

Parents, Stop Talking About the ‘Lost Year’

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They’re calling it a “lost year.”

On and offline, parents are trading stories — poignant and painful — about all of the ways that they fear their middle schoolers are losing ground.

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They reason they’ll be fine is built right into the biology of early adolescence, explained Laurence Steinberg, a professor of psychology at Temple University and the author of “Age of Opportunity,” the influential 2014 book on adolescent brain science. The fact that middle schoolers are going through a “critical period” of heightened brain flexibility, instability and plasticity, he said, means that they are hypersensitive and ultra-vulnerable — and also extra-primed for adaptability and resilience.

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