Youth Development - Thinking

**Middle School**

- Beginning to think logically and symbolically
- Think of things as black and white - very little room for middle ground
- Individual evaluation by an adult is usually preferred to group competition
- May be surprised by what can be accomplished when encouraged by an adult

**Teens**

- Move from concrete to more abstract thinking
- Ready-made solutions from adults may be rejected in favor of finding solutions on one’s own
- If an adult leader is respected, his or her opinion will be highly valued
- Small clubs with many positions for developing leadership are ideal
Youth Development - Social

**Middle School**
- Beginning to identify with groups
- Older children take responsibility for their actions
- Satisfaction from completing a project may be more from pleasing the leader than the activity itself
- Developing an increased independence of thought and action - tying new things

**Teens**
- Comfortable away from parents and are beginning to develop mature friendship skills
- Seek peer recognition rather than adult recognition
- Needs opportunity to learn while being at ease with members of the opposite sex
- Still cluster by gender, but beginning to be interested in what the other group is doing.
Youth Development- Emotional

Middle School
- Strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile
- School becomes more difficult and demanding- can easily feel overwhelmed
- Success needs to be emphasized- even if it is a small accomplishment
- Better to compare past performance with present rather than compare with peers

Teens
- Beginning to test values
- Need to be assured that some uneasiness about one’s self is normal
- Compare present performance with past accomplishments- not to the performance of others
- Promote activities that demonstrate a sense of responsibility