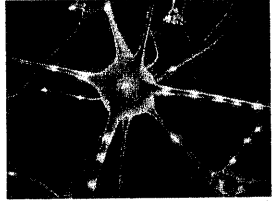


What ARE You Thinking?

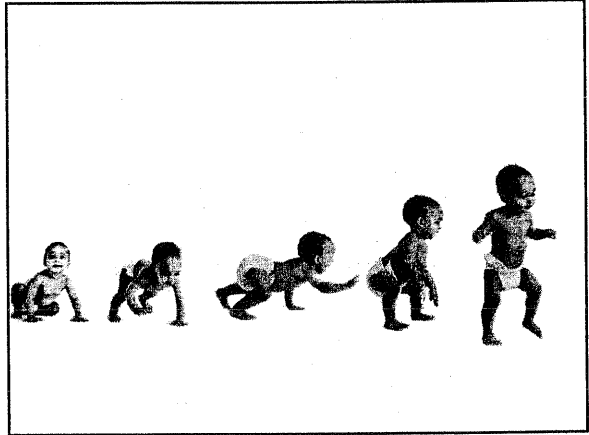
Adolescent Behavior
and Decision Making



Sally L. Ray
Attorney
Licensed Professional Counselor

After this presentation, participants will be able to

- Describe current understanding of adolescent brain development research.
- List skills involved in "executive functioning" and how they're developed.
- Use techniques to "contain" inappropriate behavior without escalating an encounter with an adolescent.

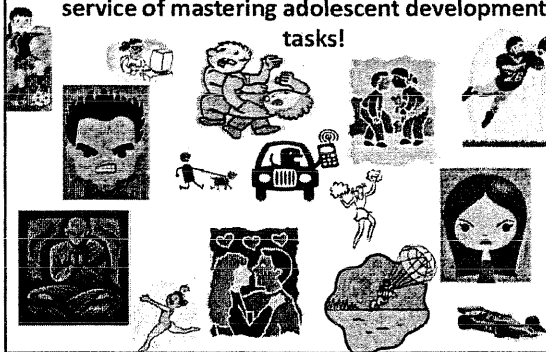


• "Developmental Tasks" of Adolescence

- **Identity** (Who am I and how do I fit in?)
- **Sexual Integration** (How do I deal with these intense hormonal changes and urges? How does my physical, sexual body affect who I am? Who am I attracted to? Can I accept all this?)
- **Autonomy** (You're not the boss of me!)



Every Single Thing a Teenager does, no matter how obnoxious or irritating, is done in the service of mastering adolescent developmental tasks!



THE HARDWARE

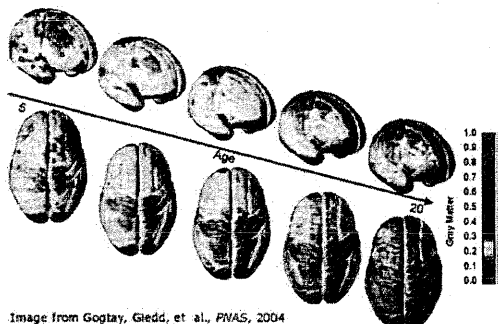


Image from Gogtay, Giedd, et al., *PNAS*, 2004
 Current brain development from ages 5 to 28-30

Emergence of Juvenile Justice Systems



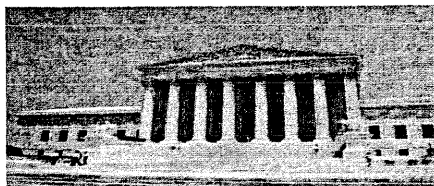
1899 Jane Addams-founder of first "settlement house" special advocate for needs of children

1920-30's Promote welfare of children, est. of separate juvenile systems—not just "little adults" "encircled by the arm of the state"



A Shift—In Re Gault 387 US 1 (1967)

"beginning of the end of traditional juvenile court"
US Supreme Court says juveniles entitled to same rights as adult criminally accused.



Pendulum swing 1980-90s

"Passing the Paddle"

- ✓ Sociologists describe as "Moral Panic" due to "moral poverty of modern culture"
- " Normative Misbehavior" becomes criminal
- ✓ Prevalence of status crimes
- ✓ "Zero Tolerance"
- ✓ Emergence of SRO programs

Stanford v. Kentucky—Juv Death Pen
492 US 361 (1986)



Poor Executive Functioning Accounts For the Fact that Teen Infractions of Law are Punished Less Harshly

• Swing Back???

• Examples:

- *Graham v. Florida*, United States Supreme Court (2010) – a life sentence for a 16 year old who doesn't kill anyone is cruel and unusual punishment.
- *Roper v. Simmons*, United States Supreme Court (2005) – recognized relative immaturity and irresponsibility of juveniles, their vulnerability to negative influence, lack of freedom and control, and therefore lack of experience in using control. Therefore no death penalty for youth under 18.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX-Brain's CEO

Responsible for:

- ❖ organization and planning ahead
- ❖ managing emotional impulses
- ❖ considering consequences

Last section to develop—happens during adolescence (which now goes up to age 30)

Process is increased by 100% from beginning of adolescence to the end
