaction also has a positive impact on how connected young people feel to their friends. It could be argued that this type of 'connectedness' replaces the recreational contact with friends that was common to previous generations of young people. When risks are appropriately managed, online gaming offers opportunities for young people to develop both subject

learning and other skills, for example concentration and hand/eye coordination. At school, online maths and literacy games that are only accessible through a password-protected website enable young people to compete against their peers in other countries.

However, despite the opportunities that online gaming affords to young people, there are associated risks. 'Stranger danger' is a real concern. There are a number of people who pose as teenagers in order to interact with young people for a variety of reasons, such as grooming for inappropriate relationships. Health issues such as repetitive strain injuries to wrists can occur, particularly through the use of Wii or Xbox Kinect, where the body is the controller. A further concern is the possibility of young people spending too much time or becoming addicted to online gaming and neglecting other activities as a result.

### **What can be done to keep young people safe online?**

When facing risks such as abusive emails or hate websites, young people need to be able to rely on support from parents as well as trusted friends. Parents can help keep young people safe online by talking about possible concerns and providing young people with safety tips for minimising risk online. These include maintaining age appropriate boundaries - for example, having computers in a shared family space rather than individual bedrooms - or limiting screen time, although this is becoming increasingly difficult with smartphones and other mobile devices.

Parents also need to ensure that young people fully understand the dangers of talking to strangers online and the reasons why they should not. Importantly, we need to explore with them what constitutes a stranger in this



digital age. Make sure young people know not to give out personal information online, for example their telephone number or address, or the school they attend. Crucially, young people must be persuaded not to give their password to access their online social network sites to any other person - even friends.

It helps if young people are assured of someone they can talk to if something does go wrong online, such as their parents, another responsible adult or practitioner. Most social networking sites now have a

'Click CEOP' button ('CEOP' is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) that can be used to report inappropriate or worrying behaviour online. Sites that do not have this may have their own ways for reporting concerns.

Social networking and online interaction provide young people with many opportunities, as long as the risks can be managed. Informed parents who regularly share information with their children can reduce some of the potential risks that young people may encounter.



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### Beginning to study

If you would like to try Open University study before you commit to a qualification, our Openings courses could be the right place for you to start. These introductory-level courses have been specially designed to help you find out what it's like to study with the OU, get a taste of a subject area, develop your study skills, and build your confidence - perfect for new learners.

### Understanding children and young people (Y176)

This Openings course is for anyone who would like to train to work with children and young people (0-19 years) or who is just interested in childhood experiences. You will be introduced to topics in childhood studies, child psychology, social work, healthcare and teaching.

### Affordable education

Studying with the OU is often more affordable than you think; you may even be eligible for financial support. If you live in England with a household income of less than £25,000 a year and you're new to higher education, you could qualify for our Access to Success Route. To find out more visit [www.open.ac.uk/learning/access/](http://www.open.ac.uk/learning/access/)

If you live in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, to find out about these OU fee structures, visit

[www.open.ac.uk/study](http://www.open.ac.uk/study)

If you have no experience of higher education to find out more about studying at the OU, visit

[www.open.ac.uk/study](http://www.open.ac.uk/study)

The Open University offers a variety of named degrees and the following have relevance for those of you who are interested in childhood.

- BA (Honours) Childhood and Youth Studies (Q23)
- BA (Honours) in Early Years (Q51)
- BA (Honours) in Youth Work (Q55)
- Bsc (Honours) Psychology (Q07)
- BA/BSc (Honours) Health and Social Care (Q18)

Here are some examples of courses you could study on the pathway to your qualification:

### Level 1 courses:

#### An Introduction to childhood studies and child psychology (E102)

A brand new module *available from 2014* which brings together different ways of studying childhood and learning about children's lives. Drawing on work from psychology and the social sciences, and with a strong emphasis on practice, this module allows students to explore the daily lives of children in the UK and abroad and to understand the various ways of studying them.

#### Introduction to working with young people in practice (E108)

This key introductory module explores key principles and ideas underpinning work with young people - particularly aged 13-19 - in areas of practice where their participation is voluntary, and the aims relate to informal education. You will examine the origins of this work; the changing contexts in which it occurs; how it is implemented; roles and responsibilities of practitioners and policy makers; and the issues they face. You'll develop a reflective stance towards your own practice and that of others. It would be helpful - though not essential - for you to be directly engaged in work with young people.

#### Discovering psychology (DSE141)

This course introduces the diversity and breadth of approaches in the discipline of psychology and the many different ways psychologists study the human mind and behaviour.

## Level 2 courses:

### Childhood (E212)

What does it mean to be a child in today's world? Do popular images of childhood match the reality of young people's lives? How is childhood affected by poverty, ill-health and adversity? Do children have different rights from adults, and if so why? How are modern lifestyles and technologies changing children's relationships and identities? What part do children play in shaping their childhood? Such questions are the starting point for this cross-disciplinary introduction to childhood and youth studies, covering the age range 0-18.

### Child development (ED209)

This course shows how psychological enquiry can help us to improve our understanding of the development of children and young people. It is organised in four parts: 'Psychological development and early childhood' introduces children's early development from a psychological perspective; 'Children's personal and social development' follows development in a social context; and 'Cognitive and language development in children' explores the development of cognitive and linguistic understanding and the developing child as an active agent. Finally, 'Developmental psychology in action' presents areas in which developmental psychology plays a part in education, remediation, health psychology and the legal system with children of all ages.

### Working with children, young people and families (K218)

This course is about the diversity and complexity of children and young people's (0-18) lives. It examines their experience of the places and spaces in which they live - family, community and a range of health, education and care services. Taught primarily through online activities, you'll develop an understanding of contemporary debates and key skills relating to safeguarding, health and wellbeing, development, disability, multi-agency working, social pedagogy, youth justice, working with parents, foster care, education, and play. You will examine practice approaches and values, policy, and legal and rights frameworks from across the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

## Supporting you all the way

Whatever you decide to do, we're right behind you and you're never alone. With most of our qualifications, you'll benefit from unrivalled one-to-one support from your tutor, who can be contacted by telephone, email or face-to-face. Your tutor will provide academic support throughout your study and will give individual feedback on your progress.

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In addition to the information in this booklet, The Open University also has a wealth of free online information and resources about the family and child development. Visit [open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime](http://open.edu/openlearn/childofourtime)

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