

Later Adolescence: Ages 15-18

Characteristics of Age Group

Growth steady, coordination, strength, and energy improving

Many still image-conscious, but may not practice health habits

Physical capacities and social mobility, relations increase dangers of risk-taking behavior

Self-esteem stabilizing
Identity tied to peer group

Aspiring to adult roles, both positive and negative

More oriented to peer group but caring adults significant, especially for high achievement

Relationships grow closer, deeper, more intense (both positively and negatively)

Implications and Applications

Incorporate physical activities in and between learning events; introduce physical challenges

Accept growth differences; promote positive image via nutrition, healthy lifestyle

Use formal and informal channels to teach risk aversion and positive development; build positive norms, monitor events

Plan activities that build mastery and competence, matched to abilities and aspirations; reward participation and growth, not just winning

Link activities to goal-setting, positive habits, service learning foster youth leadership

Empower parents, mentors, role models to challenge, support, stay in touch; Hold high expectations; recognize quality work and effort

Teach communication and conflict skills to strengthen family and peer relations and to prevent risk-taking behavior

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Characteristics of Age Group

Personal and group identity may intensify inter-group conflict

Strong motivation to explore how the world works and link learning to real-world activities and making a difference

Growing capacity to think abstractly, question authority

Growing experience, interest, and ability to plan for post-secondary training and adult work, family, and community roles

Implications and Applications

Foster inclusive activities that build understanding across races, genders, economic class

Integrate hands-on learning in different learning styles with peer teaching, critical thinking and discussion, self-guided inquiry

Assist youth to think through consequences of actions (moral, rational, relational) and create ways to improve (not just criticize) their homes, schools, or communities

Teach job skills and help youth explore career paths, personal strengths and opportunities, plans for their future