

Ten things you must know about young people

1. **MOST IMPORTANT: Check everything you read here!**

There are always multiple views about everything and sometimes competing research. And our knowledge and understanding constantly change. I am also giving you my top ten. Someone else will give you a different list. Please feel invited to let me know what your's is.

2. **Want to motivate your kids?**

Money often isn't the best way to do it. Give them something to do which:

- Is interesting
- Is challenging, enough to make them try hard
- Has choice built in
- Is meaningful.

3. **Is screen time ruining our kids' brains?**

Lots of research here, backwards and forwards. But some good evidence saying that a lot of screen time may well be okay IF balanced by lots of face-to-face time.

4. **Adolescent brains complete their growth somewhere in their mid twenties**

This hot topic has been around for a long time now, but worthwhile mentioning again. The part that tends to control impulses is the last bit to develop.

5. **Risk taking and staying safe**

Teaching young people decision-making is useful for the quiet moments in life when things need to be thought through and acted on. Decision-making for young people, 'in the moment', that is when excited, is not a logical thought-out process. It is a spur-of-the-moment snap decision driven by brain activity to seek rewards. Two good ways to keep young people safe – although not always popular with young people - are:

- Create safe environments/spaces for young people to occupy
- Structured activities
- Maintain an adult presence.

6. **Social media**

...is a huge part of young people's live. It is not going away. We need to find ways to work with it.

- Rules around use of devices can be worked out
- Device free times can be negotiated or insisted on.

7. Respect is not automatic

Whether we like it or not, young people tend to see others, including adults, as needing to earn respect rather than be given it automatically.

8. Kids can't multi-task. Unless it is really, really basic activity we don't actually 'multi'; we move between tasks even if ever so quickly. And that means one or both of two things suffer: the speed or the quality of what we are doing. Having said that, sometimes multi-tasking; reading, texting, discussing, or whatever, is a fun way to do a task. So it might be slower and less productive, but more fun. And therefore more likely to actually get done.

9. Are computers and the net changing our brains?

They may well be. Young people are more likely to now approach information

- In a navigational rather than linear way. Moving to many different sources rather than following one source beginning to end
- Are likely to produce work with greater breadth and less depth than earlier generations.

10. Respect and connectedness...

...are still the two most important things to young people. They are just likely to look really different in a modern world.

Best wishes
Peter Slattery