

**Staff Guide for Training Volunteers – Unit II**  
**POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

[Three Basic Models of Youth Development](#) | [Four Essential Elements of 4-H Adult Attitudes Towards Youth Participation](#) | [Youth as Partners](#)  
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After completing training of this unit, the leader will understand:

- The models of youth development
- The four essential elements of 4-H
- Adult attitudes towards youth participation
- Youth as partners
- Characteristics of youth development
- Stages of youth development

### **Positive Youth Development**

The fundamental principle of youth development work is that youth are at the center of their development. They have certain developmental needs--emotional, social, intellectual and physical--and will attempt to meet those needs throughout their day-to-day lives. Each young person does this in his or her own way. Our role as adults, and youth professionals, is to help play an active role in guiding and meeting these needs.

Youth development occurs whether by intent or happenstance. Whether or not we are present in the lives of young people, they will seek to have these needs met--consciously or unconsciously, in healthy ways or in dangerous ways! They will grow up with or without our help. Youth development is a natural process, but the work we do in promoting positive outcomes and healthy, contributing adults is founded on the principle that it is too important to be left to chance.

Youth development can take place almost anywhere--with peers, in families, in communities and even at school. For many youth, though, out-of-school, community-based organizations are the one place to be a part of ongoing, intentional efforts that promote optimal, healthy development of the body, mind and spirit.

4-H Youth Development programs help youth acquire the life skills necessary to meet the challenges of growing up through a series of experiential, research-based educational experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and intellectually competent.

### **Three Basic Models of Youth Development**

#### Preventive

- a. Focuses on prevention or intervention as the strategy of first importance
- b. an assumption that something is already wrong, and that "broken" kids just need to be "fixed" or "repaired" and sent back out in the world
- c. focuses on the problems
- d. often characterized by a medical context of "inoculation" or "prescription"

Preventive measures are defined as an active process of creating conditions and fostering personal attributes that promote the well being of people.

(William A. Lofquist, *The Technology of Prevention Workbook*, 1989).

Many in the prevention field have acknowledged that the practice of trying to "fix" young people was not adequate and was not helping them develop in positive ways. We know from experience that efforts that rely solely on risk reduction strategies fail to adequately prepare young people to assume productive roles as adults.

#### Protective

- a. Problems and challenges of adolescence are not ignored, but the focus is more on "protective factors"
- b. focuses on building a web of supports, relationships and opportunities for all young people
- c. looks for ways to prepare youth with useful life skills for adulthood
- d. promotes asset building as a way to successfully make the transition to adulthood

Protective factors are defined as the supports, opportunities and relationships that help people deal with negative circumstances (this is sometimes called "resilience").

## Positive Youth Development: The Balanced Model of Youth Development

This model integrates the prevention and protection youth development models into one supportive relationship that takes a more holistic approach to youth development, and understands that Positive Youth Development encompasses all the characterizations of both the preventative and protective methods.

- a. A holistic approach to youth development that includes elements that reduce risk factors and also promotes protective factors
- b. Aims to assist youth in developing skills which will lead to positive outcomes
- c. All kids need this kind of support and attention, not just those in high-risk situations

Positive Youth Development is balanced because it:

- a. Centers on the emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs of all young people
- b. Promotes skill building and asset development
- c. Sees young people in the context of family, peers, and community
- d. Reduces risk and enhances protective factors
- e. Engages youth as partners and resources
- f. Builds the relationships and provided opportunities to intervene when problems reach crisis levels

When we speak about Positive Youth Development, we specifically are referring to intentional efforts that promote positive outcomes for young people through a variety of supports, relationships and opportunities. Positive Youth Development is designed to focus on the positive outcomes we desire for young people, not just the negative outcomes we hope to prevent.

Positive Youth Development experiences provide high quality, sustained engagement with young people as partners and resources and are designed to meet their developmental needs at every stage of their lives. Positive Youth Development is relevant to the needs of all young people.

