

Developmental Guidelines – Kindergarten (Ages 5-6)

Physical

- » Enjoys a variety of physical movement
- » Not proficient in motor skills, yet displays enthusiasm for trying new activities
- » Learns best through movement, touch, and physical manipulation

Cognitive

- » Knows the difference between fact or fiction (real and make believe)
- » Begins to show understanding of order, such as a story having a beginning, middle and end
- » Can follow directions containing up to three steps
- » Can speak sentences of five to eight words
- » Speaks in front of groups
- » Predictable routines help with security and stability

Emotional / Social

- » Plays in small groups
- » Enjoys dramatic play
- » Cooperates with others, but may choose to exclude other children
- » Tends to be bossy
- » Can share and take turns
- » Impatient
- » Knows the difference between right and wrong
- » Can communicate needs and feelings verbally
- » Developing a sense of humor
- » Draws emotional stability from interactions with “secure” adults and from feeling understood and responded to in regular and predictable ways
- » Increasing awareness of others' emotions

Sexual

- » Becoming aware of differences

Developmental Guidelines – 1st Grade (Ages 6-7)

Physical

- » Enjoys a variety of physical movement
- » Not proficient in motor skills, yet displays enthusiasm for trying new activities and sports
- » Learns best through movement, touch, and physical manipulation

Cognitive

- » Interested in the difference between truth and lies
- » Predictable routines help with security and stability
- » Enjoys figuring out how things work
- » Responds well to encouragement and praise
- » Needs to know mistakes are appropriate and acceptable at this age and encourage learning

Emotional / Social

- » Developing self-esteem is a central task; requires attentive and accepting adults
- » Confident; expresses delight in showing talents
- » Displays an increasing awareness of his/her own feelings
- » Beginning to develop self-control
- » Enjoys sharing toys and snacks with friends, although conflicts may remain quite frequent
- » Draws emotional stability from interactions with “secure” adults and from feeling understood and responded to in regular and predictable ways
- » Susceptible to peer influence due to identifying more with friends and seeking to please friends
- » Increasing awareness of others’ emotions
- » Can label others’ feelings (e.g., happy, sad, and angry) and begin to identify reasons for others’ feelings (e.g., says, “he’s feeling sad because...”)
- » May start to gravitate toward playing with children of her/his own gender

Sexual

- » Often developing modesty related to their bodies
- » Aware of gender (own and differences)

Developmental Guidelines – 2nd Grade (Ages 7-8)

Physical

- » Improving motor skills and coordination enables increased participation in games and sports

Cognitive

- » May try to solve problems on own before asking an adult for help
- » Uses creative strategies when problem solving
- » Improving comprehension including following directions
- » Can be self-critical at this stage; may shy away or disengage from activities because of feelings of inadequacy
- » Developing language skills at a fast pace including understanding new words in context
- » Thinking in more abstract ways
- » Benefits from asking questions and summarizing information with adults

Emotional / Social

- » Enjoys planning activities
- » Appreciates structure of day-to-day schedules and repetition and routine
- » Considers friends important and is likely to have a group of friends based on environment, such as classroom or a shared sports team
- » May begin noticing impact behavior has on other people
- » Gaining increase in awareness of others' emotions
- » Family is an important part of identity; likely to relate stories and experiences by comparing it to own home environment
- » Increasingly understanding emotions; practicing strategies to cope with uneasy emotions
- » Growing independence; working to solve social problems through negotiation
- » Improving conversation skills; both listening and exchange are becoming more natural
- » Seeks to please important adults, such as parents and teachers
- » May mimic others' behaviors
- » May start to ask about or use technology independently from parents or caregivers including both cell phones and internet

Sexual

- » Continued increase in different gender roles and activities

Developmental Guidelines – 3rd Grade (Ages 8-9)

Physical

- » Improving motor skills and coordination enables increased participation in games and sports

Cognitive

- » Creates engaging and detailed stories, as well as reports that are increasingly persuasive, informative, and entertaining

