

# Supporting the Connecting Brain during Adolescence

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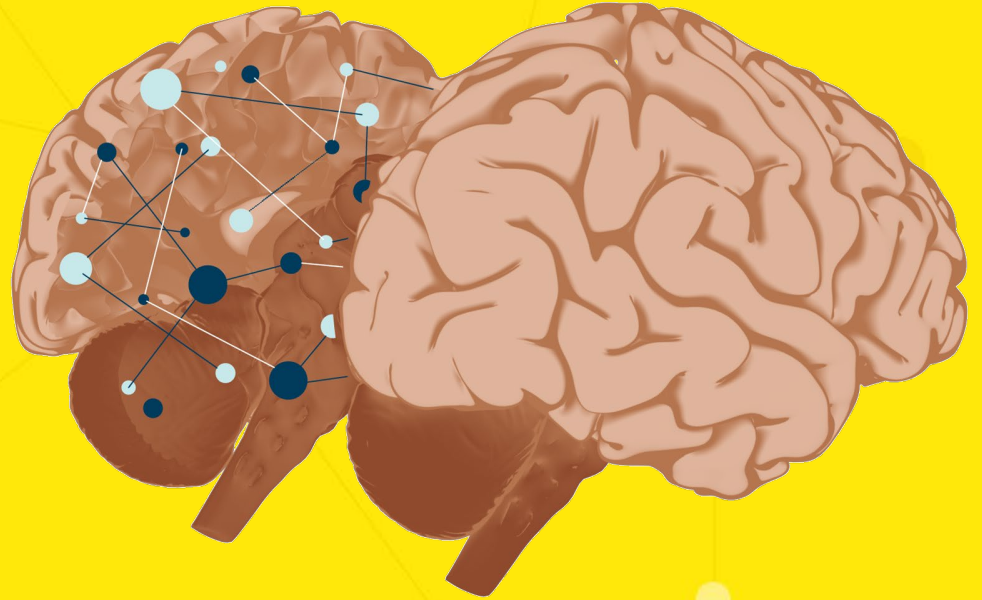
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**UCLA**  
Center for  
the Developing  
Adolescent

# Brain Development During Adolescence

Fundamentally a story of  
**connection** within the brain

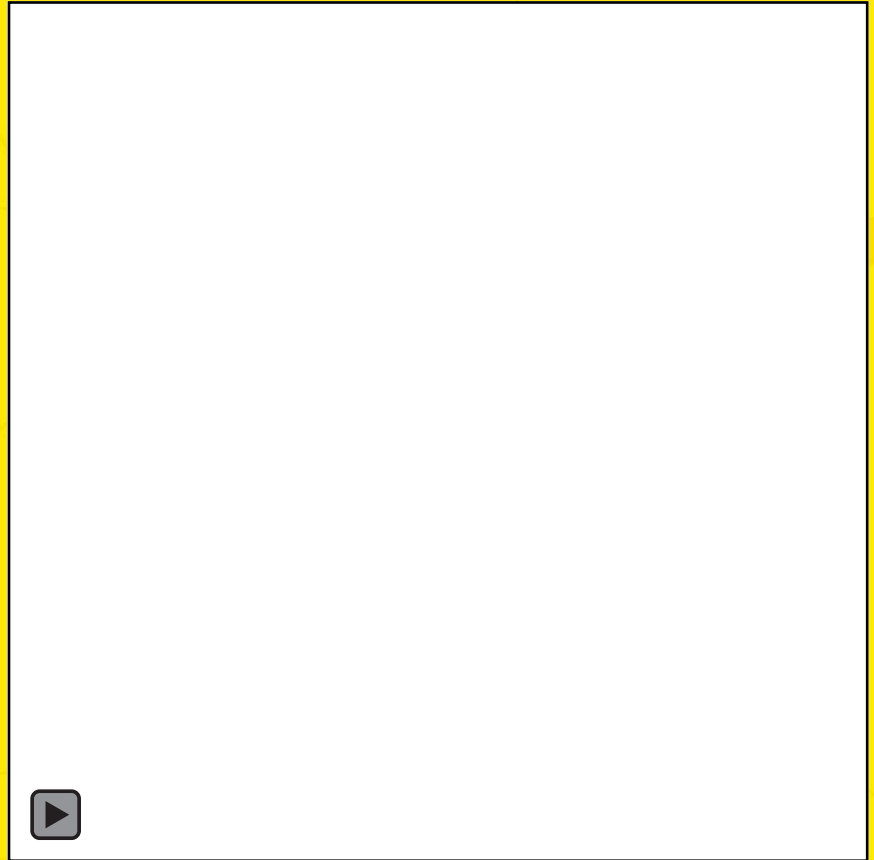


# Brain Development During Adolescence

Fundamentally a story of **connection** within the brain and *between* young people and their communities



