

CHARACTERISTICS OF 15-18 YEAR-OLDS

Characteristics	What it means for parents/providers
PHYSICAL	PHYSICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about body image • Range of size and maturity narrowing • Have realistic view of limits to which body can be tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to learn how to make selves feel attractive • Avoid comparing or critical statements about appearance
SOCIAL	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want intimacy • Want respect • Test sexual attractiveness • Want adult-like leadership roles • Able to commit and follow through • See adults as fallible • Apt to reject goals set by others • Renegotiate relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to talk about beliefs • Encourage them to plan own activities • Offer leadership opportunities • Give them lots of time to hang out with friends • Involve them in service groups, community service, etc. • Provide activities to test out interactions with opposite sex, such as trips, dances, community service
EMOTIONAL	EMOTIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to be seen as individual while conforming to certain peer standards • Want autonomy • Want to determine what happens in their world • Desire respect • Beginning to accept and enjoy own uniqueness • Develop own set of values and beliefs • Are introspective • Can see self from viewpoint of others • Can initiate and carry out tasks without supervision • Search for career possibilities • Look for confidence of others in their decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan opportunities that allow teens to try different roles • Encourage involvement in making a program or the community better, such as community service • Be willing to be wrong
INTELLECTUAL	INTELLECTUAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering abstract thinking • Like demonstrating acquired knowledge • Develop theories to explain and make sense of things • Create new possibilities from information • Can consider issues from many perspectives • Grow impatient with meaningless activity • Can imagine impact of present behavior on future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage them to plan and carry out those plans • Plan times they can discuss ideas and abstract concepts • Offer chances to explore vocational and citizenship skills

Developed by the Jefferson County Delinquency Prevention Council
 Adapted from *Youth Development Foundations for 4-H Camp Staff: Understanding Children and USDA/Army School-Age and Teen Project*

For more information contact:
 Delinquency Prevention Council
 874 Collins Rd.
 Jefferson, WI 53549
 920-675-4630

Every child develops at his/her own pace. Use this as a guide. Talk with a health care professional if you have concerns.

CHARACTERISTICS OF 12-14 YEAR-OLDS

Characteristics	What it means for parents/providers
PHYSICAL	PHYSICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid changes in physical appearance • Hands/feet/nose/ears may grow faster than arms and legs • Wide range of development between genders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept that physical appearance is very important • Avoid activities that could cause embarrassment about bodies • Plan activities that do not rely on physical prowess • Be patient with grooming behaviors that may seem excessive
SOCIAL	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look more to peers than adults for approval • Interested in opposite sex • Look for role models • Question authority and family values • Seek acceptance and trust • Tend to reject ready made solutions from adults in favor of their own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for genders to mix in groups • Engage them in setting own rules and consequences • Help them find information and resources • Encourage involvement in teen councils and planning boards
EMOTIONAL	EMOTIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare themselves to others • Concerned about physical development and emerging sexuality • Concerned about peer acceptance • Want privacy and independence from adults • Want to be part of something important • See selves as always on center stage • Body changes and differences can cause situations of embarrassment • Abandoning view that parents are all powerful • Strive for independence, yet want and need parents' help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help them develop own standards to assess improvement • Avoid putting them on the spot whether commending or criticizing • Provide opportunities to practice independence within structured limits, such as community service • Do not use put downs or "in your face" behaviors with them • Let them decide when and if to be on stage
INTELLECTUAL	INTELLECTUAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with justice and equality • Think abstractly • Understand cause and effect • Can handle in-depth, long-term projects • Challenge assumptions • Want to explore beyond community • Can imagine consequences • Moved from fantasy to realistic focus on life's goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to question values of organization • Encourage them to predict "what might happen if" • Involve them in making program decisions • Provide opportunity to learn how communities work • Offer more complex activities • Plan activities that require some length of time to complete

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