

Working with Teenagers

The late teenager years are a time when young people begin to define more clearly a sense of self and test their ideas and interest in the context of the adult world. For most it is a period of growing independence. The following traits are characteristic of teenagers in the high school years:

- Eager for opportunities to make decisions
- Sometimes apt to challenge authority
- Very interested in physical appearance (their standard, not necessarily an adults)
- Wanting independence and privileges but possibly having trouble with responsibility and personal discipline
- Feeling uneasy about their preparation for the future
- Trying out different values; beginning to build a personal belief system

Remember that work-based learning takes students out of their comfort zone of school. As a result, students may be shy or quiet until they become accustomed to being in the work environment, doing hands-on activities, and meeting and interacting with adults. Do not take their shyness for lack of interest. Even if students stay in their shell for the duration of their work-based learning experience, they still gain a great deal just by having spent time in the workplace.