

Stages of Development

Children ages 3 to 12

Quite possibly, the most important factor to successful development in a child is proper attention to the specific characteristics of a child's development. At each age group listed below, there are distinct emotional, intellectual, social, and physical characteristics that are obvious in every child. Knowing and understanding these characteristics can help one organize their methods and approach to what, why, and how to teach a child.

Here are the different specific age group that portray noticeably unique characteristics:

1. 3 year olds
2. 4 year olds
3. 5 & 6 year olds
4. 7 & 8 year olds
5. 9 to 12 year olds

If children can be grouped according to these specific age groups, their development will improve dramatically. Children of different characteristics, skills, and abilities that are grouped together can actually slow each other down. Whether the student is older, or younger, both extremes tend to distract the other. Younger students can feel overwhelmed and over challenged in their own way. Older students can feel under challenged, bored, and almost annoyed or insulted to be placed beneath their level of ability.

Review the following categories of characteristics and skills. Notice how different each age group is. Think about ways that can positively influence a child by being placed with their own age group. Think of ways that can negatively affect children who are placed with several different age groups.

Emotional Skills

Children experience different stages of emotional characteristics. Understanding when they experience these characteristics the most can make the difference in their development.

Review the following emotional characteristics, as they are experienced in the different stages of their childhood.

3 years old

1. Like sharing
2. Understand taking turns
3. Need games and play
4. Like pretending

4 years old

1. Are capable of making friendships
2. Express feelings
3. Make comparisons
4. Enjoy competition

5 & 6 years old

1. Have confidence
2. Have out of bounds behavior
3. Become negative
4. Enjoy freedom

7 & 8 years old

1. Follow directions
2. Feel sensitivity
3. Like challenges
4. Can easily be motivated

9 to 12 years old

1. Impulsive
2. Seek gratification
3. Need challenges
4. Can easily be de-motivated

Intellectual and thinking Skills

Children have distinct thinking skills in each stage of their childhood. At each stage, new methods of learning and thinking become visible. Understanding how a child thinks at each stage can enhance their knowledge.

Review the following intellectual characteristics, as they are experienced in the different stages of their childhood.

3 years old

1. Understand grouping and matching
2. Draw “symbolic” pictures
3. Ask “why”
4. Listen and observe

4 years old

1. Can mimic sounds
2. Understand order (First, next, last)
3. Can describe details
4. Can count objects to 10

5 & 6 years old

1. Can use detailed sentences
2. Can follow out detailed directions
3. Know the difference between fact and fiction
4. Have interest in outside things (environment, places, etc.)

7 & 8 years old

1. Can concentrate on a task for over 15 minutes
2. Can tell long stories
3. Can recognize important points
4. Can be taught to think wisely

9 to 12 years old

1. Can build on an idea
2. Understand people’s emotions
3. Can build on determination
4. Can rationalize situations

Social and communication skills

Children have distinct characteristics when it comes to socializing and communicating. At each stage of a child's development, their social and communication skills fluctuate dramatically.

Review the following social characteristics, as they are experienced in the different stages of their childhood.

3 years old

1. Can use and understand basic sentences
2. Enjoy being with others of the same age
3. Enjoys activities that aren't challenging
4. Can sing or repeat small rhymes

4 years old

1. Can retell part of a story
2. Understand comparatives (loud, louder, loudest)
3. Participate in cooperative play
4. Like dramatic or silly play

5 & 6 years old

1. Highly cooperative
2. Have "special" friends
3. Like to follow rules
4. Like responsibilities

7 & 8

1. Have a lot of pride
2. Like games that require taking turns and observing
3. Can give several commands
4. Can tell detailed stories

9 to 12

1. Are self-conscious about their social presence
2. Make friends and lose friends easily
3. Thrive to be the leader
4. Can organize small activities

Physical skills

Children go through distinct physical development at each age group. In this portion of a child's development, they get better with age and tend not to fluctuate in their abilities.

Review the following physical characteristics, as they are experienced in the different stages of their childhood.

3 years old

1. Can run around obstacles
2. Can walk on a line
3. Balance on one foot
4. Throw a ball

4 years old

1. Walk backwards
2. Jump forward many times
3. Jump on one foot
4. Somersault

5 years old

1. Have good body control on fast and slow movement
2. Have good balance and smoother action skills
3. Can follow multiple physical directions
4. Can follow simple left and right directions

7 & 8 year olds

1. Begin to have speed and power
2. Can develop good flexibility
3. Have good footwork
4. Can hit small targets

9 to 12 years old

1. Build strength
2. Have good endurance
3. Can persevere through physical challenges
4. Execute excellent speed and power