Positive Youth Development fosters the 6 C's as the characteristics needed by all young people as they transition into their second decade of life:

- ✓ Caring/compassion
- ✓ Competent
- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Connections to others
- ✓ Character
- ✓ Contributions

Washington State 4-H Youth Development Program has adopted the Character Counts! Curriculum for their character education. TeRRiFiCC is the acronym to remember the six character traits of Character Counts! People who incorporate these six traits into their lives are TeRRiFiCC! They fit nicely with the 6 C's.

Trustworthy

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

Positive Youth Development is holistic in its approach by addressing both protective factors and risk factors. Positive Youth Development shifts the dialogue from one that just focuses on youth with problems to one that asks how communities can help youth develop the confidence, competence, compassion, connections and character to contribute in meaningful ways so that they grow up into healthy adults. This understanding has never been more important than it is today.

4-H Youth Development programs, activities, and events should be based on the balanced method of Positive Youth Development, foster the 6 C's and incorporate Character Counts!.

Recent research in Montana on how young people spend time in their out-of-school hours shows that:

- ✓ youth who are involved in organized, out-of-school programs are less likely to shoplift, use drugs of any kind, damage property for the fun of it, smoke cigarettes, or engage in other self-destructive behaviors
- ✓ youth involved in positive out-of-school alternatives also develop the critical skills needed to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood--skills like leadership, self-confidence, communications, compassion and caring, and many others
- ✓ are more likely to get better grades than kids who are not engaged in any organized out-of-school activities

(For more information: <http://www.montana.edu/4h/4hsurvey>.)

## Four Essential Elements of 4-H

Seldom do parents today have the extended family of grandparents, aunts, and uncles close to give support and advice when needed. In fact, many children have only one parent to handle the seemingly awesome task of parenting. 4-H leaders become **parenting resources**, both to the child and the child's parent(s).

### *Caring Relationship (Belonging)*

All youth need a caring, supportive relationship in their lives. Volunteer leaders and club members provide this fellowship by showing interest in, actively listening to, and fostering the gifts of 4-H youth. 4-H clubs provide an opportunity for long-term youth development seldom found in other educational delivery modes. The multiple interactions of parents and adults working with 4-H'ers that is found in 4-H clubs is unique to most other youth education.

### *Constructive Learning Experiences (Mastery)*

Youth rely on the joy they receive from interests, hobbies and group participation to balance disappointments in other parts of their lives. 4-H offers opportunities to take on new challenges and learn new skills. 4-H youth develop mastery through the Experiential Learning Process by experiencing, sharing what happened, processing what was important, generalizing the experience to the real world and applying what was learned to other situations.

The presence of self-confidence and positive self-esteem are today considered to be two of the most important indicators of personal wellness and success in an individual. Through the support and encouragement of caring club parents and leaders, youth grow taller in their feelings of self-worth. A sense of accomplishment is achieved from finishing a project and participating in a positive evaluation experience.

### *Leadership Opportunities (Independence)*

Creating opportunities for youth to develop skills and confidence for leadership and self-discipline is a cornerstone of 4-H. 4-H helps young people recognize the connection between independence and responsibility. Independence does mean greater power and influence, but it is linked with responsibility for decisions made and actions taken. Society is busy with worthwhile opportunities for youth in greater abundance than ever before. Being involved in a successful 4-H club means that members learn how to set priorities in developing their club program and manage the time they have available for their club wisely.

### *Service to Communities (Generosity)*

The 4-H Pledge focuses on the importance of larger service and recognizing a responsibility for the welfare of others. 4-H helps youth focus on developing concern for others and taking action to demonstrate that concern. Service forges bonds between youth and the

community, and doing something valued by others raises feelings of self-worth and competence.

