

# **This Ain't Your Mama's Library!**

**Creating a New Generation of Library Services for a New Generation of Library Users**

Presented by Michele Gorman  
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## **Stages/Milestones of Adolescence:**

### **Early Adolescence (11-13 years of age)**

- Increases concern about appearance
- Seeks independence from family
- Displays rebellious/defiant behavior
- Importance of friends increases
- Peer group dominates
- Ego dominates viewing of all issues

### **Middle Adolescence (14-16 years of age)**

- Becomes less self-absorbed
- Makes decisions on own
- Experiments with self image
- Takes risks and seeks out "adventure"
- Becomes sexually aware
- Develops sense of values/morality

### **Late Adolescence (17-18 years of age)**

- Views world idealistically
- Becomes involved with world outside school/home
- Relationships stabilize
- Sees adults as equals
- Seeks to firmly establish independence

## **The 7 Developmental Needs of Teens:**

1. Physical activity
2. Competence and Achievement
3. Self-Definition:
4. Creative Expression
5. Positive Social Interaction with Peers and Adults
6. Structure and Clear Limits
7. Meaningful Participation

## 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup> are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. The list below describes the 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (ages 12-18).

<b>Asset Type</b>	<b>Asset Name &amp; Definition</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>EXTERNAL ASSETS</b>		
Support	Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
	Positive family communication	Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
	Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
	Caring neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.
	Caring school climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
	Community values youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
Empowerment	Youth as resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.
	Service to others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
	Safety	Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.
	Boundaries and Expectations	
Boundaries and Expectations	Family boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
	School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.
	Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
	Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
	Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
	High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
	Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
Constructive Use of Time	Youth programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
	Religious community	Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
	Time at home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.
<b>INTERNAL ASSETS</b>		
Commitment to Learning	Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
	School engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.
	Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
	Bonding to school	Young person cares about her or his school.
	Reading for pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
Positive Values	Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.
	Equality and social justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
	Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
	Honesty	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
	Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
Social Competencies	Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
	Planning and decision making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
	Interpersonal competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
	Cultural competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
	Resistance skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
Positive Identity	Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Personal power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
	Self-esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
	Sense of purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
	Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

<http://www.search-institute.org/assets/>

## **“The Teen Brain” – It’s not an Oxymoron!**

### Brain Research and Adolescent Behavior

Why do teens act the way they do? If your answer is “hormones”, you’re partly right. However, the rest of the equation might surprise you. Scientists conducting research on the adolescent brain during the last ten years have discovered that a teen’s developing brain is as much a part of their erratic behavior as the newly present hormones coursing through the body.

Essentially, adolescents between the ages of 11 and 17 are still works in progress. What the research tells us is that the brain of a teenager is growing and changing and that this process of growth and change will continue through adolescence and into a young person’s early 20s. In a process very similar to the first stage of development that takes place in the brain of a 3 year-old, the second stage of development that takes place during adolescence produces a whole bunch of brain cells and then basically prunes (for lack of a better word) what is not needed.

Additionally, the prefrontal cortex of the adolescent brain (the part of the brain that allows us to process information and make decisions) is also changing and growing. This is one of the main reasons teens are notorious for problems with planning, organization, complex thinking, and impulse control. While the prefrontal cortex is developing, teens often use a small structure at the back of the brain called the “amygdale” to process information and make decisions. The problem with this is that the amygdale is also the home of emotional, impulsive, and instinctual behavior.

Other things to keep in mind when it comes to teens and brain development:

- As a teen gets older, his or her ability to reason gets better. This is why trying to have a rationale conversation with an 11 year-old about choices and consequences can be incredibly frustrating, but having the same conversation with a 16 year-old can be productive.
- You cannot change what is physically happening within a teen’s brain. You CAN change how you work with a teens by trying to accommodate them when they exhibit some of the characteristics adults find so annoying like requiring instant gratification, making terrible judgment calls, or reacting immediately and irrationally to an external stimulus.
- You don’t have to understand why a teen acts the way he or she does. You just have to accept it as a natural part of life and attempt to find a way to work together for the good of a common goal.

## The Ten Commandments of Reference to Teens

1. Always let the teens know what a good deal the public library is: it's free, we're here to help, we are trained to find anything, and we want to be here. This is more about knowledge sharing – it's about making sure teens understand our core services and our desire to work with them to meet their needs.
2. Always offer short-term follow-up (“Come back if this doesn't help”) and long-term help (“Come back and see me again when you have another paper due.”)
3. Always find a way to say yes, always find a way to agree, and whenever possible, demonstrate your competence as a professional.
4. Always show teens that you are knowledgeable – most will be more impressed than intimidated by your knowledge. On the same token – don't be afraid to admit when you don't know the answer, but always offer to find out from someone who does.
5. Always be sensitive to a teen's sense of space, in terms of eye contact, body language, and other non-verbal cues.
6. Always listen, learn, and then ask open-ended questions.
7. Always be prepared to do triage reference, working with multiple teens at one time. This usually happens after one of the teens has a positive experience and sends his buddies back asking for help.
8. Always be empathetic, relaxed, and maintain a sense of humor. You were a teen once. Remember that and then put yourself in their place – asking a stranger for help.
9. Always reward the teen through encouragement, positive reinforcement, politeness, kindness, and be saying, “Yes.”
10. Always think of every reference transaction as a moment of truth; the success or failure of it will perhaps determine if your teen customer comes back again.

## The Loft @ ImaginOn

The Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County (Charlotte, NC)

The Loft @ ImaginOn is PLCMC's only teen-only library for young people between the ages of 12-18 located within ImaginOn: the Joe & Joan Martin center. Here you'll find the newest teen fiction, non-fiction, research materials, a script library, a large collection of graphic novels and circulating comic books, teen magazines, desktop and laptop computers with the Microsoft Office Suite and high end graphic design software, and an animation and music design studio where teens can make their own live action or animated movies or compose their own music.