Emotional / Social

- » Developing a subjective psychological concept of self
- » Developing increased self-esteem and self-image compared against other people's expectations
- » Values friends greatly; makes them an increasingly important part of life
- » Beginning to understand the concept of masking emotions; can vary coping strategies to deal with challenging situations
- » Very attached to home although increasing separation from parents is considered healthy
- » Imitates both good and bad adult behavior
- » Communicates well with others without assistance; able to communicate needs, wants, and emotions in healthy ways
- » Gaining knowledge of social customs and emotions that are appropriate to express
- » Recognizes the views of others in classroom interactions, good partner in play, shares ideas, understands others' points of view, and can work cooperatively toward a shared goal
- » Participates in games with more abstract rules; enjoys making up fantasy games and situations
- » Notices the impact of personal behavior on others and may modify behavior as a result; realizes that others have a similar awareness
- » Becoming increasingly skilled at settling conflicts with peers and considers various perspectives when resolving differences
- » Able to remain friends after a conflict and continue to work together
- » Generally compliant as is still accustomed to adult-directed play and rule setting
- » Develops friendships related to activities and proximity, (i.e., the children in his/her classroom, neighborhood, at church or daycare, on a team or in a dance class)
- » Increasing time away from home for social events and sleepovers, but happy to return home
- » Wants structured, time-limited activities
- » May blame someone else when something goes wrong
- » Desires adult guidance and communication about what is right and wrong

Sexual

- » Tends to be inclusive in play and generally kind and helpful to peers of both genders

Developmental Guidelines – 4th Grade (Ages 9-10)

Physical

- » Enjoys physical activity as strength and motor skills improve and may frequently exercise

Cognitive

- » Creates engaging and detailed stories, as well as reports that are increasingly persuasive, informative, and entertaining
- » Has developed a stronger sense of justice and right or wrong choices
- » Can complete tasks which require more time, his/her work is approached with more determination showing a high quality of work
- » Will pay attention for longer periods of time in group settings, even when activities are less stimulating and require more listening than participation
- » Asks questions which are complex and relevant to the topic being discussed, often displaying deeper analytical thinking

Emotional / Social

- » Wants to be like his/her group of friends; will make choices to help fit in with his or her peer group (clothes, style, language)
- » Becomes more responsible and looks forward to challenging tasks
- » Has exclusive friendships and works hard to create stability and loyalty with one another (this often includes having a “best friend” and missing that person when they are not around)
- » Appreciates being treated in a respectful adult manner when approached by adults
- » Thinks critically about adults' choices; verbalizes disagreement if the relationship is comfortable
- » Responds well to deserved praise and wants to have individual recognition
- » Able to take turns in conversation
- » Beginning to show emotions more boldly as they gain confidence and self-identity
- » Describes their identity with behaviors and personal choices (“I am great at sports”)
- » Examines different situations with more than one perspective

Sexual

- » Boys generally have same-sex friendships; may have a few best friends and casual acquaintances based on mutual interests
- » Boys are seldom interested in girls, except to tease them or scare them; some will have a “girlfriend” but tend to be very casual about it
- » Girls have same-sex friendships, and may be more possessive of their friends; enjoy shared secrets with friends, and care deeply about best friends
- » Girls are not consumed by romantic interest in the opposite sex; most show little interest in boys, though some will begin to have crushes

Developmental Guidelines – 5th Grade (Ages 10-11)

Physical

- » Enjoys physical activity as strength and motor skills improve and may frequently exercise
- » Develop hand-eye coordination quickly
- » May complain of growing pains/muscle cramps

Cognitive

- » Capable of considering multiple possibilities in order to solve problems
- » Can reason out the consequences of an action and generate hypotheses
- » Seek help with academics when needed, and exhibit self-control, accept feedback, assume responsibility, show quality in work, observe school rules, can work independently, follow directions, use time wisely, have cooperative attitudes, and generally like school

Emotional / Social

- » Highly attuned to the peer group and recognize their place in it
- » Views acceptance by peer group as critical
- » May commonly request sleepovers
- » Plays well in groups or team sports
- » Possesses the ability to sense the emotions of others and to read facial expressions and body language
- » Quickly changing emotions
- » Often enjoys reading or being read to and enjoys adventures, mysteries, and biographies of famous people
- » Generally compliant to parents and other authority figures
- » May begin using social media

Sexual

- » Boys may have a few best friends and casual acquaintances based on mutual interests, such as membership in a club or sports team
- » Seldom interested in girls, except to tease them or scare them; some boys will have a “girlfriend” but tend to be very casual about it
- » Shows few signs of puberty and are far less concerned about physical maturity than girls
- » Girls have mostly same-sex friendships; becomes more possessive of their friends, enjoy shared secrets with friends, and care deeply about best friends
- » Girls are not consumed by romantic interest in the opposite sex; most girls show little interest in boys, though some will begin to have crushes
- » Beginning to show physical signs and an awareness of approaching puberty

