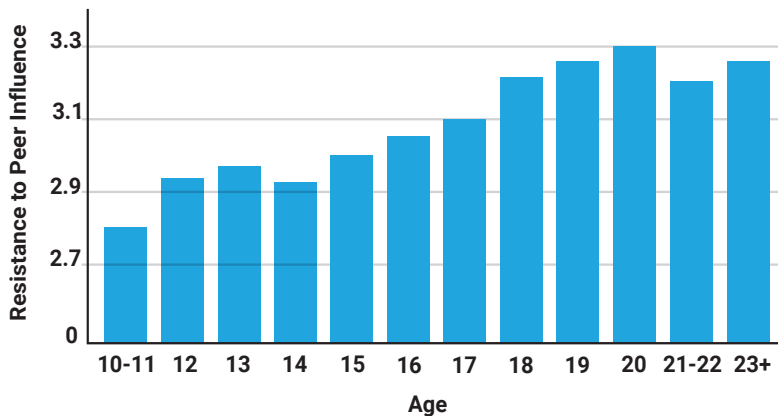


Peer Pressure Facts & Stats

Resisting Peer Influence by Age



Resistance to peer influence increases over the course of adolescence, with the steepest increases occurring between ages 14 and 18. This may be the time when youth must decide what their own values and beliefs are in preparation for adulthood. Identity development requires the establishment of resistance skills in order to successfully mature and keep oneself safe in an adult world.

Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Age differences in resistance to peer influence. *Developmental psychology*, 43(6), 1531–1543. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.6.1531>

What is Your Favorite Way to Resist?

- Say 'Nah, no thanks.'
- Be firm, 'Not my scene!'
- Suggest alternative, 'Let's go play soccer.'
- Leave and find others to be with.
- Blame Mom, 'She'd be angry with my choice!'

70%

of teens who smoke said they started because their peers did.

55%

of youth who tried drugs said they felt pressured by their peers to do so.

Road to Independence

At first, humans may need to conform before becoming independent. Peers become more important in early and middle adolescence as youth individuate from parents. Adopting styles, values, and the interests of a group as well as placing more importance on what others think helps establish solidarity and group membership on the way to creating autonomy.

The brain primes this path by increasing executive functioning skills such as abstract thought and empathy, allowing youth to consider other perspectives with more depth. Creating successful group affiliations may be a necessary step on the road to independence.

What Do You Think?

Boys vs. Girls. Research indicates that girls and women are more likely than boys and men to stand up for what they believe than to alter their behavior to conform to the expectations of their peers.

Popularity. Peers perceived as higher status, or more 'popular' can be more influential on their peers.

Negative Influence. Research indicates that peers often influence one another to try drugs and continue using them.

Driving. Teens driving with their friends in the car were more likely to take risks—like speeding through yellow lights—if they knew that two or more of their friends were watching.

Norms. When it is considered 'normal' not to use drugs, teens are less likely to do so.