PLCMC Teen Services Website: [www.libraryloft.org](http://www.libraryloft.org)

The Loft @ ImaginOn MySpace Site: <http://www.myspace.com/libraryloft>

PLCMC Teen Services Photos Online: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/libraryloft/>

Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County: [www.plcmc.org](http://www.plcmc.org)

ImaginOn: the Joe & Joan Martin Center: [www.imaginon.org](http://www.imaginon.org)

### Library Resources Online:

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# Beyond the Building: Virtual Library Services for Teens

Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County  
Charlotte , NC

## Virtual Homework Help for Teens

PLCMC offers homework help to teens in a variety of ways including an online resources page, Brarydog.net, "Ask a Librarian", online tutoring (provided by tutor.com), and IM services. Find out more about us online: [www.plcmc.org](http://www.plcmc.org)

<http://plcmc.org/Online>

Using their library card, teens can access a number of databases including encyclopedias, newspapers, journal articles, photos banks, and more.

### Brarydog:

[www.brarydog.net](http://www.brarydog.net)

Users can create own Brarydog page, choose the homework resources they want, and e-mail questions and get answers.

### NCKnows!:

<http://ncknows.org/about.htm>

NC Knows is 24/7 live reference help staffed by North Carolina librarians

### Ask a Librarian:

[http://plcmc.org/online/Ask\\_a\\_Librarian/default.asp](http://plcmc.org/online/Ask_a_Librarian/default.asp)

Use our Ask a Librarian service to get answers using:

- Instant Messenger (IM)
- Online chat
- Email
- Phone
- Assistance in person by appointment

### Reference IM (Instant Messaging):

PLCMC offer teens the opportunity to Instant Message during business hours using AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messenger or an AIM Express Account by adding **charmecklib** to their buddy list. Teens who use Google Talk can IM us by adding [charmecklib@gmail.com](mailto:charmecklib@gmail.com) to their contacts.

Teens who want to contact the Loft @ ImagineOn's (PLCMC's Teen-Only Library) Staff can use the Meebo widget on **The Loft @ ImagineOn's MySpace** page at: [www.myspace.com/libraryloft](http://www.myspace.com/libraryloft). They do not need to have an account set up with any IM provider to use this Meebo Widget.

## Virtual Library Services and Marketing to Teens:

### PLCMC's Teen Website:

[www.libraryloft.org](http://www.libraryloft.org)

Library Loft is a PLCMC website designed specifically for Mecklenburg County's teen population. The following can be found on LibraryLoft: library programs and events calendar, book reviews and reader's advisory, teen contacts, homework help links, job resources, pictures and videos, and more.

### PLCMC MySpace Sites for Teens:

<http://www.libraryloft.org/ourSpace.asp>

10 of PLCMC's 24 branches have MySpace sites. You can find links to all of them from this URL.

### PLCMC Teens on Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/libraryloft/>

On our Flickr site you can find pictures of branch-specific and system-wide teen events and programs.

### PLCMC Teens on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/ImagineOnTeens>

On our Flickr site you can find videos created by teens in ImaginOn's Studio i, our animation and live action video and music production studio just for teens located in the Loft @ ImaginOn, PLCMC's teen-only library.

### Teen Contacts:

<http://www.libraryloft.org/lib.asp>

Each PLCMC library branch has a teen contact who is dedicated to serving the teens in their region. Check out their high school photos and a Q & A about past lives (not reincarnation, adolescence) on this site!

## Virtual Reference/Reader's Advisory for Teens

### Reader's Club

[www.readersclub.org](http://www.readersclub.org)

- Monthly book reviews and staff recommendations
- Customizable book review search
- Internet book links
- Submit your own book review

### Guys Read Forum

PLCMC's "Guys Read Bookclubs" are for boys between the ages of 11 and 14 and each meeting consists of reading and discussing a high interest book that will appeal to boys in middle school. The Guys Read Forum is used to discuss books or any other topics outside of the bookclub's face-to-face meeting time.

## PLCMC's Virtual Programming for Teens

### Teen Second Life

<http://www.libraryloft.org/secondlife.asp>

Second Life is a 3-D virtual world built and owned by its residents. "Residents" create alter egos in the form of avatars, or caricatures. They build, create, interact and transact using Second Life's own form of currency. Though the main virtual world is for adults 18 and over, there is also a Teen Second Life for teens ages 14-18 where no adults are allowed.

Here are some examples of PLCMC's virtual programming using Teen Second Life:

### Literary Festival

Teens presented about their book club, text chatted with visiting YA authors Barry Lyga and Marc Aronson, and built and scripted the venue for the event. Adults helped to recruit the authors and coordinate author information such as podcasts and author images with Teaching Books.net.

### College Fair

Teens expressed interest in having questions about applying to colleges. A fair was organized to have college recruiters come to the island and interact with teens. Speakers from Amazon, NASA, Linden Lab, teen entrepreneurs, and colleges talked about their technology skills as related to their jobs. Teens built and scripted the venue for the event. Adults helped recruit college representatives and got feedback from which colleges teens wanted representation from. Colleges local to Charlotte, NC were targeted to have representation as well.

### Ishmael Beah

As part of PLCMC's annual Novello series, Ishmael Beah, author of *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* presented at ImaginOn. The audio from his presentation was streamed into the virtual theatre on the library's island so teens from all over the world, could listen to his presentation. Many teens were familiar with Ishmael Beah because they created a machinima using Second Life a few months ago.