

# research in brief

## **Interests of Pre-adolescents**

Attitudes, values, and vocational choices of lifelong significance are formed during the restless years of 9 to 13. The purpose of this study was to secure information about this perhaps least understood age group regarding their interests and to compare the interests of pre-adolescents attending schools in the various geographical locations.

During the spring of 1971, an interest inventory consisting of 83 items was completed by approximately 10,000 students in Western Michigan, 2,000 in 2 cities in Alaska, and approximately 1,800 in the Port of Spain area of Trinidad.

The results indicated that 10 of the inventory items were of interest to 75% or more of the boys and girls. These items related to pets, athletics, working with hands, outdoor games, travel, association with peers, spending money, living outdoors, and watching cartoons and comedies. Only 3 items were checked positively by 25% or fewer pre-adolescents and these items concerned living far from other people, doing factory work and being lazy as much as possible.

X Younger pupils indicated more interests than the older ones and there were many significant differences between the interests of the younger and older children. The pre-adolescents in the Michigan area indicated fewer interests than those in the other two areas. They also more often indicated an interest in dropping out of school as soon as possible and less interest in obtaining a college education than did other pre-adolescents.

The Michigan sample was classified into urban, inner-city, suburban, and rural subgroups. Analysis showed that the urban and inner-city boys and girls checked more items positively than did those in either the rural or suburban areas. The inner-city group differed significantly from other groups on 20% of the inventory items and were more like the Trinidad sample than other subgroups from Michigan.

The author suggested that pre-adolescents are alert, active young people who tend to be bored with passivity and the routine of traditional school work and that adults often have difficulty in knowing what would encourage them toward constructive action. It's also suggested that an interest inventory such as the one used in this article could quickly and inexpensively provide clues to activities and topics that would be of current interest to the youth in the area.

*Editor's Note*

4-H has projects and activities relating directly to nearly all of the interest items that prove to be of interest to 75% or more of the boys and girls. Does this study give some indication that programs in these areas could gain wide acceptance to large groups of pre-adolescent youth?

"Inquiry Into Pre- and Early-Adolescent Interests." Greta Delong. *Adolescence*, X (Summer, 1975), 187-190.

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