



Our Last Best Shot

Laura Stepp

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A Pulitzer prize-winning journalist translates the behavior of young adolescents and guides us through this pivotal developmental stage.

Young adolescence, between the ages of ten and fifteen, is often dismissed as a baffling period, mistakenly lumped together with the later teenage years. Yet is perhaps the most critical time in the human life cycle, a fateful juncture at which unmatched physical and intellectual growth, expanding creativity, emerging moral sensibilities, awakening sexuality, and maturing emotions powerfully converge. Unsure of what constitutes "normal" behavior, parents can fail to distinguish between behaviors that signal healthy growth and those that indicate real trouble. Without this knowledge, they are in danger of forfeiting their last best chance to affect decisive changes.

After writing a series of award-winning articles on young adolescents, examining the existing scientific literature, and conferring with social scientists and educators, Laura Sessions Stepp set out across the country to meet and observe young people and their families over the course of a year. Through the stories of average young people she met in urban Los Angeles; Durham, North Carolina, and rural Ulysses, Kansas, she helps us navigate the landscape of adolescence.

To be placed on the shelf alongside Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia*, Michael Gurian's *The Wonder of Boys*, and William Pollack's *Real Boys*, *Our Last Best Shot* is a book parents and educators cannot afford to miss.

"This is the best book on adolescence ever written for the general public. Touching . . . deeply insightful . . . fascinating, and highly informative. A wealth of practical understanding and guidance for parents and others who care for our youth." --David A. Hamburg, M.D., President Emeritus, Carnegie Corporation of New York

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