

# AGES & STAGES

*Early adolescences (or tweens and young teens) are going through dramatic changes. They're hitting a time when peers will have the most influence on them. They are more able to think like adults, but they don't have the experience and judgement needed to act like adults.*



## 12-14 YEARS

### PHYSICAL

- experiences rapid changes in physical appearance that can occur at different rates
- may be concerned about their body image
- interested in sports and active games
- wide variation in developing maturity

### SOCIAL

- interested in activities involving mixed gender groups
- peer approval becomes more important and adult approval decreases
- seeks acceptance and trust in peer groups
- tends to reject ready-made solutions from adults in favor of their own

### EMOTIONAL

- compares themselves to others causing them to be self-conscious and critical
- strives for independence yet needs adult approval
- experiences a range of emotions, possible mood swings
- seeks privacy

### COGNITIVE

- ready for in-depth, long-term experiences
- wants to explore the world beyond their own community
- includes more abstract thinking and begins to understand cause and effect
- looks for new ways to do things

### IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT

- encourage active, fun, group learning experiences while also allowing opportunities to work on individual goals
- encourage learning experiences related to self-discovery, self-understanding, and getting along with others
- provide opportunities for all genders to mix without feeling uncomfortable- let the youth plan activities themselves
- help youth find solutions on their own by providing supervision without interference
- allow youth to plan activities and expect them to follow through. Help them evaluate the outcome
- accept their feelings and be careful not to embarrass or criticize
- encourage youth to work with adults and older teens
- watch for youth who are making fun of others and put a stop to it to avoid hurt feelings

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