

# What's Special about this age...

## Character building

At twelve a child's character is mostly formed. It is a time to work with the characteristics of the child to build the strengths they have and to try to minimize the weaknesses. Bad habits will hinder a child's success in life. This is a final opportunity to try to correct these habits and instill proper approaches that will be reinforcing of positive traits. At this age, the child should be making a positive contribution to the community. Encourage the child to find an area and commit to volunteering so that others will see s/he has value and commitment to working for the common good.

## Communication

At twelve, the child should be able to speak his/her mind in a respectful way, ask appropriate questions in order to get the information needed, and advocate for him/herself with others. Since today Inuit rely on written language, it is important for children at this age to have accurate writing skills and to be able to use syllabics fluently and correctly.

## Skill Building

At twelve, the child should have several skill areas that s/he can feel quite confident about and can carry out projects independently. It is important to become very highly skilled in as many areas as possible and to work at continually improving one's capabilities.

# Definitions of Terminology



*Being resourceful is important. Inuit value those who can think on their feet and use deep thinking to resolve issues and overcome obstacles.*

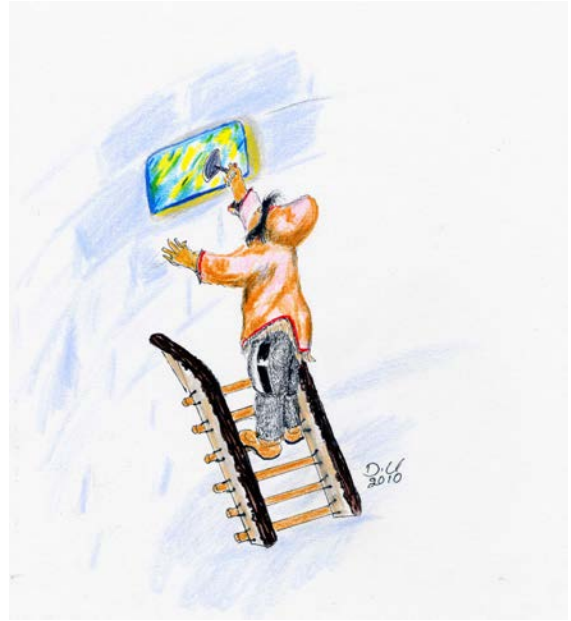
## Description of processes

The ability to be resourceful, seek solutions, use resources innovatively and creatively, to demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in response to a rapidly changing world, are strengths required to be effective in planning for the future. Resourcefulness should always be demonstrated in that it also shows respect and stewardship. Thinking that seeks to improve the situation in innovative ways is referred to as deep thinking or isumaksaqsiuttiarniq. This kind of thinking requires skilled perseverance or upalurniq and eventually contributes to silaturniq or a collective level of wisdom. Achieving this level of wisdom is a lifelong process, but certain evidence of wisdom is recognized in individuals at any age and is nurtured and developed by the group. Those who are able to think deeply and show wisdom are considered leaders.

**Reminders for parents...**  
 At this stage of life, while entering puberty, your child needs to have a healthy diet in order to develop properly. This is also a time to ensure they have plenty of fresh air, exercise and develop an active lifestyle.

# Inunnguiniq

## Advice from Inuit Elders



12 years old



## The profile of the child at this age...

A child of 12 years is a very capable person. They are able to take on many responsibilities and to be a big help to the family. By this age, the child is aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses. S/he is also aware of personal traits and preferences. It is an age when the child is learning to work on improving themselves and becoming more in control of emotions and behaviours. This is also an age when the child can easily be influenced by others or draw off track and into bad habits. This usually happens with a child who has not been made aware of his/her abilities and roles or who has been too harshly disciplined or neglected. Sometimes a child is neglected even though the parents says the child is loved. There can be a negative kind of love that is lazy to discipline and ignores the child in order to escape the burden of proper parenting. At this age, children will take pride in being able to assume a responsibility and complete a task without help or supervision. They enjoy a sense of independence and accomplishment. This is very important. In carrying out these tasks, the child is able to use ingenuity to solve small problems or overcome barriers. They are able to plan ahead and anticipate barriers and plan to avoid them. At twelve, boys and girls will be consulted about a task at hand such as planning a trip or completing a sewing project. They should be able to think about the future and are beginning to have some ideas about what they want to do or what kind of employment they want to pursue.

## What parents can do...

- It is important to be very supportive of your child at this time.
- Talk about the future and what you also see for them based on the strengths and abilities they demonstrate.
- Also talk about the areas in their personality that they need to work on and give them ideas about how to do this.
- Allow your child time for his/her friends and interests, but have set expectations for participating in family activities.
- Talk, talk, talk at every opportunity. At this age, your child has many questions that s/he may be shy to ask. The more openly you communicate as a parent, the more free your child will be able talking to you about his/her concerns.
- Don't be afraid to discipline. The twelve year old still needs boundaries and to know there are consequences for bad behaviours or failure to obey rules. Discipline at this age should be a stern and serious talk about responsibility and becoming like an adult and not behaving like a child and there can be a withdrawal of privileges.
- Provide every opportunity for your child at this age to experience new things and to learn new skills.
- Talk about family heritage, namesakes and kinship relationships. This is an important age for the child to explore his/her identity. You may want to help with developing a family tree.
- This is also a time to develop decision making abilities in the child. Help him/her to think through consequences to actions in order to make good decisions.

## Learning with your child

Include your child on land trips and activities. Take time to teach about land place names, directions and landmarks to help find direction. Take an interest in what your child is interested in. try to assist him/her in becoming more skilled in this area. Develop thinking skills by asking your child questions about things s/he sees in the environment or in activities. Help the child to associate cause and effect and to observe closely to discover details about how things work. Give your child tasks and encourage them to use the skills they have developed and what they have observed to complete the task on his/her own. For example, a girl should be able to cut and sew a garment or a boy to build a small sled without assistance.

### Tips for Parents

If you are not able to develop the skill areas that your child is interested in, find an expert in the community who is willing to share knowledge with your child. It is often difficult to find the balance between giving your child freedom and maintaining strong family time. If your child becomes rebellious, withdrawn, irritable or secretive or you notice a significant change in behaviour, this may be an indication of problems with peers, bullying or involvement with drugs or alcohol. Talk to your child or seek help from others who have a strong relationship with him/her.