# Brain Connectivity Is Refined During Adolescence



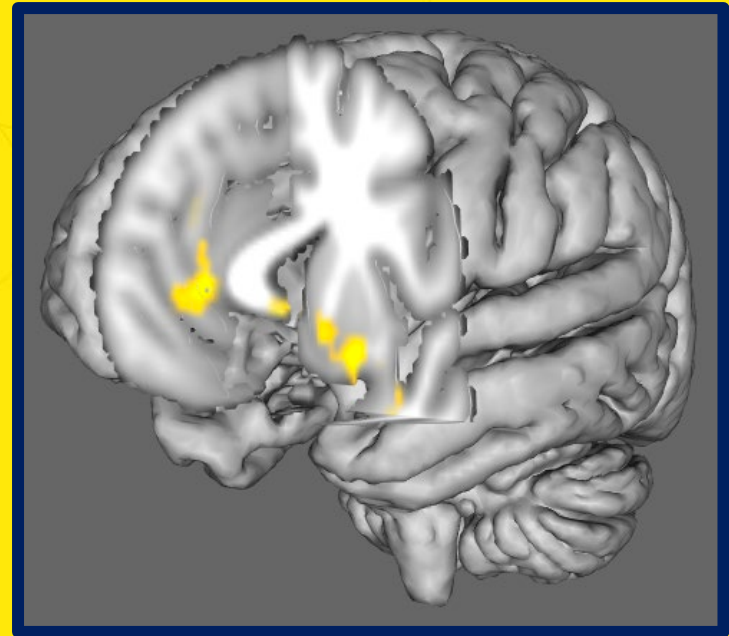
# Plasticity in Brain Development during Adolescence

Brain cells form, strengthen, and streamline connections in response to our experiences more rapidly than in any period of life other than early childhood



# A Brain Designed for Exploration, Discovery & Connection

Our motivation and reward systems are more active



# The Connecting Brain



Heightened activity within certain brain regions motivates us to explore the world and find new ways to connect with others

# The Connecting Brain



New experiences and relationships prompt brain cells to connect with other neurons





# The Connecting Brain



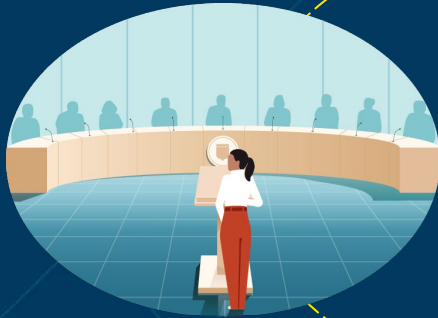
These connections strengthen  
and become more efficient the  
more we use them



# The Connecting Brain

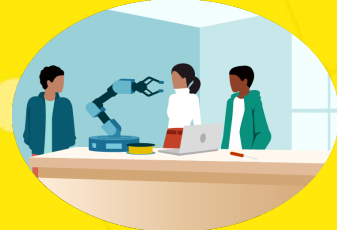


We develop new skills that help us as we navigate the more complex world of adulthood

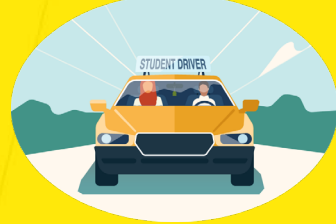


# Developmental Needs during Adolescence

Experiences that Support the Connecting Brain & Thriving Youth



Safe and satisfying ways to explore the world and take healthy risks to test out new ideas and experiences



Real-world scenarios in which to build decision-making and emotional regulation skills



Positive ways to earn respect and social status among peers and adults



Warmth and support from parents and other caring adults



Experiences that help define personal values, goals, and a positive sense of identity



Avenues to develop a sense of meaning and purpose by contributing to peers, families, and communities

One More!