In 1999, a team of 5 evaluators from the National 4-H Impact Design Implementation Team was given the charge of answering the question, “What positive outcomes in youth, adults, and communities result from the presence of critical elements in a 4-H experience?” The eight critical elements identified by that group are distilled here into our current four Essential Elements. To see the complete copy of the four Essential Elements go to: [http://4h.wsu.edu/ws4h/elements\\_distillation.pdf](http://4h.wsu.edu/ws4h/elements_distillation.pdf)

Introduction to The Essential Elements of 4-H video available at: [http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/4h\\_news.htm](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/4h_news.htm)

## **Vulnerable Youth**

Many people feel that all children are “at risk” because of the complex social forces affecting our society. As a significant adult in children’s lives, you can help them become good citizens. Four major factors necessary for the development of capable young people have been identified that often are missing from our culture:

- Networks
- Meaningful roles
- On-the-job training
- Parenting resources

Through 4-H Youth Development you can help restore these vital missing pieces.

**Networks** are formed among youth, among youth and adults, and among adults through participation in 4-H meetings, activities, and events.

Many youth today grow up in families and communities without any significant role to play. They just don’t seem needed until they become adults. Research indicates that a primary cause of decline in motivation, discipline, and achievement is this perceived lack of need or value. We must treat youth as contributors and assets rather than passive objects to be done for or to. As 4-H leaders, listen to members, take them seriously, and treat them with respect. This will help restore the dialogue and collaboration necessary to link youth with larger society.

**On-the-job-training** with hands-on involvement has been the cornerstone of 4-H Youth Development. It is important for youth to have this opportunity because that is how they learn patience, personal initiative, hard work, and deferred gratification. If they don’t learn about real life in this way, they may think that real life is what they see on television.

Learning by doing is one of the primary reasons why the 4-H Youth Development program was successful in informal education. If you think you are helping by doing children's work for them, that the best way to destroy self-esteem and a sense of worth in young people is to do too much for them. This robs them of a sense of personal capability. The greatest gift of all is to help them gain control of their own lives.

## **Adult Attitudes Toward Youth Participation**

Understanding youth/adult partnerships, youth empowerment, the benefits of planning with youth as partners, and adult leadership styles is beneficial for all adults that work with youth and who work on projects and events aimed at youth.

The success of your 4-H programs will often hinge on the attitudes and beliefs you and your volunteers take towards young people. How you see them--as capable or as incapable--will establish a precedent in all that you do in your program.

There are many perceptions that adults have about the involvement of young people in programs designed for their benefit. These perceptions influence how we choose to involve them in decision-making processes. Here are a few of those perceptions first explained by William A. Lofquist:

(from *The Technology of Prevention Workbook: A Leadership Development Program*. Tucson, AZ: AYD Publications, 1989)

### Youth as Objects--

- ✓ Adults know what is best for young people and control situations in which they allow them to be involved.
- ✓ The attitude is that the young people have little to contribute.
- ✓ Adults may work to keep young people in a relatively powerless position.
- ✓ Adults with such opinions have no intention of allowing significant youth input or participation.
- ✓ Adults may truly believe that they need to protect young people from "suffering" from their mistakes (like they did!).

However, we know that involvement in meaningful roles is essential to positive growth and the development of successful young adults.

### Youth as Recipients--

- ✓ Adults allow young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be "good" for them.
- ✓ Focuses on young people learning from "adult society" and that young people need to be guided through their participation in adult society.
- ✓ Adults allow young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be good "preparation" for them when they become "real people" characterize this attitude.

- ✓ Consequently, responsibilities and tasks often delegated to young people are either trivial (it won't matter if they mess up) or those which adults find distasteful (roadside cleanup campaigns).

Adults with this viewpoint on youth involvement often control the terms and conditions of their involvement. For example, adults invite two youth representatives to participate on a board of a committee composed primarily of adults. Such participation still leaves youth in a relatively powerless position. They realize that their role remains trivial and that adults are retaining the positions of authority and much of the responsibility.

