



AGE APPROPRIATENESS IN YOUTH SERVICE ACTIVITIES GRADES 9-12

The service of young people is an important resource in solving community problems. But like any volunteer, they need to be matched with volunteer opportunities that are appropriate. Developing age appropriate service activities will ensure that they and the agency they are serving receive the most out of their experience. Depending on the age of youth, concrete developmental features must be present to retain a youth's interest and energy in service.

This Resource Packet includes a brief overview of the developmental characteristics of young people in grades 9-12, sample projects appropriate for this age group, and a list of other contacts for this issue.

The list of developmental characteristics was adapted from several sources including:
A Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning

Contact: The Points of Light Foundation
Youth & Family Outreach
1400 Eye Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202-729-8135
www.pointsoflight.org

The Power and Potential of Youth in Services to Communities, "Service Experiences Through the Eyes of Youth"

Contact: Minnesota Office on Volunteer Services
117 University Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55155
1-800-234-6687

Growing Hope: A Sourcebook on Integrating Youth Service into the School Curriculum

Contact: National Youth Leadership Council
1910 West County Road B
St. Paul, MN 55113
651-631-3672
www.nylc.org

DEVELOPMENTAL THEMES FOR YOUTH

Each young person develops at a slightly different rate and in a slightly different way. However, general patterns can be seen within different age groups of youth. Here are some major developmental themes to take into account when designing appropriate ways to include youth in grades 9-12 in service.

Intellectual Development

- Abstract thinking emerging
- Make fine conceptual distinctions
- More critical of traditions and institutions
- Connect concrete experiences and abstract concepts
- Concerned with hypothetical (future and remote)
- Formulate and consider a variety of ways problems can be solved
- Deal with logical and imaginary solutions
- Aspirations frequently exceed capabilities
- Learn how to manage time and personal health
- Assume responsibility for career planning and its consequences
- Develop skills important to life as a consumer and for effective use of leisure time

Physical Development

- Physical changes stabilize
- Attention span increases
- Want to be treated more like an adult

Identity Development

- Look for a sense of personal identity
- Tendency to be self-critical
- Evaluating self and thinking about future
- Competitive peer relations produce some distrust
- Confide more in friends than parents
- Worry about physical appearance
- Assurance of acceptance and security of parents is still necessary

Social Development

- Less susceptible to self-centered values
- Emerging understanding of moral principles
- Friendships last longer
- Peer group influence is still intense
- Increase in conflict between peer and adult roles

Values

- Interest in philosophical and ethical problems
- Is aware and verbalizes contradictions in moral code
- Group beliefs still important in influencing values
- Develop citizenship skills important to responsible participation in a democratic society

*Adapted from [A Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning](#), Points of Light Foundation, [The Power and Potential of Youth in Services to Communities](#), Minnesota Office on Volunteer Services, and [Learning By Giving](#), National Youth Leadership Council.

WHAT IS AND IS NOT AGE APPROPRIATE SERVICE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

Sometimes it is just as important to know not what to do as what to do. Below we have highlighted some projects for comparison.

IS AGE APPROPRIATE...

- Cleaning a polluted lake or river
- Researching general information on political platforms and distributing it to peers.
- Making a panel for the AIDS Quilt and give awareness presentations
- Helping design a playground in an underprivileged neighborhood
- Volunteering as a candy striper in a hospital
- Holding a forum about racism to form possible community solutions
- Working as aides in group homes for adults with disabilities.
- Setting up a peer counseling program

IS NOT AGE APPROPRIATE...

- Making posters about pollution
- Developing a political candidates talking points for a debate
- Facilitating an AIDS support group
- Building a playground in an underprivileged neighborhood
- Running the candy striper volunteer program at a hospital
- Organizing and facilitating a weekend diversity retreat
- Making holiday decorations to be used in group homes for adults with disabilities
- Providing therapy for drug or alcohol addicted peers

OTHER RESOURCES FOR AGE APPROPRIATENESS IN SERVICE:

National Youth Service Day sponsored by Youth Service America, encourages communities to celebrate and recognize the power of young people's involvement in community problem solving. A toolkit is available that explains how to plan and organize a community service project including volunteer recruitment, fundraising, and publicity.

Contact: Youth Service America
1101 15th Street NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005-5002
202-296-2992
www.servenet.org

Make a Difference Day "the national day of doing good" sponsored by USA Weekend in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation, is a way for all citizens to get involved in solving serious social and environmental problems. Specific planning guides are available for young people, teachers, employers, and families are great organizational tools that can help anyone plan a great Make A Difference Day project.

Contact: Amity Tripp
Points of Light Foundation
1400 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-729-8122
www.pointsoflight.org OR www.usaweekend.com/diffday

The Giraffe Project has developed the **Standing Tall Teaching Guide** for students grades K-12. The teaching guides contain lessons and activities to inspire students to stand tall for the common good. It also lists sample service projects and a bibliography of books that contain concepts of caring, courage, service, and action.

Contact: The Giraffe Project
197 Second Street
PO Box 759
Langley, WA 98260
206-221-7989
www.giraffe.org

The Maryland Student Service Alliance has developed service-learning curriculum guides for elementary, middle, and high school. These instructional guides were developed to help teachers to engage students in service-learning.

Contact: Maryland Student Service Alliance
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410)333-2427