Regular and sufficient sleep

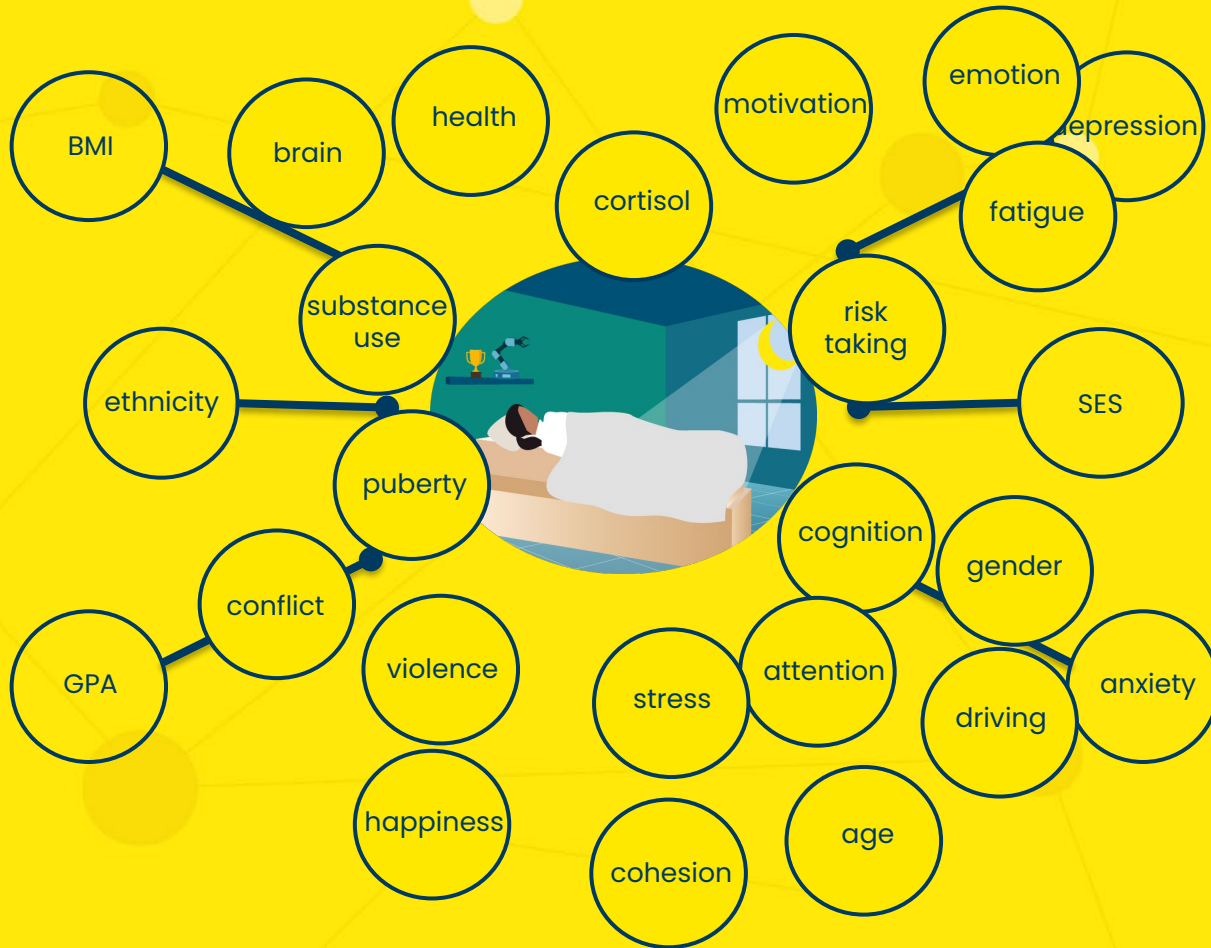
*Necessary for the Connecting Brain during Adolescence*

# Sleep is a Core Feature of Development

- Tied to fundamental biological change
- Relevant for critical aspects of functioning & health
- Sensitive to the proximal environment
- Health disparities & inequalities
- Sensitive to early adversity



# Sleep is Associated with So Many Things



# Sleep & Early Adversity

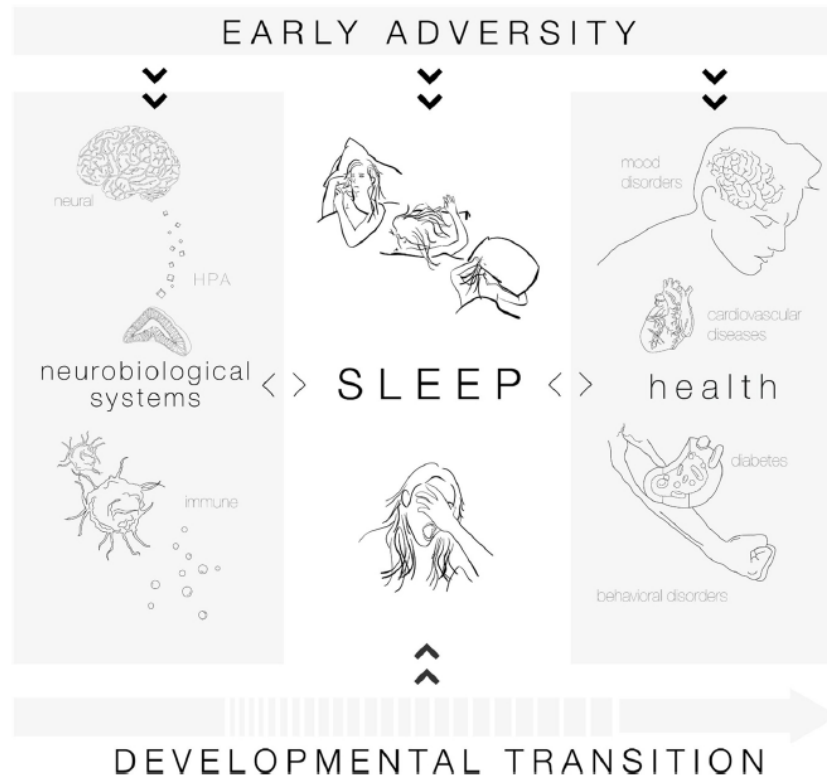


Fig. 1. Heuristic Model of Sleep Disturbance as a Mechanism of the Long-Term Impact of Early Adversity.