#### Youth as Resources--

- ✓ Perspective is based on respect for the contributions youth can make to the planning, operation and evaluation of a youth-focused organization in the present.
- ✓ In essence, the organization then becomes "youth-driven" rather than merely "youth-serving."
- ✓ Adults see youth as critical to the success of a program or the organization.

This perspective acknowledges that adults and young people can share any leadership and decision-making roles involved. This may mean that both young people and adults need to learn the skills necessary for shared leadership, and it may require some change in policy and administrative practice within the organization. This may require a re-formulation of the organization's mission statement.

Young people come to our programs with a set of basic needs (see Module II.A.) that we address through our programs and practices. One of those needs is the opportunity for self-determination. One of the key ways we can allow this in 4-H is by considering youth as full partners and resources in our work--adults and youth working together in all kinds of ways from decision-making to program planning. We want to view youth as resources to our programs and consider it a part of the youth's responsibility to participate.

#### Adults are Key

Adults play a key role in supporting youth involvement. This is not an opportunity for us to stand by and watch. We must be involved in helping create safe spaces and structures that help youth in the process of becoming full partners.

Think now for a moment--how do you assess your present level of thinking about or working with young people?

- ✓ Truly respecting their ideas?
- ✓ Giving encouragement?
- ✓ Providing resources for activities?
- ✓ Listening carefully?
- ✓ Promoting active participation?
- ✓ Helping them get organized?
- ✓ Encouraging critical thinking?

## Tips for Working with Youth as Partners

Don't expect more from youth than you would from another adult. And don't expect less!

In much the same way that minorities feel they have to be "better" than their counterparts to get the same rewards, young people do too. When a young person shows up 15 minutes late for a meeting, an adult might think: "Ah-hah! Just as I expected--an irresponsible kid!" When a fellow adult shows up 15 minutes late, the same person might think: "That's understandable. They've got deadlines and pressures and schedules to meet." So do young people! Also, remember that youth have parents and often can't drive themselves.

- ✓ Make sure that you don't hold a young person to a stricter standard than the adults.

No, they may not hold down full-time jobs, but they have other commitments and pressures and schedules that demand their attention. And they will agonize more over their performance than adults. In dealing with any new relationship, there is a caution and tentativeness. You both watch closely for signs that this new relationship may not work out. Don't exaggerate this tendency and expect the youth's performance to exceed that of adults.

- ✓ Don't excuse all indiscretions just because you are dealing with a young person.

Sometimes adults tend not to expect enough from young people. Some adults say they can't find any faults with youth when working with them on a project. Hold youth to high standards and don't tolerate indiscretions.

- ✓ Treat youths as individuals; don't make one youth represent all youth.

Young people will put enough pressure on themselves. They understand that adults may carry negative images of them and may generalize from the behavior of a few. Don't add to it by making them feel that they must speak for or represent all youths. You wouldn't do that for another adult. Assure young people that you are interested in their individual opinions and don't expect them to embody an entire population.

- ✓ Be careful about interrupting.

Young people can get discouraged easily when working with powerful adults. Let them finish their ideas. For the partnership to work, young people must feel that they are valued and respected by adults. In many outside relationships, this respect is lacking and they are inherently wary of adults. When interrupted by adults, they will tend to stop talking (sometimes permanently).

- ✓ Remember that your role in a partnership is not to parent. While being a parent may be the most important role that any adult can play, the purpose of a

youth/adult partnership is to give young people different ways to relate to adults.

- ✓ Don't move too fast! Remember that this is all new for young people, too. Don't move too fast without explaining the reasons for actions taken. Rushing through meetings can be a sign that adults are still trying to control the actions of the group. Pace your work and bring youth along in the decision-making process. The goal is to allow youth to make as many of the decisions about the club as is appropriate to their development. At some point, the youth should be running the club almost independently, but with adult consultation as needed.

