



Introduction

- Friendships are a major part of an adolescent's life.
- Friendships are a context in which adolescents can explore their independence.
- Adolescents have a strong desire for independence and social interactions.
- Adolescents want to experience new ideas and explore their limits and abilities.

Research

- An adolescent's brain structure and function change drastically during the second decade of life, including changes in decision-making processes. This can increase adolescents' vulnerability to peer influence (Albert et al., 2013).
- Adolescents are susceptible to peer influence and are more likely to engage in risky behaviors when they are with their peers than when alone (Albert et al., 2013).
- Adolescents compare themselves to high-status peers which can increase their desire to engage in similar ways as their high-status peers (Helms et al., 2014).

References

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Preventing Risky Behaviors Among Adolescents

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What is Risky Behavior?

- Behaviors that have unfavorable consequences, such as physical harm.
- Examples:
 - Dangerous physical activity.
 - Alcohol and drug use.
 - Unprotected sexual activity.
 - Reckless driving, such as speeding and texting while driving.



Peer Pressure

Peer pressure refers to the influence that peers have on each other's thoughts, decisions, and behaviors.

1. Positive Peer Pressure:

Encouraging peers to do something that is safe and beneficial.

2. Negative Peer Pressure:

Persuading peers to do something dangerous to themselves or others.



Strategies to Reduce Risky Behaviors

- Support and strengthen your relationship with your children in order to build trust.
- Have open discussions with your child about risky behaviors and how to make smart decisions.
- Supervise your child's friendships.
- Encourage your child to participate in school and quality out-of-school programs as an alternative to risky activities.
- Make communities safe and supportive for children and youth in order to reduce environmental risks.

