

EDUCATION AND ROTATIONAL LIFE

At home, the decision is difficult enough: Schools — private or public? Systems — English, French, immersion or bilingual?

Then, having finally come to what you consider to be the best solution, you find yourselves posted abroad and the process begins all over again, but with added elements. Schools — private or public, at home or abroad, boarding or with you? Systems — American, British, French, Ontario, Quebec or other; plus

the added complications of moving from one system to another.

To give some indication of how five of the systems compare, a table has been prepared by the Centre. This is not meant to be an equivalency table, but rather to show at what level a student might be placed when at a specific age.

For specific information on schools abroad and boarding schools, contact the Posting Services Centre.

Average age of children in different school systems

Age	Levels in each School System				
	Ontario	Quebec	American	British	French
5				1	
6	1	1	1	2	CP or 11th
7	2	2	2	3	CE1 10th
8	3	3	3	4	CE2 9th
9	4 } prim.	4 } prim.	4 } prim.	5	CM1 8th
10	5	5	5	6	CM2 7th
11	6	6	6	7	6th
12	7	I	7	Form I	5th
13	8	II	8	II	4th
14	9	III	9	III	3rd*
15	10	IV	10	IV	2nd
16	11 } sec.	V	11 } sec.	V	1st
17	12	CEGEP I		VI-1	2nd cycle
18	13	CEGEP II		VI-2	T (BAC)
19		CEGEP III*			
			EXAMS OR TESTS	EXAMS	
			CEEB: College entrance exam. PSAT: Preliminary scholastic aptitude test. SAT: Stanford Scholastic... * For professional Diploma only. AP: Advanced placement test.	GCE: General certificate of education.	Possibility in France of vocational training.

MASTERING ADOLESCENCE

by Dr. Robert M. Coles, a research psychiatrist and lecturer at Harvard University who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1973 for Volumes II and III of Children in Crisis.

Excerpted from STRESS, A Report from Ontario Blue Cross.

...I recall one boy I worked with who came to me with the diagnosis of "acute adolescent turmoil". He had become increasingly irritable, moody, suspicious and withdrawn at home; at school he was sullen, rebellious, hard to reason with. We spent many visits, week after week, trying to find the sources of his discontent. Gradually he seemed to improve, though I never was sure whether anything I said (or conveyed to him that I felt) made all that much difference. Eventually he seemed a little more relaxed with himself, and we stopped our talks.

A year later he was in college, and had gained enough distance on himself to write me a letter, part of which I will quote. In a way, his is one of the best descriptions I've ever come across of what adolescent stress is all about, and how it ought to be handled:

"I realize now," he wrote, "that there were moments when no matter what you said, I would have disagreed with you. I was deter-

mined to go my own way, and I wouldn't let anyone persuade me otherwise. But I know that I needed someone to disagree with, someone I could talk with who wouldn't walk away just because I was being a tough talker.

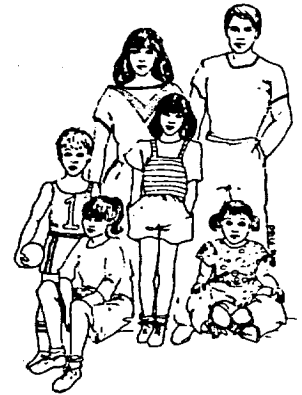
"When I have children and they grow up to be teenagers, I only hope that I'll have patience with them and not forget that it's not so much what you say, but your attitude. If you're sending signals that you care and you want to help, to be there, to stand by, then that's what a teenager needs.

"He may try to pick a fight with you, and he may scream or cry or cuss or whatever. But he needs you there, and you can't forget that. You shouldn't become a doormat, just as you can't rise to every piece of bait thrown at you. I guess you have to keep remembering that with time a lot changes, and soon the person who seems completely wrapped up in himself and has no perspective gets a sense of humor about things. And the next thing you know, he's really growing up. Then everybody can take a deep breath.

"I'm beginning to take a deep breath myself — about myself. That's when you know that you won't be a teenager too much longer!"

Foreign
Service

Tots
&
teens



A word to the wise:

by Nancy Fraser

Friday evening the family returned to Canada. All day Saturday was spent shopping for a completely new school wardrobe. The pants were all washed, shortened, and ready for 9:00 Monday morning; the parents congratulating themselves on their efficiency, though jet lagged.

Four o'clock that afternoon the ninth grader returned to the hotel, tore off the cords, never to put them on again. The problem? There were the wrong cut for the group in which he had found himself. Had they been a part of his regular wear, he would have been rejected by his precious new friends.

Peer approval is essential, and styles have become not only a definition of youth, but uniforms for separate groups. There are mods, rockers, trendies, preppies and punks. These teen groups are actually tribes that dictate attitudes and music, whether books are read or not and what kinds, and what school grades are acceptable.

For all young people there's great security in being well accepted by friends, but for foreign service kids, trying to move away emotionally from family while being more, rather than less dependent than usual during the process of an international move, it assumes an even greater importance.

The choosing of an appropriate wardrobe is analogous to taking on a protective coating, at least until the student is confident the environment is safe enough for her/him to stand out visually. Being able to move from one group to another seems only to be possible after real confidence is attained, and that takes some time in a new school environment.

It is interesting to note that in international schools in third world posts, the style element of group identification is often suspended. It is understood that clothing is only bought on summer leave, so judgement on that basis assumes less importance. As to the clothing discussed earlier, one hundred and fifty dollars worth of corduroys are in a box in the basement ready to be delivered to Neighbourhood Services.