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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