How adult volunteers view young people, can have a huge impact on your program. Recent research has clearly demonstrated that the more involved youth are in making program decisions, in planning events and activities designed for their benefit and enjoyment, and in being actively engaged in program evaluation, the more successful those programs will be.

Moreover, involving youth in decision-making provides them with the essential opportunities and supports (i.e. challenge, relevancy, voice, cause-based action, skill-building, adult structure, and affirmation) that are consistently shown to help young people achieve mastery, compassion and health.

The extent to which you involve them, of course, will depend on the age and maturity of the young people themselves.

- ✓ With very young children, for example, adults may need to provide more guidance and direction than with teenagers. At the same time, though, we should not underestimate the capacity of even young children to take on responsibilities and make decisions. After all--that's how they learn to make responsible decisions and the reason that youth development is a "developmental" process.
- ✓ Adults who lead groups of youth must possess a large repertoire of activities and techniques that engage youth and promote the development of skills that will help youth learn and grow in positive ways. This requires a leadership style that consistently validates and encourages genuine youth participation while also assuring the safety and boundaries of the group.

Competent group leaders choose and use methods of working with young people that are geared toward meeting their basic needs. They know that young people's basic needs are best met through constructive and meaningful opportunities that are linked to development outcomes and supported by lasting relationships with caring adults (refer to the 8 critical elements).

## Characteristics of Youth

5 to 8 year-old developmental growth:	Leader suggestions:
<p><b><i>Physical Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are mastering physical skills.</li> <li>• Have more control of gross (large muscle) motor skills than fine motor skills (small muscles)</li> <li>• Slow, steady growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ample opportunities to work with hands.</li> <li>• Keep directions to the point. Repeat, repeat, repeat directions.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Intellectual Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalize from own experiences. Very concrete learning style; see, hear, taste, feel and smell it.</li> <li>• Interested in process rather than final product. Will continue working on project rather than complete it.</li> <li>• Thinking based in reality and accuracy.</li> <li>• Developing cause-effect and sorting skills.</li> <li>• Handle one mental operation at a time.</li> <li>• Able to distinguish between reality and fantasy although usually afraid of scary things.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer opportunities to experience entire process, including project completion.</li> <li>• Give one directive at a time.</li> <li>• Provide encouragement through activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Social Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning how to be friends and may have several “best friends” at a time.</li> <li>• Peer opinions more important. More concerned of success in front of peers than parents.</li> <li>• Increased empathy for others although still discovering and involved in self.</li> <li>• Dependence on another adult besides parent becomes a new experience.</li> <li>• Family-oriented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a positive role model.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for youth to showcase their work in public.</li> <li>• Encourage group work activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Emotional Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairness is viewed as “the golden rule.” Enjoy cooperation games. Competition with others is inappropriate.</li> <li>• Seeks parental/adult approval but gaining independence.</li> <li>• Behaves in ways to avoid punishment.</li> <li>• Likes to play games. Rules and rituals are paramount. Losing is not yet accepted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide positive feedback and praise.</li> <li>• Hold ceremonies for new members to begin building friendships within the club.</li> </ul>

