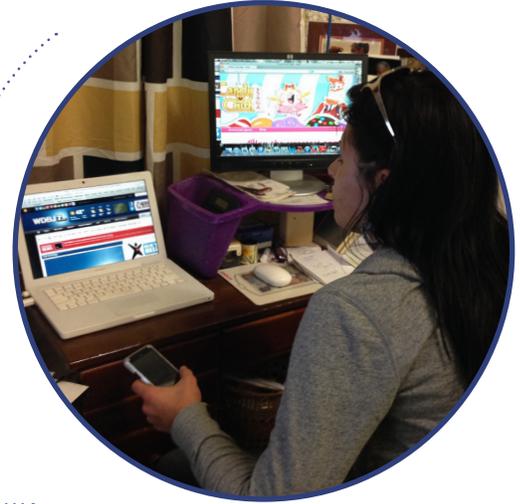




## Learning in Families Together: Emerging Adults

Today's young adults are delaying marriage and parenthood while extending their stay at home and in school.

Karen DeBord, Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialist, Family and Human Development



### Parenting Secrets

- The exploratory phase in the life course is referred to as emerging adulthood. It includes the ages from late adolescence (about ages 16 to 19) through the mid-20s.
- Many changes in women's roles — the economy, birth control, and the vast number of life choices — have led to these changes.
- Job changes are frequent because young people look for work that will not only pay well but will also be personally fulfilling.
- Nowadays, most young people delay marriage while still having serious sexual relationships.
- Young people today see adult obligations as an end to independence and spontaneity.

### Together Time

Emerging adults are exploring their identities and feeling unstable and “in between” — neither an adult nor a child.

- Expose young adults to many experiences to help them decide next steps. Allow freedom with parameters.

### Growing Time

Emerging adults seem self-focused, and they are, at least temporarily.

- If young adults still live at home, let them be responsible (and learn responsibility) for their own laundry, dinner, and schedules. Be available as a sounding board. This is the time for them to learn skills for daily living.

### Learning Time

Adulthood is no longer defined as being a parent or being married. It is gradually defined by making independent financial decisions, being financially independent, and accepting responsibility for oneself.

- Young adults carry their family's influences with them.
- Continue to build traditions and family rituals together.