

Understanding developmental stages can help you support your child's learning at home and in school.

All children go through developmental stages as they grow up ■ Just as children's height, weight, and physical abilities change, so do things such as their desire to play alone or with a group, how they learn best, or how talkative they are.

These stages of development are fairly predictable in children within any given culture* ■ With each stage come certain predictable changes in how children relate to others and approach the world.

Children go through these stages at different rates ■ Although there are general characteristics at each developmental stage in any given culture, how quickly a child goes through these stages depends on many things, including the child's personality and environment. It's common and normal for some children to arrive at a developmental stage a bit later or earlier—sometimes a year later or earlier—than their peers. Also, a child might mature quickly in one area, such as physical development, but more slowly in another, such as social development.

Children don't change suddenly on their birthday ■ For example, a child who just turned nine may still show a lot of eight-year-old behaviors, and a child who's nine-and-a-half may already be showing a lot of ten-year-old behaviors.

ENJOY YOUR CHILD
AT EACH AGE.

Each age is unique. Each is a wonder.

**The characteristics in this pamphlet are based on research on children in European and U.S. schools. Children growing up in other cultures may show different developmental patterns.*

Additional resources about child development and children's success in school

BOOKS

Comer, James P., and Alvin F. Poussaint. 1992. *Raising Black Children*. New York: Plume Books.

Faber, Adele, and Elaine Mazlish. 1995. *How to Talk So Kids Can Learn*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Konner, Melvin. 1991. *Childhood: A Multicultural View*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Nelsen, Jane. 1996. *Positive Discipline*. New York: Random House.

Rogoff, Barbara. 2003. *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*. Reprint Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wood, Chip. 1997. *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4–14*. Turners Falls, Mass.: Northeast Foundation for Children.

WEBSITES

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
www.casel.org

Easy-to-use information, with a section on how parents can support their children's social and emotional learning at home

National PTA®
www.pta.org

Tips, fact sheets, and articles on a wide range of topics related to parenting and school-home collaboration

School Success Info.org
www.schoolsuccessinfo.org

Highly practical tips on how to support children's school learning at home

TRIFOLD PAMPHLET
WEB SAMPLE
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ACTUAL SIZE 17" X 11"

The content of this pamphlet was adapted from the book *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4–14*.

Published by Northeast Foundation for Children, the book goes into more detail about the common characteristics of children at each age and implications for classroom curriculum.

Pamphlets are available for grades K through 8. Pamphlets for each grade can be purchased in packets of 30. To order *Yardsticks* or pamphlets, please call 800-360-6332 or order online at www.responsiveclassroom.org.

Responsive  Classroom®

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Fourth GRADERS

Common developmental characteristics of 8, 9, and 10 year-olds

ADAPTED FROM

YARDSTICKS

Children in the Classroom Ages 4–14

by Chip Wood ■ Published by Northeast Foundation for Children

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF Eight-Year-Olds

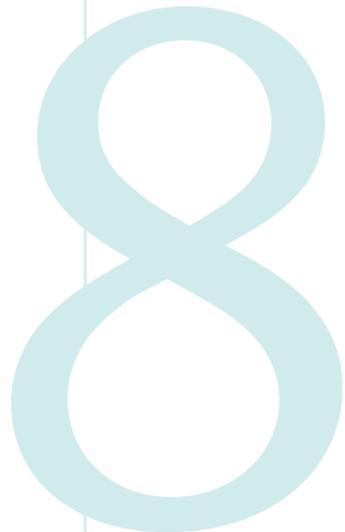
Enthusiastic and imaginative, eights often love big challenges but lack the work skills and patience to complete their plans. Children this age need adult help to know their limits and work through the steps to their goal.

SOCIAL

- Love group activities and cooperative work
- Prefer playing with peers of the same gender
- Like to talk and explain ideas
- Good sense of humor
- Adjust well to change; bounce back quickly from mistakes or disappointments

PHYSICAL

- Full of energy; play hard, work quickly, and tire easily—do better with several short play breaks than one long one
- Eyes able to focus well on objects near and far
- May have growth spurt
- Limited attention span; short exercise breaks help concentration
- Better control of eyes and hands allows cursive writing and copying from board



COGNITIVE

- Industrious, impatient, and full of ideas; often take on more than they can handle
- Listen well but may not always remember what they've heard
- Getting good at handwriting, handcrafts, computers, and drawing
- Excited but also nervous about exploring the broader world
- May give up when things are hard but soon want to try again
- Interested in rules, logic, and fairness

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF Nine-Year-Olds

The enthusiasm of eight often turns into brooding and worrying at nine. Nines tend to be critical of the world around them—nothing seems fair to a nine-year-old. But nine can also be a time of budding intellectual curiosity. Children this age look hard for explanations of how things work and why things happen as they do.

SOCIAL

- Very competitive, yet may form cliques
- Complain a lot; criticize self and others (including adults)
- Often say "I hate it," "I can't," "It's boring," etc.
- Like to work with same-gender partner
- Can work in groups but with lots of arguing
- Enjoy exaggeration, "dirty" jokes, and graffiti
- Need adults to be patient and explain clearly
- Need adult lightheartedness, humor, and encouragement to lighten their mood and relieve anxiety

PHYSICAL

- Coordination is better; boys love to rough-house
- Like to push physical limits; get tired easily
- Complain about aches, pains, and injuries
- Restless; can't sit still for long
- May bite nails or twist hair to relieve tension

COGNITIVE

- Worry about world events, parents' health, friends, school, etc.
- Work hard and pay attention to detail, but may jump quickly between interests
- Less imaginative than at eight years old
- Want factual explanations; enjoy scientific exploration
- Have trouble understanding abstractions such as large numbers, long periods of time, and vast areas of space
- Love language and word play
- Begin to see the bigger world, including issues of justice and fairness
- Enjoy "interest" clubs such as stamp collecting, chess, or rock collecting clubs

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF Ten-Year-Olds

Ten-year-olds are generally happy and relaxed, enjoying themselves and their peers, parents, even siblings. Proud of all they have accomplished, they like to share their knowledge with others. Tens usually do well with group projects because they tend to be calm and naturally cooperative.

SOCIAL

- Good age for clubs, team sports, and whole-class activities
- Eager to reach out to others, such as through community service or tutoring younger children
- Boys and girls work well together
- Quick to anger and quick to forgive
- Competitive but also cooperative
- Listen well but also enjoy talking and explaining
- Enjoy adult recognition

PHYSICAL

- Muscles for jumping, running, and other big movements are developing quickly
- Need lots of outdoor play and physical challenges
- Snacks and rest periods help rapidly growing bodies
- Better at small muscle movements; enjoy precision tasks such as tracing and copying
- Ready to start using tools such as compasses, rulers, and templates

COGNITIVE

- Very good at memorizing facts
- Enjoy collecting, organizing, and classifying
- Like rules and logic; open to learning about scientific principles, governmental structures, and meeting formats
- Can concentrate on reading and thinking for long periods
- Hardworking; take pride in school work
- Enjoy choral reading, poetry, plays, and singing
- Open to learning mediation or problem-solving skills

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