# Sleep & Foster Care Youth

*Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 48(3), 2023, 254–266

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsac087>

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Original Research Article

OXFORD

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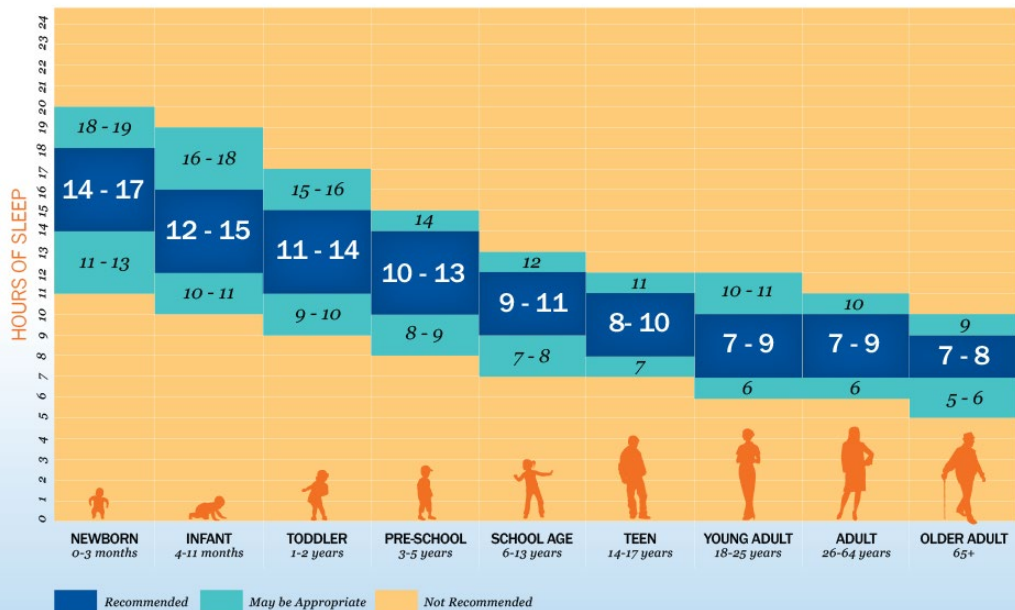
## Foster Caregivers' Perceptions of Children's Sleep Patterns, Problems, and Environments

Eleanor L. McGlinchey,<sup>1</sup> PhD, Priscilla Rigos,<sup>1</sup> BA, Josephine S. Kim,<sup>1</sup> MA, Josefina Muñoz Nogales,<sup>2</sup> BA, Madeline Valentine,<sup>2</sup> BA, Jinu Kim,<sup>3</sup> MA, Carol H. Ripple,<sup>4</sup> PhD, Amy R. Wolfson,<sup>2</sup> PhD, and Candice A. Alfano,<sup>3</sup> PhD

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# SLEEP DURATION RECOMMENDATIONS



# Supporting Sleep

Later school start-times that align with adolescents' chronotype

Be mindful of demands placed on youth

Focus on regularity in bed & wake times

Establish bedtime routines in a household

Minimize arousal near bedtime

Los Angeles Times



CALIFORNIA

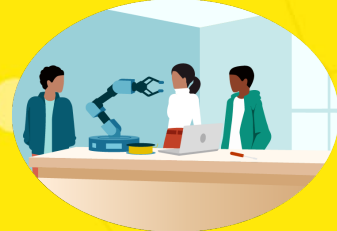
## California becomes first state in the country to push back school start times

By TARYN LUNA | STAFF WRITER

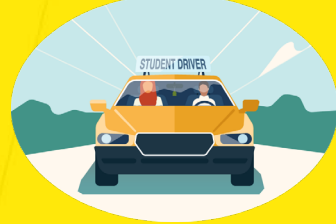
OCT. 13, 2019 | 5:22 PM

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# Why Adolescence is Special

Investments can pay off for young people and their communities, and help to realize gains from earlier investments

Early childhood

Adolescent years





# STEPS

*FOR YOUTH*  
Science to Enhance  
Policy Success

FROM THE UCLA CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPING ADOLESCENT



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