9 to 11 year-old developmental growth:	Leader suggestions:
<p><b>Physical Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth this age are very active (better gross and fine motor skills); they are unable to stay confined.</li> <li>• At the peak of interest in skill for own sake.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities should encourage physical involvement.</li> <li>• Help members select projects that use tools and equipment they can manage. Provide plenty of direction and individual coaching.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intellectual Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning to think logically and symbolically. Vocabulary is greater than experience; can read words they don't understand.</li> <li>• Still think concretely, however, can handle ideas if they are related to things they can do or experience with their senses.</li> <li>• There is no middle ground; things are either right or wrong, fun or boring.</li> <li>• Very curious and ask many questions.</li> <li>• Want to make choices but are confused by too many options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep directions short and simple</li> <li>• Go over directions several times in different ways.</li> <li>• Remain flexible to take advantage of "teachable moments" created by curiosity and questions.</li> <li>• Provide guidance through project planning and group activities, helping to evaluate alternatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning to identify with peers; still look to adults for guidance and authority figure.</li> <li>• Satisfaction from completing projects comes from pleasing an adult.</li> <li>• Seek groups of same gender; interests of boys and girls in both work and recreation differ.</li> <li>• Increased independent thought, reasoning, negotiating and compromise skills</li> <li>• Developing an increased ability to cooperate and prefers group work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be alert to ways of involving each member.</li> <li>• Set a good example.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for members to show their work to parents and other adults.</li> <li>• Have members work in pairs with partners of their own choosing.</li> <li>• Encourage exchange of ideas among members.</li> <li>• Use teamwork to develop cooperation and assign leadership tasks when possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile.</li> <li>• Still seeks adult approval and encouragement</li> <li>• Becoming aware of personal appearance.</li> <li>• Likes to measure skills against others but self-confidence is fragile.</li> <li>• While still short, interest-span is increasing; it is longer when interest is high.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold initiation and installation ceremonies for new members and officers.</li> <li>• Praise good work.</li> <li>• Reassure youth that it is natural for children to grow differently; don't allow teasing about physical differences.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for competition but ensure that competitors are well matched in skill level.</li> <li>• Emphasize successes, no matter how small.</li> <li>• Change activities and pace from time to time and when members get "antsy."</li> <li>• Help limit what members undertake, since they are better starters than finishers.</li> </ul>

<b>12 to 14 year-old developmental growth:</b>	<b>Leader suggestions:</b>
<p><b><i>Physical Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiencing rapid changes in physical appearance making teens uncomfortable and clumsy.</li> <li>• Exhibit wide range of sexual maturity. This is a time of great developmental variety.</li> <li>• Interested in skills for specific uses; must use their skills or lose interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be patient and provide individual guidance when members are learning physical or manual skills.</li> <li>• Reassure members that development varies between boys and girls.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Intellectual Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move from concrete to more abstract thinking.</li> <li>• Find justice and equality to be important.</li> <li>• Challenge assumptions and ready-made solutions.</li> <li>• Depth and scope of intellectual interests are increasing; they want to try new things.</li> <li>• Enjoy playing with ideas; learning to think for themselves and find solutions on their own.</li> <li>• Getting better at making choices, but still need guidance.</li> <li>• Better at planning than executing. Can imagine consequences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide learning experiences that will develop and show off special abilities - through demonstrations, appearing before groups and serving on committees.</li> <li>• Give good reasons for your requests or limits. Helping them to understand “why” is a good mental exercise and lesson in decision-making.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Social Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opinions of peers gaining more importance.</li> <li>• Begin to question authority; testing values to gain independence.</li> <li>• Interested in activities involving the opposite sex.</li> <li>• Searching for adult role models.</li> <li>• Are more secure with same-sex peers; status in the group is very important.</li> <li>• Have entered the "hero worship" phase.</li> <li>• Developing mature friendship skills.</li> <li>• Enjoy participating in activities away from home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize directed group work and guide young teens in pursuing acceptable activities. Otherwise behavior will deteriorate into intolerant acts against those not in "the group."</li> <li>• Set few rules, but be firm.</li> <li>• Young teens need contact with several strong adults of the same sex to help them learn what it means to be a masculine or feminine individual.</li> <li>• Provide social and recreational opportunities in settings where boys and girls feel at ease.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Emotional Growth</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning to test values and seek independence.</li> <li>• Mood swings – see self as center stage</li> <li>• Think they know it all and reject help; while they really want adult guidance they reject domination and resent criticism.</li> <li>• Struggling to accept their changing bodies; interested in personal appearance (sexuality).</li> <li>• Do not like embarrassment.</li> <li>• Have a longer attention-span.</li> <li>• Want to be part of something important; service projects are of great interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have reassuring, informal heart-to-heart chats that inspire them to feel more self-confident.</li> <li>• Help members recognize and appreciate their good points; recognize and improve their weaknesses; give praise for progress made.</li> <li>• Stress good health habits, good grooming and proper diets.</li> <li>• Help them to laugh at themselves (without laughing <b>at</b> them) and thus accept changes that are sometimes embarrassing (ex. Voice pitch).</li> <li>• Show warm affection and a sense of humor - no nagging, condemnation or talking-down.</li> <li>• Hold project meetings separately from business meetings so that members can devote more concentrated time to more advanced project work while having more time for social interaction at business meetings.</li> </ul>

