

DID YOU KNOW?

ADOLESCENCE IS A CRITICAL WINDOW FOR LEARNING

For students to succeed in college, career, and life, they need to be able to



Master Academic Content



Collaborate



Think Critically



Develop Social & Emotional Skills



Communicate Effectively



Solve Problems

Adolescence is the time to develop these skills.

Why? Adolescents' brains are growing and changing as they prepare for adulthood.

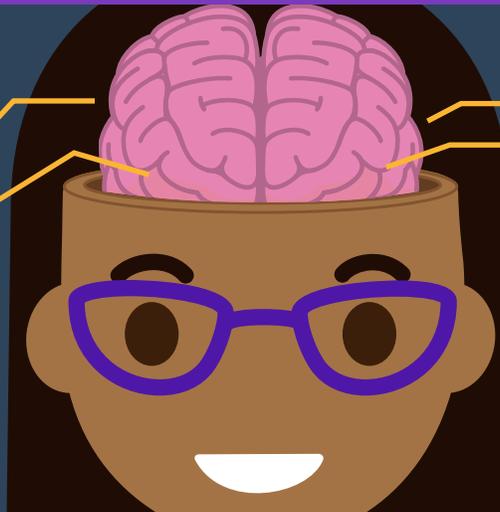
THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN IS

Hardwiring Important Skills

Connections related to important skills become stronger, and connections to skills that are not being used are removed.

Becoming More Efficient

The brain increases speed between connections, making them more efficient.



Preparing for Change

Experiences during the adolescent years drive the brain to adapt for future needs.

Creating Connections

The brain starts creating more complex connections, making it easier to engage in advanced thinking and mental tasks.

It is not enough to invest *only* in early childhood and elementary education.¹ Students are more likely to succeed when they receive continuous support throughout development.

Early childhood intervention only

66% high school graduation rate

13% enrolled in college



Early childhood and adolescent intervention

82% high school graduation rate

27% enrolled in college

Supporting students throughout development

91%

high school graduation rate

38%

enrolled in college

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

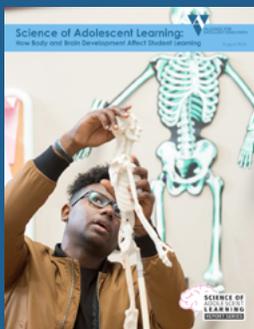
Connect academic learning to students' personal interests, prior knowledge, and current events.

Design instructional programs and resources that allow students to engage in complex thinking. This can occur through academic instruction or extracurricular opportunities, such as debate or robotics clubs.

Structure assignments and assessments that require students to solve complex problems and connect information to their own experiences, rather than simply regurgitate memorized information.

Guide students through increasingly complex social environments by providing opportunities to develop social and emotional skills and emotion-regulation strategies through built-in time during the school day or designated advisory periods.

SCIENCE OF ADOLESCENT LEARNING (SAL) CONSENSUS STATEMENT REPORT SERIES



Report 1: How Body and Brain Development Affect Student Learning

Adolescence is a critical window for student learning and development. The first report of the series highlights SAL research and describes the key biological, cognitive, social, and emotional development processes that occur during the adolescent years and their implications for education practice and policy.



Report 2: Risk Taking, Rewards, and Relationships

Supporting adolescent risk taking and relationship building can increase adolescents' motivation to learn and even improve their ability to learn. Using neuroscience, and social and psychological research, the second report of the series highlights how educators and leaders can shift their thinking about adolescent behavior to capitalize on the unique learning opportunities of this developmental stage.



Report 3: Valuing Culture, Experiences, and Environments

Culture and learning environments, inside and outside of school and online, affect the learning opportunities adolescent students experience as well as their development and capacity to learn. The third report explains the growing research about how stress affects learning and how the intersection of school and societal cultures supports or hinders educational outcomes of diverse student populations.



Report 4: How Identity and Empowerment Influence Student Learning

Providing adolescent students with opportunities to shape their own learning experiences supports their identity development and their learning outcomes. The fourth report of the series discusses how in-school and out-of-school contexts nurture or obstruct student voice and agency. The report also highlights neuroscience research for educators and leaders to inform their decisionmaking when designing developmentally appropriate adolescent learning opportunities.

Visit all4ed.org/SAL to learn more about All4Ed's SAL initiative.



¹ America's Promise Alliance, *Every Child, Every Promise: Turning Failure into Action* (Washington, DC: Author, 2006), <http://www.americaspromise.org/sites/default/files/Every%20Child%20Every%20Promise%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

The **Alliance for Excellent Education** (All4Ed) is a Washington, DC–based national policy, practice, and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those underperforming and those historically underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. all4ed.org