

## **Developmental Characteristics of Children**

### **Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten Year Olds**

- Usually in second through fifth grades
- Very enthusiastic, hardly ever bored
- Not self-conscious; will participate in activities easily. Enjoy dramatics, dressing up, story telling.
- Short attention spans; 1/2 hour activities are best; longer projects should be spread over several days or weeks; short sessions in garden and berry picking can be productive
- Tires quickly and can get easily discouraged
- Curious; eager to learn about new things and explore; interested in animals, though may be a little frightened
- Usually have a large number of friends; friendships generally are not long-lasting
- Beginning to form clubs and groups
- Usually away from home for the first time; still very tied to parents; insecurity may be expressed in bedwetting or thumb sucking during the first few days
- Seeks out the companionship, direction and approval of adults; will seldom take direction from peers; will do almost anything if it is with an adult; usually very helpful
- Coordination and skill development is primitive; has trouble doing fine muscle or precise tasks
- Developing self-reliance and self-confidence
- Learning through roles, observing adults; mimic the actions and roles of adults important to them
- Easily motivated through the fun approach
- Restless about bedtime; often fidgety when first lying down
- Likes repetition; often enjoy the same songs, foods, and activities
- Not time conscious; has little conception of time
- Too much excitement or activity can make them nervous or feel overwhelmed
- Tend to believe, accept statements, stories as literally true; undeveloped ability to discriminate between fact and fiction; often believe that fantasy characters are real
- Need close supervision in hygiene and personal appearance

### **Eleven, Twelve, and Thirteen Year Olds**

- Usually in sixth through eighth grades
- Period of great physiological development
- Very peer oriented; like their own age group; cluster in same age, same sex cliques; prefer group activities to individual ones
- Beginning interest in opposite sex; consciousness of dress and grooming, fearful of actual interaction with opposite sex
- Developing fine motor skills and coordination
- Secrets and mystery are important; important to be in the "in" group
- Curious; eager for information; beginning to develop ability to discriminate truth and misinformation; able to evaluate; beginning to think logically; can understand the importance and responsibility of being a group member
- Beginning to be self-conscious about participating in some activities

- Enjoy physical activities
- Longer attention spans; can concentrate on activities for longer periods; can work on projects individually or with peers
- Conscious of fairness and equal division of work and adult attention
- Developing a sense of humor
- Able to plan and make decisions individually and democratically in a group; enjoy planning and organizing activities such as pow-wows
- Excited and enthusiastic about learning to care for themselves; enjoy cooking and other small camp activities
- Need close supervision in hygienic and personal appearance
- Conscious of privileges of older campers
- Enjoy talking about themselves, homes and families

### **Fourteen to Sixteen Year Olds**

- Usually in ninth through eleventh grades
- Can be tremendous differences between these ages
- Period of self-exploration - who am I? Where and how do I fit in?
- Peer relationships and acceptance are important - may try to conform to group
- Interested in learning about relations with opposite sex; sex education
- Approach to opposite sex done in groups - security in numbers
- Slow physical pace
- Can be moody
- Want to experience new things; need to do routine things in different ways
- Want to be self-reliant and independent; often claim privileges but not ready for or willing to take on responsibilities
- Able to decide upon, plan, and organize group's activities
- Like to socialize, talk with other group members
- Value peer evaluation over parental/counselor evaluation
- Want to consider counselors as friends rather than parents; wanting to break away from parents
- Self-conscious, don't want to appear as if they don't know the answer; don't want to be embarrassed
- Able to evaluate selves/group/activities
- Able to participate in extended projects for longer periods of time
- Concerned with physical appearance, hair, clothes, etc.
- Open to and interested in discussing controversial and moral issues (i.e. marriage, pregnancy, sexuality)
- Tend to think that they can take care of themselves/know what is best for themselves