Developmental Guidelines – 6th Grade (Ages 11-12)

Physical

- » Enjoys physical activity and sports
- » Rapid growth may cause clumsiness and awkwardness

Cognitive

- » Thoughts focus on the present more so than the future
- » Can see the world from different perspectives
- » Begins to think more abstractly
- » Idealistic
- » Needs learning activities that are active, hands-on, and better if related to the real world or personal experiences
- » Shows interest in such things as current events, politics, and social justice
- » Selects role models
- » Shows concern for rules and standards of behavior
- » Has a sense of fairness, especially as it relates to themselves
- » May question parents' religious and/or political beliefs and values
- » Demonstrates off-color humor and silliness

Emotional / Social

- » Moody, easily frustrated
- » Demonstrates emotional extremes
- » Can express feelings verbally
- » Egocentric
- » Seeks to belong
- » Forms cliques
- » Shows less overt affection toward parents
- » Experiments with behavior, roles, appearance, and self image
- » Sees themselves as unique
- » Sees parents as an interference with independence
- » Has difficulty making decisions

Sexual

- » Curious about opposite sex, usually demonstrated by girls before boys
- » Sees friendships with both boys and girls as important
- » Shows signs of puberty, including the onset of menarche for girls
- » Boys may begin to grow facial hair and experience a change in their voices – cracking and deepening

Developmental Guidelines – 7th Grade (Ages 12-13)

Physical

- » Enjoys physical activity and sports
- » Rapid growth may cause clumsiness and awkwardness
- » Has high energy levels, but needs a lot of rest
- » Increasing need for personal hygiene

Cognitive

- » Increasing ability to think abstractly
- » Lack of understanding of cause and effect; don't think about the consequences of their actions beforehand
- » Uses speech for self-expression
- » Idealistic
- » Focuses thoughts more on present than future
- » Likes to challenge answers; don't take things at face value
- » May show emerging ability in a particular skill or content area
- » Selects role models & develops ideals
- » Metacognitive skills improving

Emotional / Social

- » Moody, easily frustrated
- » Desires more privacy
- » Demonstrates emotional extremes
- » Increasing concerns for body image
- » Expresses less affection for parents
- » Struggles with sense of self-identity
- » Has difficulty making decisions
- » Struggles with peer pressure
- » Sees themselves as unique; think no one will relate to them or understand what they are going through
- » Constantly feeling judged by their peers
- » Has a better understanding of what to say in different situations
- » Develops a sense of pride
- » Friendships with both sexes become increasingly important

Sexual

- » Onset of menarche for many girls
- » Becomes interested in "dating" due to the need for assurance and acceptance
- » Boys develop changes to their voices; deepening and cracking

Developmental Guidelines – 8th Grade (Ages 13-14)

Physical

- » Has high energy levels and needs more physical exercise; eats more throughout the day
- » Boys growth spurt continues, upper body strength begins to develop
- » Girls almost fully developed

Cognitive

- » Abstract thinking and formal operations developing
- » Developing self-concept
- » Hormonal & physical demands of puberty slow down intellectual growth
- » Longer attention spans
- » Learns better by being actively involved with ideas connected to their personal lives
- » Increasing risk-taking behaviors and impulsivity
- » Begins analyzing behavior
- » Memorizes information quickly
- » Starts to use flexible thinking
- » Develops a set of values

Emotional / Social

- » High self-consciousness
- » Struggles with sense of identity
- » Overly concerned with physical attractiveness
- » Struggles with peer pressure
- » Adult personalities developing
- » Likes to do as much as possible; having a lot of activities and events to attend makes them feel accomplished
- » Close friendships are important; tend to value close friends over crowds
- » Test rules & limits; push boundaries
- » Sees themselves as unique; think no one will relate to them or understand what they are going through
- » Peer group influences much of their behavior
- » Desires to try new things
- » Increasing desire for independence
- » Sensitive to others' criticisms

Sexual

- » Sexual experimentation begins
- » Girls and boys will start to flirt
- » Girls almost fully developed sexually

Developmental Guidelines – 9th Grade (Ages 14-15)

Physical

- » Biggest year of physical change for boys
- » Boys and girls level out in height
- » Develops a need for exercise and healthy habits
- » Most girls are full height
- » Girls tend to be overly concerned with weight

