



# 4-H VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SERIES

Nebraska 4-H Youth Development

## How Kids Develop - Ages 15-18, Middle Adolescence

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

<u>Characteristics of Age Group</u>	<u>Implications and Applications</u>
Have high social needs and desires.	Put more emphasis on personal development (mental and social) wherever possible.
Want and need a strong voice in planning own programs.	Provide suggestions and several alternatives rather than detailed instructions.
Need freedom from parental control to make decisions.	Make youth aware that in these situations they are making decisions for themselves or a group like themselves.
Want adult leadership roles.	Emphasize guidance and counseling from adult leaders rather than directions. Recommend liberal use of discussion method.
Quite interested in coeducational activities.	Plan coeducational and group-oriented projects or activities.
Strong desire for status in peer group.	Make sure youth are encouraged by peers. Help establish a climate that is conducive to encouragement.
Are restricting areas of interest; patterns of interest becoming more definite.	Projects can have considerably more depth. May need to suggest related areas to give youth a broader outlook.
Reach high levels of abstract thinking and problem solving. Can choose purposes, make plans, carry them out, and evaluate the results.	Put youth into real life problem-solving situations. Allow them to fully discover ideas, make decisions, and evaluate the outcomes.
Have widespread feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.	Counter the feelings of inferiority and inadequacy by encouraging youth and helping them to see their positive worth.
Are beginning to know self as individual. Personal philosophy begins to emerge.	Allow time for youth to explore and express their own philosophies. Use activities that have them search for experiences that will allow them to identify their philosophies.
Are developing community consciousness.	Recommend civic projects that are a service to others.
Are developing a growing concern for the well being and progress of other individuals and groups.	Encourage interest in and discussion of community and world problems in which they express concern.
Need life planning guidance.	Include activities and information regarding life planning.
Are beginning to think of leaving home for college, employment, marriage, etc.	Put emphasis on consumer and financial management.
Many will leave the community for employment, and many who go to college will not return to their present communities after graduation.	Need to introduce youth to other settings through tours and trips to state and interstate conferences.
Are interested in travel and adventure.	For incentives, provide trips, rather than medals and ribbons.

Query, S. How kids develop. Iowa 4-H volunteer. Revised: Levings, J. 2006. Iowa State University Extension.  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/Documents/V1950902FAgesStages.PDF>



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.