Developmental Characteristics of Youth

Editor’s Note: This is a revamped, updated version of Section 3, “Understanding Children and Adolescents,” of Program Basics: The Definitive Program Resource for Boys & Girls Clubs (Atlanta, Ga.: Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 1999).

Factors Influencing Development

Children and adolescents grow and develop at very different rates. Each individual is unique, with a distinct personality and life experience. For this reason, age is not the only sign of where a particular child or adolescent is in terms of development. A young person’s movement through the stages of childhood and adolescence are influenced by a number of factors, including:

- **Physical development** – genetic make-up, ethnicity, race, gender, nutrition and diet, exercise, sleep patterns, use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, stress and stressful life events, environmental toxins and socioeconomic status

- **Cognitive development** – academic setting, family environment, parent or caregiver involvement, access to early education opportunities, teacher support, personal motivation, gender and cultural or ethnic context

- **Emotional development** – individual temperament, parent and family relationships, support network, life experiences and transitions; media exposure and influence and a tendency toward risk-taking or delinquent behaviors

- **Social development** – peer influence, popularity, community and societal context

Not all children and adolescents have the same characteristics as they develop, but there are some qualities that are common to most youth in a particular age group. These are mostly behaviors that have a clear biological or psychological basis. Youth in certain age groups may also exhibit other behaviors – such as obsession with body weight and resulting behaviors such as anorexia or bulimia – but these trends are the result of cultural or environmental influences and are not a part of healthy development.
The Differences Between Boys and Girls

Gender does influence how young people develop, but before puberty, girls and boys are much more alike than they are different. In early childhood, girls and boys share many of the same characteristics and engage in many of the same types of activities. Throughout the first few years of elementary school, boys and girls both enjoy participating in team sports, playing organized games and working cooperatively in small groups.

As they grow older, girls and boys begin to develop behaviors unique to their gender. Understanding the differences between boys and girls at each stage is key to developing effective programs. The basic developmental differences between boys and girls are as follows:

- **Boys and girls mature physically at different ages.** In early and middle childhood, boys typically are taller and heavier than girls of the same age. By age 10 or 11, girls have moved ahead as a result of the growth spurt associated with puberty. For boys, puberty typically begins two years later, and by age 15, they have caught up to or surpassed girls in height and weight. New studies indicate that some girls begin puberty as early as 6 or 7 years of age, creating an even wider gap between girls’ and boys’ maturation rates.¹

- **Girls’ and boys’ rates of learning differ.** Recent studies indicate that there are differences in the brain development of boys and girls, beginning as young as 5 to 7 years of age. Girls develop faster and often perform better in school than boys. Some research even suggests that girls have a better sense of hearing than boys, which could, in part, explain girls’ higher academic performance.²

- **There are differences in how males and females process information.** Research shows that males are more likely to use one side of the brain for a given task, while females use both sides of the brain. Because girls access both the thinking and feeling functions of the brain at the same time, they process information best when it is presented in a larger context. In general, boys prefer information presented in an objective and fact-oriented manner.³

- **Girls and boys have different standards and evaluate themselves differently.** Although girls typically do better in school than boys, they are less confident and more likely to be critical of their own academic performance. Boys, on the other hand, tend to have unrealistically high views of their own academic abilities and accomplishments. Some girls may even hold back in school as they try to fit in with peers and avoid surpassing boys.⁴

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³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
• **Boys and girls experience adolescence in different ways.** Self-esteem falls for both boys and girls after elementary school, but the drop is more dramatic for girls. Compared with boys, adolescent girls are more anxious and stressed, experience lowered academic achievement and suffer more from depression. Girls also experience more distress over their looks and bodies, suffer from eating disorders and attempt suicide more often than boys do.\(^5\)

• **Girls and boys have different internal motivations.** Some girls may be motivated by paying attention to the needs of others, while boys might find motivation in doing what is fair or right. Girls at all ages may think more of other people when they make a decision. They also may be reluctant to judge right and wrong because they were raised to be nurturing and nonjudgmental. Often, girls place more emphasis on compassion and care, and boys are more concerned with honor and justice.\(^6\)

**Understanding Developmental Characteristics**

Club professionals need a solid understanding of the ways in which youth develop in order to successfully create a Club environment, programs and services to meet their needs. While the following list provides general characteristics of children and adolescents in four age groups, it is important to remember that the descriptions are only a guide. Each Club needs to supplement these descriptions with specific information about the young people it serves.

