



# 4-H VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SERIES

Nebraska 4-H Youth Development

## How Kids Develop - Ages 12-14, Early Adolescence

### Understanding and Working with Youth: What are they like?

<u>Characteristics of Age Group</u>	<u>Implications and Applications</u>
Are concerned about physical development, being liked by friends, social graces, and good grooming (even through they don't like to admit it).	Encourage learning experiences related to understanding oneself and getting along with others. Be willing to talk about physical changes.
Change at different rates, according to highly individual "clocks." Can be painfully self conscious and critical. Are vulnerable to bouts of low self-esteem.	They need many varied opportunities to achieve and to have their competence recognized by others.
Are self conscious with many needing help to overcome inferiority complexes.	Concentrate on developing individual skills.
Have intense feelings related to sex. Keen interest in their own bodies, especially sex and sex processes.	Prepare opportunities to help youth discuss body development as a natural and normal process. Provide the opportunity for discussion of human sexuality to ease anxiety associated with a developing body.
Experience emotions that are on a roller coaster rides. Change in hormones and changes in thinking contribute to the mood swings.	Accept the feelings that they have. Remember that early adolescents are known for their drama, and their feelings may seem extreme at times.
Desire a sense of independence, yet they want and need their parents' help.	Encourage youth to work with adults and older teens to complete learning experiences and apprenticing.
Like fan clubs. Many have older or adult idols.	Encourage youth to work with or apprentice to older teens and adults.
Still depend on parental guidelines,	Involve youth in deciding on own group rules. Give them parameters to follow.
Are beginning to question authority and values of parents.	Be willing to spend time to discuss values and morals.
Peer pressure mounts, first from same sex, then from opposite sex.	Use peer pressure as a positive influence. Use the group to influence non-participation. Have the group give encouragement to individuals.
Are interested in activities involving boys and girls.	Encourage learning experiences involving boys and girls.
Are interested in sports and active games.	Encourage active, fun-learning experiences.
Are ready for in-depth, longer learning experiences.	Encourage deeper exploration of leadership roles; encourage more detailed recordkeeping or leadership experiences.
Can take responsibility in planning and evaluating their own work.	Allow members to plan activities. Expect follow through. Help them evaluate the outcome. Let members have responsibility for group activity.
Can plan their own social and recreational activities.	Form planning committees to plan parties and other social activities. Give experience in working in groups.
May avoid difficult tasks.	Help youth choose tasks at which they can succeed. Encourage them to participate in all tasks. Assist youth in eliminating their fears. Help them succeed in solving and participating in difficult tasks.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

<b><u>Characteristics of Age Group</u></b>	<b><u>Implications and Applications</u></b>
Want to get outside of their own community to explore.	Provide learning experiences outside of the community.
Are getting over the age of fantasy. Beginning to think of what they will do when they grow up, but are often unclear of needs and values.	Relate life skills to career choices.
Gain skills in social relations with peers and adults.	Provide opportunities for interaction with peers and adults. Provide activities that would foster social interaction.