

CHILDREN'S NORMAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOR AND NEEDS BY APPROXIMATE AGE

ABOUT SIX

Physical Development

- Growth proceeding more slowly, a lengthening out. Large muscles better development than small ones.
- Eleven to twelve hours of sleep needed.
- Eyes not yet mature, tendency toward farsightedness. Permanent teeth beginning to appear.
- Heart in period of rapid growth.
- High activity level. can stay still only for short periods.

Characteristic Behavior

- Eager to learn, exuberant, restless, overactive, easily fatigued. Relatively short periods of interest.
- Self assertive, aggressive, wants to be first, less cooperative than at five, keenly competitive, boastful.
- Whole body involved in whatever he does. Learns best through active participation. Inept at activities using small muscles.
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced; regresses when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders.
- Has difficulty making decisions.
- Group activities popular, boys' and girls' interests beginning to differ. Much spontaneous dramatization.

Special Needs

- Encouragement, ample praise, warmth, and great patience from adults.
- Ample opportunity for activity of many kinds, especially for use of large muscles.
- Wise supervision with minimum interference; help in developing acceptable manners and habits.
- Friends; by end of period, a best friend.
- Concrete learning situations and active, direct participation. Some responsibilities, but without pressure and without being required to make complicated decisions or achieve rigidly set standards.

ABOUT SEVEN

Physical Development

- Annual expected growth in height; two or three inches. In weight; three to six pounds. Growth slow and steady.
- Losing teeth. Most seven year olds have their six molars.
- Better eye hand coordination. Eyes not yet ready for much close work.
- Better use of small muscles.

Characteristic Behavior

- Sensitive to feelings and attitudes of both other children and adults. Able to assume some responsibility.
- Interests of boys and girls diverging. Less play together.
- Full of energy but easily tired, restless and fidgety, often dreamy and absorbed.
- Little abstract thinking. Learns best in concrete terms and when he/she can be active while learning.
- Cautious and self critical, anxious to do things well, likes to use hands.
- Talkative, prone to exaggerate, may fight verbally instead of physically, competitive.
- Enjoys songs, rhythms, fairy tales, myths, nature stories, comics, television, movies.
- Concerned about right and wrong, but sometimes prone to take small things.
- Rudimentary understanding of time and monetary values.

Special Needs

- The right combination of independence and encouraging support. Acceptance at own level of development.
- Chances for active participation in learning situations with concrete objects.
- Adult help in adjusting to the rougher ways of the playground without becoming too crude or rough. Warm, encouraging, friendly relationships with adults.

ABOUT EIGHT

Physical Development

- Growth still slow and steady; arms lengthening, hands growing. Poor posture may develop.
- Eyes ready for both near and far vision. Nearsightedness may develop this year.
- Permanent teeth continuing to appear.
- Large muscles still developing. Small muscles better developed too. Manipulative skills are increasing. Attention span getting longer.

Characteristic Behavior

- Often careless, noisy, argumentative, but also alert, friendly, interested in people.
- More dependent on his mother again, less so on his teacher. Sensitive to criticism.
- New awareness of individual differences. Greater capacity for self evaluation.
- Eager, more enthusiastic than cautious. Higher accident rate.
- Gangs beginning. Best friends of same sex. Allegiance to other children instead of to an adult in case of conflict.
- Much spontaneous dramatization, ready for simple classroom dramatics.
- Understanding of time and use of money.
- Responsive to group activities, both spontaneous and adult supervised.
- Fond of team games, comics, television, movies, adventure stories, collections.

Special Needs

- Praise and encouragement from adults. Reminders of his responsibilities.
- Wise guidance and channeling of his interests and enthusiasm, rather than domination or unreasonable standards.
- A best friend.
- Experience of belonging to peer group; opportunity to identify with others of same age and sex.
- Adult supervised groups and planned after school activities. Exercise of both large and small muscles.

ABOUT NINE OR TEN

Physical Development

- Slow, steady growth continues; girls forge further ahead. Some children reach the plateau preceding the pre adolescent growth spurt.
- Lungs as well as digestive and circulatory systems almost mature. Heart especially subject to strain.
- Teeth may need straightening. First and second bicuspids appearing.
- Good hand-eye coordination. Eyes almost adult size and ready for close work with less strain. Ready for crafts and shop work.

Characteristic Behavior

- Decisive, responsive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Individual differences are distinct, abilities now apparent.
- Capable of prolonged interest. Often makes plans and goes ahead on his own.
- Gangs strong and of one sex only, of short duration and changing membership.
- Perfectionist; wants to do well, but loses interest if discouraged or pressured.
- Loyal to his country and proud of it.
- Spends a great deal of time in talk and discussion. Often outspoken and critical of adults, although still dependent on adult approval. Frequently argues over fairness in games.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Special Needs

- Active rough and tumble play. Friends and membership in a group.
- Training in skills, but without pressure. Books of many kinds, depending on individual reading level and interest.
- Reasonable explanations without talking down.
- Definite responsibility.
- Frank answers to questions about coming physiological changes.

PREADOLESCENT

Physical Development

- A "resting period", followed by a period of rapid growth in height and then growth in weight. This usually starts sometime between 9 and 13. Boys may mature as much as two years later than girls.
- Girls usually taller and heavier than boys. Rapid muscular growth.
- Uneven growth of different parts of the body.
- Enormous but often capricious appetite.

Characteristic Behavior

- Wide range of individual differences in maturity level.
- Gangs continue, though loyalty to the gang stronger in boys than in girls.
- Interest in team games, pets, television, radio, movies, comedy. Marked differences between boys' and girls' groups.
- Teasing and seeming antagonism between boys' and girls' groups.
- Awkwardness, restlessness and laziness common as result of rapid and uneven growth. Self conscious about physical changes.
- Opinion of own group beginning to be valued more highly than that of adults.
- Often becomes over critical, changeable, rebellious, uncooperative.
- Interested in earning money.

Special Needs

- Understanding of the physical and emotional changes about to come.
- Skillfully planned school and recreation programs to meet needs of those who are approaching puberty as well as those who are not.
- Opportunities for greater independence and for carrying more responsibility without pressure.
- Warm affection and sense of humor in adults. No nagging, condemnation or talking down.
- Sense of belonging, acceptance by peer group.

THE ADOLESCENT

Physical Development

- Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.
- Girls maturity, with accompanying physical and emotional changes. Girls are usually about two years ahead of boys.
- Skeletal growth completed, adult height reached, muscular coordination improved.
- Heart growing rapidly at beginning of period. Sometimes a period of glandular imbalance.

Characteristic Behavior

- Going to extremes, emotional instability with "know it all" attitude.
- Return of habits of younger child; nail biting, tricks, impudence, day dreaming.
- High interest in philosophical, ethical and religious problems. Search for ideals.
- Preoccupation with acceptance by the social group. Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular. Over-sensitiveness and self pity. High interest in physical attractiveness.
- Strong identification with an admired adult. Assertion of independence from family as a step toward adulthood.

- Responds well to group responsibility and group participation. Groups may form cliques.
- Girls usually more interested in boys than girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

Special Needs

- Acceptance by and conformity with others of own age.
- Adequate understanding of sexual relationships and attitudes.
- Kind, unobtrusive, adult guidance which does not threaten the adolescent's feeling of freedom. Assurance of security. Adolescents seek both dependence and independence.
- Opportunities to make decisions and to earn and save money.
- Provision for constructive recreation. Some cause, ideal or issue to work for.