**AGES 6 TO 9**

**Physical Development**

• Physical growth is steady and slow, with average gains of 2½ inches and eight pounds per year. Boys are slightly ahead of girls in both weight and height.

• Large muscles are developed, allowing for ease in activities such as running or throwing.

• Growth of small muscles begins, leading to more competence in motor skills.

• Boys and girls have improved muscle strength, coordination, balance and reaction time. These abilities allow for more complicated movements such as dancing or basketball.

• Gender differences are not noticeable. For some girls, the onset of puberty may begin as early as 6 or 7 years (for African-American girls, one year earlier).

• Boys and girls enjoy practicing and mastering new physical skills.

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Cognitive Development

- Boys and girls are developing self-control and are able to follow simple directions. They enjoy participating in organized activities and games with rules.

- Learning is rapid, as attention span and memory improves.

- Thinking is logical and concrete.

- Boys and girls can carry on conversations with adults, as their ability to speak and express ideas develops.

- Focus is on the present, with a growing awareness of the future.

- Youth begin to understand how to learn, as they start to see that strategies such as study and practice can improve ability and performance.

- Boys and girls are beginning to think for themselves and develop their own opinions, but continue to need help in solving problems.

- There is a strong need to demonstrate mastery of skills and be recognized for competence. Boys and girls develop a “sense of industry” and learn to cooperate with peers and adults.

Emotional Development

- Growing independence brings a desire to do more by and for themselves.

- Boys and girls continue to need love, attention and approval from adults, but are less willing to ask for it.

- Opinions of peers matter more than before.

- Boys and girls are very susceptible to having hurt feelings.

- There is a growing understanding of complex emotions such as confusion and excitement.

- Boys and girls are self-centered, but are beginning to think of others.

- Because the focus is on the present, instant gratification is important.

- Boys and girls may be fearful of school or of failure in school, and some may need help expressing feelings when upset or worried.
• There is a need for accomplishment, a desire to perform well and do things right.

Social Development

• Social development is increasing; boys’ and girls’ worlds expand to include peers, adults and activities outside the family.

• Youth begin to identify with a peer group and want to belong. Spending time with friends becomes more important.
• Developing self-esteem is important. Girls and boys earn social status through doing something well.

• Activities and play occur primarily in single-gender groups.

• Boys and girls are beginning to see other points of view and are learning to resolve conflicts with others.

• Security is found in small groups and organized play.

• Boys and girls are willing to care for and play with younger children.

AGES 10 TO 12

Physical Development

• Puberty begins. Outward signs include rapid growth and bodily changes associated with sexual maturation.

• The growth spurt of puberty generally begins two years earlier in girls than boys. By age 11, most girls have caught up with or surpassed boys in weight and height.

• Physical maturation occurs faster than cognitive, emotional and social development.

• An uneven growth of bones, muscles and organs can result in an awkward appearance.

• Small muscles develop at a faster pace, leading to better motor skills.

Cognitive Development

• A wave of brain development just prior to puberty results in more reasoned perceptions and improved performance.

• Attention, memory and problem-solving abilities improve.

• Girls move ahead of boys in terms of cognitive development.
• Special athletic, artistic, academic or musical talents may emerge.

• Thinking remains fairly concrete, literal and “black or white.” Boys and girls think logically, in terms of what is tangible and real rather than in terms of abstract ideas.

• Events are understood in terms of direct experience.

• Boys and girls begin to question rules and beliefs previously accepted at face value.

• Goal setting and planning begin to be important, and some girls may even start to think about college and careers.

**Emotional Development**

• There is greater self-consciousness. Youth respond to an “imaginary audience” in their heads, imagining the thoughts and feelings of those around them.

• Some girls and boys may become overly concerned with weight and physical appearance.

• Boys and girls basically accept parental guidance, but seek independence and begin to test adult authority.

• There continues to be a great need for emotional support from parents and other adults.

• Self-esteem is developing. Some girls may be vulnerable to losing confidence and becoming self-critical.

• Winning becomes important and competitive sports become more interesting.

• Some boys may repress their feelings and express themselves more physically.

• Adult role models and heroes are important.

• Behaviors related to the development of identity begin to be apparent.

• As puberty begins, boys and girls are less able to recognize other people’s emotions.

**Social Development**

• Approval of and attention from peers is very important.

• Friendship continues to be important, with “best friends” and cliques developing.

