

## Science News

from research organizations

### What happens to 'cool' kids? New study sheds light

Date: June 12, 2014

Source: Society for Research in Child Development

**Summary:** Teens who tried to act cool in early adolescence were more likely to experience a range of problems in early adulthood, a study shows. Teens needed more and more extreme behaviors to appear cool, eventually engaging in serious criminal behaviors in addition to alcohol and drug use. By young adulthood, they were found to be less competent overall than their less 'cool' peers. Teens were followed from age 13 to age 23.

Share:     

#### FULL STORY

Teens who tried to act cool in early adolescence were more likely than their peers who didn't act cool to experience a range of problems in early adulthood, according to a new decade-long study. The study, by researchers at the University of Virginia, appears in the journal *Child Development*.

While cool teens are often idolized in popular media -- in depictions ranging from James Dean's *Rebel Without a Cause* to Tina Fey's *Mean Girls* -- seeking popularity and attention by trying to act older than one's age may not yield the expected benefits, according to the study.

Researchers followed 184 teens from age 13, when they were in seventh and eighth grades, to age 23, collecting information from the teens themselves as well as from their peers and parents. The teens attended public school in suburban and urban areas in the southeastern United States and were from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Teens who were romantically involved at an early age, engaged in delinquent activity, and placed a premium on hanging out with physically attractive peers were thought to be popular by their peers at age 13. But over time, this sentiment faded: By 22, those once-cool teens were rated by their peers as being less competent in managing social relationships. They were also more likely to have had significant problems with alcohol and drugs, and to have engaged in criminal activities, according to the study.

"It appears that while so-called cool teens' behavior might have been linked to early popularity, over time, these teens needed more and more extreme behaviors to try to appear cool, at least to a subgroup of other teens," says Joseph P. Allen, Hugh P. Kelly Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia, who led the study. "So they

became involved in more serious criminal behavior and alcohol and drug use as adolescence progressed. These previously cool teens appeared less competent -- socially and otherwise -- than their less cool peers by the time they reached young adulthood."

---

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: SPONSORED OPPORTUNITY

---

### **Story Source:**

Materials provided by **Society for Research in Child Development**. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

---

### **Journal Reference:**

1. Joseph P. Allen, Megan M. Schad, Barbara Oudekerk, Joanna Chang. **What Ever Happened to the "Cool" Kids? Long-Term Sequelae of Early Adolescent Pseudomature Behavior.** *Child Development*, 2014; DOI: 10.1111/cdev.12250
- 

### **Cite This Page:**

MLA

APA

Chicago

Society for Research in Child Development. "What happens to 'cool' kids? New study sheds light." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 12 June 2014. <[www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/06/140612085341.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/06/140612085341.htm)>.

---

### **RELATED STORIES**

---

#### **Perceptions of Old Age Change as We Age**

Feb. 26, 2018 — Does life really begin at 40? Is 50 the new 30? For people in these age groups, the answer appears to be yes. But for young adults in their teens and early 20s, turning 50 equates to hitting old age. ...

#### **Graduated Driver Licensing Laws Need to Be Expanded Throughout the U.S.**

Apr. 25, 2016 — Motor vehicle crashes (MVCs) are the leading cause of death among U.S. teens. In 2012, 184,000 young drivers were injured in MVCs, and 23 percent of young drivers (15 - 20 years old) involved in ...

#### **Teens With Autism and Caregivers Should Plan Early for Adulthood**

Jan. 6, 2016 — As the number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders continues to rise, medical professionals have emphasized early diagnosis, intervention and treatment. However, less attention has ...

#### **Close Friendships in Adolescence Predict Health in Adulthood**

Aug. 31, 2015 — Teens are often warned to beware the undue influence of peer pressure, but new research suggests that following the pack in adolescence may have some unexpected benefits for physical health in early ...

---

### **FROM AROUND THE WEB**

*Below are relevant articles that may interest you. ScienceDaily shares links with scholarly publications in the Trend-MD network and earns revenue from third-party advertisers, where indicated.*

## Free Subscriptions

---

Get the latest science news with ScienceDaily's free email newsletters, updated daily and weekly. Or view hourly updated newsfeeds in your RSS reader:

 Email Newsletters

 RSS Feeds

## Follow Us

---

Keep up to date with the latest news from ScienceDaily via social networks:

 Facebook

 Twitter

 LinkedIn

## Have Feedback?

---

Tell us what you think of ScienceDaily -- we welcome both positive and negative comments. Have any problems using the site? Questions?

 Leave Feedback

 Contact Us

[About This Site](#) | [Staff](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Contribute](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Editorial Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)

Copyright 2020 ScienceDaily or by other parties, where indicated. All rights controlled by their respective owners.

Content on this website is for information only. It is not intended to provide medical or other professional advice.

Views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of ScienceDaily, its staff, its contributors, or its partners.

Financial support for ScienceDaily comes from advertisements and referral programs, where indicated.

— CCPA: Do Not Sell My Information — — GDPR: Privacy Settings —