



**BRIGHT FUTURES**

***The Teen Brain—Still Under Construction***

Teenagers are a study in contrast—they are nearly adults, yet one foot (or more!) is still planted firmly in childhood. This is largely due to the hormones of puberty, and also due to changes in the adolescent brain. The National Institute of Mental Health's new brochure on the Teen Brain lists some of the changes the brain undergoes during adolescence:



- Connections between parts of the brain continue to increase throughout the teen years, building intellectual abilities such as memory and reading.
- Teen brains react more strongly to emotional images than do younger children and adults.
- The hormones of puberty affect more than just sexual development. They affect general social behavior—including response to stress.
- A teen's brain is an intellectual match for an adult's—which may explain why trying to win an argument with a teen can be a challenge!

To read more about the teen brain, go to: [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/complete-index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/complete-index.shtml).

***Baby Brains are Under Construction, Too!***

A baby's brain has its earliest beginnings within a week of conception and nine months later has 100 billion nerve cells! Zero to Three, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, has an interactive brain map that you can see what is happening during different stages of development, beginning prenatally and going through 36 months of age. It also gives tips on how to encourage healthy brain development.



To see the map, go to: [www.zerotothree.org/baby-brain-map.html](http://www.zerotothree.org/baby-brain-map.html).

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