Cognitive

- » Increasing ability to set and achieve goals
- » Increasing self-discipline
- » Easily bored
- » Recognizes own strengths and weaknesses
- » Increasing ability to understand complex ideas such as justice, equality and religion
- » Increasing vocabulary
- » Heightening sensitivity to physical appearance and its social value
- » Increasing ability to reason; using logic to solve problems

Emotional / Social

- » Less egocentric
- » More even-tempered; but mood swings still common
- » Development of morality system
- » Has a desire for more control over aspects of their life
- » Idealistic viewpoint
- » Begins to discover their identity
- » Exhibits impulsive behavior with their peers
- » More time spent with peers and less with their parents and siblings
- » Friendships are extremely important
- » Increasing need for independence
- » Tends to be more argumentative

Sexual

- » Sexual desire is awakened
- » Temptation to be sexually active is common
- » Increasing desire to be in a romantic relationship
- » Romantic relationships become a priority

Developmental Guidelines – 10th Grade (Ages 15-16)

Physical

- » Boys gain muscle rapidly
- » Girls become more concerned with weight
- » Girls slowdown in physical development; boys rapidly speed up
- » Teens at this age will require more sleep and will eat more

Cognitive

- » Has sophisticated communication skills
- » Exhibits more defined work habits
- » Masters abstract thinking
- » Increasing ability to think of the world as a whole
- » Writing skills improving
- » Increasing ability to reason
- » Confidence increasing; developing higher self-esteem
- » Morality is almost fully developed

Emotional / Social

- » Increasing desire for privacy
- » Increasing resistance to peer pressure
- » More likely to confide in peers than in parents or siblings
- » Less conflict with parents
- » Periods of sadness are common
- » Increasing independence; especially if they acquire a driver's license
- » Friendships and romantic relationships becoming extremely important and likely consume most of their free time
- » Mood swings become less common
- » Idealistic viewpoint
- » Increasing stress about the future

Sexual

- » Increasing desire for sexual activity
- » Has a deeper capacity for intimate relationships
- » Many teens will become sexually active at this age
- » Romantic relationships are important
- » Increasing understanding of their sexuality

Developmental Guidelines – 11th Grade (Ages 16-17)

Physical

- » Most males and females are fully developed
- » Body image issues in both males and females are common
- » Teens at this age require more sleep and will eat more

Cognitive

- » Developing fluid intelligence
- » Mastering abstract thinking; able to think about “what could be”
- » Takes fewer risks; less impulsive
- » Tends to be more goal-oriented
- » Increasing ability to make and keep commitments
- » Increasing ability to manage adult leadership roles
- » Developing better organizational skills

Emotional / Social

- » Periods of sadness common
- » Experiences uneasiness about entering adulthood
- » Calmer demeanor
- » Values dependability; promises and commitments tend to be very important
- » Increasing sense of control
- » Forms strong relationships and friendships
- » Searching for intimacy
- » Increasing ability to cope with new problems and different situations
- » Less conflict with parents
- » Exhibits more independence and responsibility

Sexual

- » Increasing desire to engage in sexual activity
- » Complex understanding of their sexuality
- » Has a deeper capacity for intimate relationships
- » Many teens will become sexually active at this age
- » Romantic relationships are important

Developmental Guidelines – 12th Grade (Ages 17-18)

Physical

- » Fully developed
- » Puberty is usually over for most teens by this age
- » Reached full height and weight
- » Most teens will start to become more comfortable with their bodies

Cognitive

- » Future-oriented; tends to make decisions contingent on their future goals
- » Adult-like thinking; able to make decisions logically and understand the consequences of their actions
- » Philosophical and idealistic
- » Stronger stances on social issues; less likely to be influenced by the opinions of their parents or peers
- » Understands, plans and pursues long-term goals
- » Has expansive vocabularies

Emotional / Social

- » Manages emotions more effectively
- » Better able to evaluate their opinions
- » Less influenced by peer pressure
- » More comfortable with seeking advice from parents or other adults
- » Calmer demeanor
- » Feels both excitement and stress about the future
- » Search for intimacy
- » Develop better coping skills
- » Less conflict with parents
- » Exhibits more independence and responsibility

Sexual

- » Has a complex understanding of their sexuality
- » Increasing sexual drive
- » Has a deeper capacity for intimate relationships
- » Many teens have been or will become sexually active at this age
- » Romantic relationships are important
- » Has a better understanding of physical intimacy