

Young Achievers Set Tone for '80s

YOUNG people of the 1980s seem to be turning toward conservatism in contrast to trends of the 1960s. Many of their parents may have been identified with the rebellion against "The Establishment" but today's smart youngsters are preparing to take charge of it.

Surveys of public schools across the country report that students are toning down what they wear and conforming voluntarily to dress codes. Less extremism in hair and sloppy attire is found.

On college campuses lectures on "executive dress" are attracting interested audiences from students preparing for job interviews. "The right attire can give you a competitive edge," said one student. "Those who don't do it right won't get the prestige job."

These changes are accompanied to a considerable degree by serious attitudes in classrooms, although a recent speaker at Central State University declared that deterioration of discipline in the classroom continues to be the most critical prob-

lem of education.

"If the kids aren't controlled in the home, the teachers have little chance," said Dr. Jim Tunney, president of the California-based Institute for Study of Motivation and Achievement.

There can be no question but what teaching of values, good or bad, begins in the home, but considerable debate goes on about the proper role of schools in this respect. Complaints are voiced that failure to teach or undergird positive precepts places schools in the position of teaching negative values.

A 1981 study of families in New York found that law-abiding youth most often came from homes where the father was present and the mother was active in church. "Discipline in a family cuts the chances of drug addiction in half," it was noted in the report.

A poll of "Who's Who Among American High School Students," with 24,000 responding, showed that high achievers tend to hold to high moral and social values. This sur-

vey reported:

Eight out of 10 high achievers belong to an active religion and 72 percent attend services regularly;

Eighty percent do not think marijuana should be legalized and 90 percent wouldn't use it if it were;

More than half watch less than 10 hours of television a week;

Some 87 percent favor traditional marriages and less than 25 percent had had sexual intercourse.

Census data show that as a share of the entire U.S. population, young people ages 15 to 24 have been in a decline since 1977. It is predicted this shrinkage will continue at least until 1995.

This means less strain on schools and colleges, fewer young adults entering the job market, and possibly a decline in crime rates.

By no means have all problems of youth been solved. Yet, there are signs that more young people are being motivated on courses that build character, solve problems and lead to success.