The History of Adolescence in the United States

Robert Wm. Blum, MD, MPH, PhD
Johns Hopkins University
Section A

Adolescents in History
The word *adolescent* comes from the Latin “to nourish” and referred to someone who is still growing.
Aristotle on Youth

- “Youth are prone to desire and ready to carry out any desire they may have formed into action” – Aristotle
“I was always ready to imitate the negligent garb still to be seen among our young men—my cloak across the shoulder, my hood to one side, and a stocking in disorder, all of which was meant to show a proud disdain for the exotic trumperies and a contempt for everything artificial.” – Montaigne, 1570s

During the 1620s to 1630s in England, there were “spirits” who picked up young people with promises of wealth if they signed up to go to the New World. This was sanctioned by the City of London; and in 1619 Virginia recruited 100 children to be brought to the colony as apprentices.