• Boys and girls are beginning to learn social skills: how to enter groups, how to read social cues and how to deal with conflict in a positive manner.
• There is increased social interaction with members of the opposite sex.

• Boys and girls may begin to experiment with tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

• Boys and girls learn to better understand other people’s point of view.

**AGES 13 TO 15**

**Physical Development**

• Puberty continues. Boys begin their growth spurt and by age 15, are generally taller, heavier and more muscular than girls.

• Body changes and sexual development are more evident in both boys and girls.

• Girls reach their final adult height by age 14 or 15.

• Acne and body odor are concerns for many teens.

• There is an increased need for sleep and physical rest.

• Clumsiness may occur as a result of rapid physical growth.

• Boys and girls feel a need to be competent and gain further achievement.

**Cognitive Development**

• Thinking becomes more abstract, with better reasoning and more intellectual curiosity. Youth are able to understand the hypothetical as well as the real.

• Boys and girls begin to understand metaphors, double meanings and humor.

• Youth begin to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses as learners.

• Focus is on the present, but there is a beginning awareness of the future.

• Boys and girls do not always see the consequences of their actions.

• Feelings of being all-powerful, all knowing and invulnerable are common.

• Boys and girls continue to test rules and limits and begin to question social conventions.

• There is a strong sense of fairness, but a black or white, right or wrong sense of morality.

• Boys and girls are rejecting their parents’ values while they develop and test their own.
• Forgetfulness is common.

• Goals for the future, including long-term goals, are beginning to be important.

**Emotional Development**

• Boys and girls seek independence, but continue to find security in structure and limit setting by parents and other adults. Although youth want some distance from their parents, they often want close relationships with other adults outside the family.

• Intense sensitivity and self-consciousness often results in shyness, blushing or modesty and a greater need for privacy.

• There is increased concern about physical changes and confusion over emerging sexuality. Confidence in physical appearance is related to self-esteem.

• Sexual experimentation may begin as sexual awareness increases.

• Boys and girls can become critical or argumentative.

• There is a preoccupation with conformity and a desire not to be too different from peers.

• Boys and girls seek acceptance from peers, but still look to parents for values and guidance.

• Boys and girls attempt to figure out who they are by trying on different lifestyles or mannerisms, looking for the right “fit.”

• Boys and girls see themselves differently when they are with peers compared to when they are with parents and teachers.

**Social Development**

• Friendship and romance are increasingly important.

• Relationships deepen and become more mutual and trusting.

• Boys and girls are able to step outside themselves and see another’s perspective in a relationship.

• Boys and girls are trying to establish their own identities separate from their families’.

• Peer pressure is at its peak. Boys and girls identify with the peer group. Social acceptance is important to self-esteem.
• Some dating begins (group dating, casual dating and serious dating).

• The peer group influences interests, clothing styles, music and social activities.

**AGES 16 TO 18**

**Physical Development**

• Physical changes are leveling off and ending.

• By 16, boys have stopped growing but their muscles continue to develop. Boys are considerably taller and heavier than girls.

• Many have achieved their full height and other adult physical milestones.

• Eating disorders – such as anorexia and bulimia – may occur. Girls are more likely than boys to suffer from these disorders.

• Most older teens experience strong sexual feelings.

**Cognitive Development**

• Thinking abilities expand. Many youth can think abstractly and hypothetically, and can envision the future and logical outcomes.

• There is greater ability to see different perspectives, resulting in more empathy and concern for others.

• Boys and girls refine and clarify their values. Many are able to see the bigger societal picture and may show an interest in justice, history, politics or patriotism.

• There is a greater capacity to set goals, think about one’s role in life and consider career options.

• Boys and girls are better able to make decisions, act independently and rely on themselves.

• There is an increase in mature behaviors, especially adult-type responsibilities such as handling money, holding down a job or managing time.

• Boys and girls are able to express their thoughts and ideas more clearly. While boys experience their thoughts and feelings as separate, girls are able to process thoughts and feelings simultaneously and express them verbally.

• Because the brain continues to develop until about the age of 24, a teen’s judgment and
decision-making skills vary in maturity level from one time to another. Memory capabilities also vary during this time.

**Emotional Development**

- Independence increases. Teens gain a more realistic sense of themselves as adults.
- Although there is less confusion regarding bodily changes, teens continue to be extremely concerned with appearance.
- In the search for identity, teens explore different roles, looks, values, lifestyles or friendships. Minority youth may try to define themselves by identifying closely with their own racial or ethnic groups.
- Teens have a greater sense of self-control and the ability to compromise.
- There is a movement from self-centeredness to real sharing.
- All experiences are intense and emotional.
- Interest in ethical and religious issues grows as teens form their own standards and values.