15 to 19 year-old developmental growth:	Leader suggestions:
<p><b>Physical Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still growing at different rates but boys are catching up and passing the girls.</li> <li>• Most awkwardness has been overcome.</li> <li>• Can master skills that hold their interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for older teens to develop physical and manual skills on an advanced level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intellectual Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have increasing ability to see how things relate and to use this in problem solving; are mastering abstract thinking.</li> <li>• Have the ability to make and execute short term plans; able to initiate and carry out tasks without supervision.</li> <li>• Are becoming better judges of their abilities.</li> <li>• Goals are based upon personal needs and priorities; are apt to reject goals set by others.</li> <li>• Enjoy demonstrating knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide time for discussions and opportunities for oral presentations of all kinds so teens can try out and expand their ideas within their own age group.</li> <li>• Allow for self-directed group responsibilities; let teens plan and carry out programs on their own.</li> <li>• Use skills of members to carry out group events.</li> <li>• Foster the development of judgment and decision-making ability by helping them to see and understand what is important in life and factors to consider when evaluating alternatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have exaggerated interest in personal appearance to meet group standards.</li> <li>• “Going along with the gang” tapers off, but being an accepted part of a mixed group is important. Can recognize own status in group.</li> <li>• May have great interest in the opposite sex and dating. Tend to romanticize sexuality.</li> <li>• Relationship skills are usually well developed.</li> <li>• Are ready to assume leadership and to prove they are capable of working in an adult manner.</li> <li>• Desire respect and intense, close and long-lasting friendship at this stage.</li> <li>• Recognition is important.</li> <li>• Beginning to feel responsibility for contributing to group and community efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress social graces; let teens introduce guests and plan and hold parties and other social events.</li> <li>• Help members understand the rules of society because they must take responsibilities for their own actions.</li> <li>• Set up work and recreational activities that enable teens to observe the behavior of the opposite sex in a variety of situations.</li> <li>• Be alert to opportunities for teens to assist less skillful or younger club members.</li> <li>• Provide experiences for leadership development.</li> <li>• Use news articles to publicize the leadership roles and community service activities taken on by teens for public recognition.</li> <li>• Direct teen interest in contributing toward something they can accomplish successfully; encourage group participation in community service projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal motivation overcomes limitations in vocabulary and experience.</li> <li>• Striving for independence and identity; have great need to make their own choices.</li> <li>• Need and want guidance on an adult level, but seldom ask for it. Communication may be difficult.</li> <li>• Accept guidance readily from one with prestige.</li> <li>• Have an interest span similar to that of adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust teens; tolerate some conduct that is recognized as part of their developmental phase.</li> <li>• Accept each teen for what s/he is; encourage independent thinking and decision-making.</li> <li>• Don’t expect them to tell you all but be willing to listen and help them evaluate their problems.</li> <li>• Foster values of integrity, generosity, fairness, etc.</li> <li>• Offer career guidance; use resource people.</li> <li>• Include projects and activities that require more patience and perseverance; provide training, encouragement and experience on an adult level.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from "Understanding Youth," Module 4 of The Ohio 4-H BLAST! - Building Leadership and Skills Together, The Ohio State University, 1993 and "Module II: Positive Youth Development," Washington State University, 2007. New York State 4-H Club Leader Handbook, Cornell Cooperative Extension - 6/2003*