

## PBL Description of Learning Phases

Nursery Phase		
0-9 months	9-14 months	15-24 months
<p><i>Mothers of new infants (pre-mobile) are the most prepared to judge what their infant needs. Mother and nursery leader should be in close communication. Babes in arm are welcome to stay with Mom or another mom could be assigned to hold the baby if Mom is a lead teacher.</i></p>	<p><i>This stage brings early exploration for a child as they explore environment as well as new physical skills. They may be developing “stranger/separation” anxiety. PB adults try to allow as much safe exploration as possible and try to develop a warm relationship with these children they serve.</i></p>	<p><i>Children nearing age 2 may be ready for some limited structure in a small group setting. The structured time and need to follow instruction would be short. When ready, this stage can transition into “early core” for short periods of time. (Coordinate with teacher.) Many children at this stage are still prone to “stranger /separation” anxiety. PBL is a place where they can find a new adult to trust.</i></p>
Core Phase		
<-----Less structure      More structure ----->		
early core (18m-3 yr)	mid core (2-5 yr)	late core (4-6)
<p><i>A child in this stage can enjoy a short picture book with limited words. Labeling things is helpful as language is just developing. Too much structure and expectation can create anxiety. Short “lessons” (5-10 minutes) are most effective with good doses of unstructured time. A few children can still feel “stranger /separation” anxiety and need to develop a trusting relationship with a caring adult.</i></p>	<p><i>The child in this stage is able to understand simple instructions. They are beginning to play with others, but still may have a hard time sharing. They can attend to story books with simple story lines. Impulse control is possibly established. Core lessons of “right and wrong”, “good and bad” are the center of their learning. PBLO is a safe place to make mistakes since that is a great way to learn through gentle corrections.</i></p>	<p><i>“Another story” tends to be the request of this child. They attend to longer picture books and even short chapter books with fewer pictures. ABCs and 123s are intriguing. Nursery rhymes and simple songs are delightful. They enjoy a group setting and handle longer periods of structured activities well, although they also love free play. “Can we go to the playground” is also a familiar refrain.</i></p>

Love of Learning Phase		
<-----Less Ability to Focus      More Ability to Focus ----->		
<b>early LoL</b> (4-7 yr)	<b>mid LoL</b> (6-10 yr)	<b>late LoL</b> (8-12)
<p><i>Learning in groups with friends is important to the student at this stage. It is easy to get distracted because pleasing peers is in the forefront more than adults now. The world is just opening up and this student can become obsessed with an interest. If the learning atmosphere is not positive, the student may resort to focusing on “being cool” even if they secretly like the subject. Direct contact with great minds through living books is essential. This is a time to develop habits of attention to the first reading through narration practice. It is a time to reinforce core lessons and help them live those core lessons.</i></p>	<p>Good habits are continuing to form. This student can get deeply involved with a story and, if it has been encouraged and practiced, can narrate with increasing skill and detail. Longer periods of focus are possible, especially in areas of great interest. Peers continue to be a paramount influence and care needs to be taken to encourage positive communications and peer encouragement. The need to “be cool” can be positive or negative depending on the learning atmosphere. It may seem that “fun” is the only goal for this stage.</p>	<p>Hints of maturity start to come through from time to time. There is often a struggle between wanting to play like a child and wanting to observe and listen to adult conversations. Friends remain center attraction, but the logical mind is awakening and it is increasingly easier to reason through issues. There are times when they study a topic without being directed to do so... this is a gentle transitioning into scholarship. At times this student is ready to be a scholar and at times they need a good dose of LoL activities.</p>

### Scholar Phase

*For PBLO purposes we will focus on early scholar. (A late scholar is usually transitioning into a college setting.) A scholar is self-disciplined and able to focus especially in subjects of high interest to them for up to 40 minute stretches without a break. They are willing to explore areas that have not previously been appealing as they begin to understand that all knowledge is connected. Peers are still very important, but “play” tends to revolve around conversations that are rather adult-like in nature. If given the choice between playing with younger children and speaking with adults, they tend to prefer the adult option more and more. They choose to study alone for long periods of time without adult. They don’t like “busy work”, but want to have real work and projects that are useful now or in helping them prepare themselves for the future. Good mentors are essential at all stages and parents have served most of that role, but now parents often need to help them connect with “experts” in areas that interest them.*