**Social Development**

- Family tensions decrease as peer pressure levels off and teens establish new, adult relationships with parents.
- The peer group remains important, but one-to-one relationships are increasingly significant.
- Friendships are based more on real intimacy – sharing thoughts and feelings – and less on simply doing things together or common interests.
- Strong same-sex friendships continue to exist, but cross-gender friendships become more common.
- Teens need a balance of time spent with peers and with adults.
Applying Developmental Characteristics in Program Design

AGES 6 TO 9

Children aged 6 to 9 do best when they are engaged in physical activity or small-group play, and when they have consistent adult support and feedback. The following guidelines may be helpful in developing programs for this age group.

- Keep instructions, games and activities simple and relatively short. Activities should be no longer than 15 minutes in duration.
- Include an age-appropriate variety of physical activities, especially those that call for high energy and active physical involvement.
- Promote a healthy and active lifestyle.
- Encourage parents and guardians to support their children’s participation in physical activity, be physically active role models and include physical activity in family events.
- Build in ways to develop internal motivation by providing regular, positive feedback to children about their achievements, accomplishments and strengths.
- Offer activities that challenge children to do as much as possible on their own, but allow for adult support and problem-solving help when needed. Adults should consider themselves facilitators of learning and play rather than leaders.
- Encourage youth to maintain high expectations for future success by helping them understand that abilities can be learned, practiced and improved.
- Design programs to be accessible and challenging for all youth by including activities that appeal to a diverse range of talents, interests and skill levels.
- Organize play and exploration in small groups.
- Provide opportunities to practice communication skills: expressing thoughts and feelings.
- Offer regular rewards and incentives to acknowledge milestones.
- Encourage self-directed, youth-led activities.
- Foster the growth of youth’s social networks by offering activities that encourage parent and community involvement and support.
- Offer opportunities for children to interact and communicate with others from diverse racial, ethnic, language, religious and cultural groups.
• Allow free time for boys and girls to play on their own.

**AGES 10 TO 12**

Youth aged 10 to 12 need activities that engage thinking and reason, problem-solving abilities and imagination. The following suggestions can guide program development for this age group.

- Offer opportunities to develop citizenship, service and leadership skills (e.g., Torch Club, Club youth council, recycling projects, hospital visits, tutoring, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, working with disabled, junior staff leaders or peer leaders).

- Include an age-appropriate variety of physical activities. Offer competitive activities and team sports that challenge youth physically.

- Promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

- Encourage parents and guardians to support their children’s participation in physical activity, be physically active role models and include physical activity in family events.

- Engage thinking, memory and problem-solving skills.

- Keep messages simple and straightforward.

- Design programs to be accessible and challenging for all youth by including activities that appeal to a diverse range of talents, interests and skill levels.

- Relate new concepts to the direct experience of youth.

- Allow youth to make choices and decisions on their own.

- Offer opportunities for youth to talk, listen and let their opinions be heard.

- Allow for the expression of any special talents that emerge.

- Offer opportunities to be useful in the Club (e.g., activities such as scorekeeping, helping staff clean up after an activity or taking telephone messages).

- Provide chances for youth to achieve and be recognized for their competence.

- Create a setting in which youth can express their individuality, master new skills and seek emotional support from adults.

- Support boys’ and girls’ confidence in their ability to become productive, positive members of their communities by offering mixed-age groups and activities that highlight effort rather than competition.
• Combine security and comfort with expanding leadership opportunities that recognize and respect young people’s increasing maturity.

• Encourage self-directed, youth-led activities.

• Foster the growth of young people’s social networks by offering activities that encourage parent and community involvement and support.

• Offer opportunities for children to interact and communicate with others from diverse racial, ethnic, language, religious and cultural groups.

• Create safe and comfortable places for girls and boys to socialize and be with friends.

**AGES 13 TO 15**

Adolescents aged 13 to 15 need opportunities for independent thinking, exploration and testing of limits. In developing programs for this age group, Club staff should consider these guidelines.

• Offer opportunities to develop citizenship, service and leadership skills (e.g., Keystone Club, Club youth council, recycling projects, hospital visits, tutoring, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, working with disabled, junior staff leaders or peer leaders).

• Include an age-appropriate variety of physical activities. Provide regular exercise and games to develop coordination, reduce stress and provide an outlet for excess energy.

• Promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

• Encourage parents and guardians to support their children’s participation in physical activity, be physically active role models and include physical activity in family events.

• Model positive examples of healthy interaction, both cooperative and competitive interaction.

• Demonstrate goal setting and achievement.

• Stimulate youth to think about possibilities for the future.

• Provide opportunities for youth to apply newly learned knowledge to their own lives.

• Design programs to be accessible and challenging for all youth by including activities that appeal to a diverse range of talents, interests and skill levels.

• Demonstrate sharing, listening and hearing others’ points of view.

• Develop the ability to understand cause and effect, actions and consequences.
• Offer opportunities to develop an identity and sense of self.

• Encourage adult involvement (parents and other community members) in critical decisions.

• Allow freedom within defined boundaries and structure.

• Intentionally expand the horizons of adolescents, challenging them to stretch beyond their current awareness and understanding.

• Create a setting in which teens can express their individuality, master new skills and seek emotional support from adults.

• Support teens’ confidence in their ability to become productive, positive members of their communities by offering mixed-age groups and activities that highlight effort rather than competition.

• Combine security and comfort with expanding leadership opportunities that recognize and respect teens’ increasing maturity.

• Recognize accomplishments and achievements (e.g., Youth of the Year Program).

• Consult with teens and involve them in program design to make sure programs are relevant and interesting to them.

• Encourage self-directed, youth-led activities.

• Provide opportunities for teens to mentor and tutor younger Club members.

• Foster the growth of young people’s social networks by offering activities that encourage parent and community involvement and support.

• Offer opportunities for youth to interact and communicate with others from diverse racial, ethnic, language, religious and cultural groups.

• Create safe and comfortable places for youth to socialize and be with friends.

**Ages 16 to 18**

Older teens aged 16 to 18 thrive when given the chance to act independently, make choices and be responsible for their own behavior. Whenever possible, programming for older teens should integrate the following suggestions.

• Consult with teens and involve them in program design to make sure programs are relevant and interesting to them.
- Offer opportunities to develop citizenship, service and leadership skills (e.g., Keystone Club, Club youth council, recycling projects, hospital visits, tutoring, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, working with disabled, junior staff leaders or peer leaders).

- Include an age-appropriate variety of physical activities.

- Promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

- Encourage parents and guardians to support their children’s participation in physical activity, be physically active role models and include physical activity in family events.

- Design programs to be accessible and challenging for all youth by including activities that appeal to a diverse range of talents, interests and skill levels.

- Integrate new and creative experiences to keep older teens excited and motivated. Provide challenging and varied types of activities to keep them engaged in learning.

- Empower teens to make their own choices and decisions.

- Keep structure to a minimum and allow teens the freedom to participate in the ways that work best for them.

- Challenge thinking and reasoning skills.

- Use role-playing and “what if” scenarios to foster abstract thinking skills.

- Offer opportunities to explore an identity based on beliefs and values.

- Encourage teens to set goals for the future.

- Offer outlets for negotiation, cooperation and compromise.

- Link teens’ long-term participation to appealing, age-appropriate rewards and incentives.

- Encourage self-directed, youth-led activities.

- Provide opportunities for teens to mentor and tutor younger Club members.

- Foster the growth of young people’s social networks by offering activities that encourage parent and community involvement and support.

- Offer opportunities for teens to interact and communicate with others from diverse racial, ethnic, language, religious and cultural groups.

- Create safe and comfortable places for teens to socialize and be with friends.
Integrating High-Yield Learning Activities

The use of high-yield learning activities – fun and academically challenging activities that increase scholastic performance – is an essential component of Project Learn, Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s comprehensive educational enhancement strategy.

High-yield learning activities are an effective way to meet the needs of youth in different stages of development. In these activities, which can be incorporated into any program design, young people utilize skills, information, behavior and values needed for successful learning. High-yield learning activities are fun, inherently motivating to members and provide incentives for them to develop new skills in a variety of areas.

Because these activities can take place throughout the entire Club – in the learning center, in the computer room, on the basketball court, in the kitchen – any location becomes a place where members can engage in exciting activities. Examples of high-yield learning activities include:

- leisure reading
- writing activities (newspaper articles, newsletters, journal entries, letters, poetry, short plays, skits, song lyrics)
- games that develop cognitive skills (chess, Monopoly®, Scrabble® or SIM City®)
- crossword puzzles
- logic problems
- tangrams or other spatial puzzles and activities
- science projects
- creating a comic book
- role-playing and improvisation

Developing high-yield learning activities takes a bit of creativity and time, but they can be any experience that encourages members to explore, develop, create and learn.

Recognizing Learning Strengths

Intelligence – the ability to solve problems or create things of value – can be measured in a number of ways. Harvard Professor Howard Gardner developed a theory that identifies eight measures of intelligence:
• **linguistic intelligence** – the ability to understand the meaning and order of words;
• **logical-mathematical intelligence** – ability in mathematics or other systems;
• **spatial intelligence** – the ability to think in pictures;
• **bodily-kinesthetic intelligence** – the ability to use one’s body in a skilled way;
• **musical intelligence** – the ability to understand and create music;
• **interpersonal intelligence** – the ability to perceive and understand others;
• **intrapersonal intelligence** – an understanding of one’s own emotions; and
• **naturalist intelligence** – an understanding of the natural world.

By understanding that youth may approach learning through one or more of these strengths, Club professionals can tailor activities to enhance the development of members’ talents, skills and abilities, making sure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

**Youth Development Professionals as Mentors**

Research has shown that mentors can serve as models for youth, leading to improved behavior and less delinquency. As mentors, Club professionals can create an atmosphere in which youth of all ages feel comfortable aspiring and achieving. The following are some of the ways mentors can help youth succeed.

• Listen to help build or reinforce self-esteem.
• Encourage new, nontraditional thinking and methods of problem solving.
• Encourage goal setting, letting youth know they are expected to succeed.
• Allow youth to make mistakes, learn from them and try again.
• Expose youth to new areas of experience and provide support when needed.
• Encourage youth to seek challenges and take positive risks.
• Give positive feedback about accomplishments, achievements and strengths.

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• Provide appropriate challenges and the support to meet them.
• Encourage youth to acknowledge their successes.
• Serve as a role model with whom youth can identify.
• Praise youth for their efforts as well as their abilities.
• Reinforce young people’s abilities to make decisions while offering information and help.
• Respond to young people’s growing need for independence while providing safe boundaries.

Implementing the Youth Development Strategy

All Club programs and services are designed to promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling in them a sense of:

• **belonging** – a setting where young people know they “fit” and are accepted;
• **usefulness** – the opportunity to do something of value for other people;
• **influence (or power)** – a chance to be heard and to influence decisions; and
• **competence** – the feeling there is something they can do and do well.

The Youth Development Strategy serves as a guide for Club professionals and is the natural outgrowth of solid, quality programming and one-on-one, nurturing relationships between Club staff and Club youth. When Club professionals understand the developmental stages of young people, integrate this knowledge into their program design and foster strong mentoring relationships with Club members, youth will naturally feel a sense of belonging, usefulness, influence and competence.

Serving Youth with Special Needs

Clubs must take the time and care to identify hard-to-reach members and incorporate their needs into program design. These members may be failing in school, or they may be good students whose grades and performance have recently taken a sharp downturn. They may also be students earning good grades, but who maintain a disruptive and negative attitude. Hard-to-reach members also could include those who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities, are on medication or who have been pulled out of mainstream classes and placed in a special class.

If necessary, discuss members’ progress and challenges with their teachers or parents. Although you are not expected to know how to meet the needs of every member, you should identify partners, like teachers and social workers, who can help you serve each member effectively.
Additional Resources

Be sure to check out BGCA’s internal Web site for Club professionals (www.bgca.net) for helpful and informative technical assistance papers on a variety of subjects. For example, you may want to read the Technical Assistance Paper, “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder,” so you can better understand and help members in the program who have been diagnosed with ADHD (available on the Education and Career Development page under Programs).

You may also want to read the publication entitled Youth’s Search for Identity to better understand this important aspect of youth development. It is available from National Supply Service at (404) 487-5702 (Item P-040, $2.50).

Another important publication for Club professionals is Lessons of Hope: Time-Tested Principles of the Boys & Girls Club Movement, also available from National Supply Service, (404) 487-5702 (Item P-044, $10 for 50 copies). Originally delivered as a speech by BGCA President Roxanne Spillett at BGCA’s 2003 National Conference, the full text also can be found on www.bgca.net (search for “Lessons of Hope”).

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Bibliography


