

Age Characteristics of Children

WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR PARENTS

Although the following characteristics are generalizations and based on attachment-focused parenting, they may provide guidelines for understanding some of the age-level expectancies. Not all children will show all the characteristics, especially not at the exact chronological age. However, knowing some of the sequences children go through can help adults provide a more nurturing environment. Children in a foster home often can be expected to be on a slower timetable, especially in regards to social and emotional growth.

BIRTH TO SIX MONTHS	
<p>Physical Characteristics</p> <p>Develops own rhythm in feeding, eliminating, sleeping.</p> <p>Grows rapidly.</p> <p>Gains early control of eye movements. Develops motor control in orderly sequence, balances head, rolls over, pulls self to sitting, sits alone briefly.</p> <p>Begins to grasp objects.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Adapt schedule to baby's rhythm as much as possible. Don't worry about spoiling the baby.</p> <p>Supply adequate food. Change baby's position frequently. Exercise baby's arms and legs as you bathe and change the baby.</p> <p>Supply visual stimuli, such as mobiles.</p> <p>Let baby grasp your fingers as you pull him up.</p>
<p>Mental Characteristics</p> <p>Learns through senses. Discriminates mother from others, is more responsive to her.</p> <p>Coos and vocalizes spontaneously. Babbles in two-syllable vowel sounds.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Provide objects to see, hear and grasp.</p> <p>Talk to baby a great deal. Share books and describe the pictures in detail.</p>
<p>Social Characteristics</p> <p>Imitates movements. Gazes at faces. Smiles to be friendly.</p> <p>Likes to be played with, tickled and jostled. Smiles at self in mirror. Plays with hands and toes.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Play pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo.</p> <p>Bounce the baby gently on your knees. Provide a mirror. Mirror baby's smiles. Allow freedom for baby's hands and legs.</p>
<p>Emotional Characteristics</p> <p>Shows excitement through waving arms, kicking, wiggling. Shows pleasure as he anticipates bottle or being picked up.</p> <p>Cries in different ways when cold, wet, hungry, tired or lonely.</p> <p>Fears loud or unexpected noises, strange objects, situations or persons, sudden movements, pain.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Show facial expressions of smiling and frowning.</p> <p>Learn to "read" baby's cries. Don't be afraid of spoiling.</p> <p>CAUSES FOR CONCERN: <i>No vocalization.</i> <i>Failure to respond to sounds.</i></p>

SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR

SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR	
<p>Physical Characteristics</p> <p><i>Large Muscle:</i> 8 months on – crawls 9 months on – may begin to walk</p> <p><i>Small Muscle:</i> Learns to let go with hands.</p> <p>Puts everything into his mouth.</p> <p>Begins to have teeth come in.</p> <p>Cannot control bowels or urination.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Be sure dangerous objects are out of reach. Provide experiences that involve arm and leg exercises. Baby-proof home.</p> <p>Play with child “dropping things” game – this helps him understand his world. Provide him with safe foods he can eat with his hands and with other activities involving exercise of fingers. Child may be cranky and will need special patience and things to chew on. Do not try to potty train.</p>
<p>Mental Characteristics</p> <p>Learns through senses – especially by mouth. Likes to put things in and take things out.</p> <p>Likes to do things over and over.</p> <p><i>Language:</i> Begins to understand such familiar words as “eat,” “Mama,” “bye-bye,” “doggie”. May not speak until age one or later. Likes to hear you name objects.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Provide objects to see, hear and grasp.</p> <p>Talk to baby a great deal. Share books and describe the pictures in detail.</p> <p>Say the names of objects as the child sees or uses them. Continue to look at very simple picture books with the child.</p>
<p>Social Characteristics</p> <p><i>With Adults:</i> Finds mother or mother substitute extremely important. Will “talk” to you using babbling sounds. Will start to imitate. Uses eating as a major source of social interaction.</p> <p><i>With Peers:</i> Will not play with other infants – will poke, pull, push, etc. instead.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>One person should be in charge of most of child’s care. Talk to baby. Do the things you want the child to do.</p> <p>It’s too early to expect her to play with others, but infants enjoy seeing other babies nearby.</p>
<p>Emotional Characteristics</p> <p><i>Needs:</i> To be held and cuddled with warmth and love. To feel sure that someone will take care of him.</p> <p><i>Personality Traits:</i> Becomes unhappy when mother leaves him.</p> <p>Draws away from strangers. Same fears as before.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>A special person should provide physical comfort and meet his needs of hunger, cleanliness, warmth, holding, sensory stimulation, and interaction. Don’t be afraid of spoiling him.</p> <p>If mother must leave, a special person should provide care. Proceed slowly in introducing the child to new people.</p> <p>CAUSES FOR CONCERN: <i>Failure to respond to you.</i> <i>Too much crying or “fretting”.</i> <i>Sad expressions and failure to cry.</i></p>

ONE TO TWO YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>Large Muscle:</u> Begins to walk, creep up and down stairs, climb on furniture, etc. Enjoys pushing and pulling toys.</p> <p><u>Small Muscle:</u> Begins to feed himself with a spoon and can hold a cup. Can stack two or three blocks. Likes to take things apart. Likes to put in and take out things. Takes off pull-on clothing. Cannot control bowels or urination.</p>	<p>Provide large, safe place for exercising arms and legs. Push and pull toys help him balance in walking.</p> <p>She'll be messy, but allow the child to feed herself sometimes. Fix food she can eat easily. Provide toys or games she can take apart, stack, squeeze, pull, etc.</p> <p>Do not try to potty train.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Learns through senses. Is curious - likes to explore - pokes fingers in holes.</p> <p><u>Language:</u> Can say the name of some common objects. Uses one-word sentences - "No." "Go." "Down." Can point to common body parts and familiar objects. Understands simple directions, e.g. "Get your coat."</p>	<p>Have toys or play games which make sounds, have different "feels," involve color and shape, etc. Be sure area is safe - allow child to explore.</p> <p>Talk to child often. Say the names of objects he sees or uses. Talk about activities as you bathe and dress him. Teach names of body parts.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>With Adults:</u> Still finds mother or mother substitute very important. Enjoys interactions with familiar adults. Imitates - will copy your behavior. Demanding, assertive, independent. Waves bye-bye.</p> <p><u>With Peers:</u> Plays by herself but does not play well with others her age. Possessive of own things.</p>	<p>A special person should provide most of the care.</p> <p>Be sure you do the things you want the child to do.</p> <p>Although she likes to observe other children, she may want an adult close by. Don't expect the child to share.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>Needs:</u> The love, warmth, and attention of a special adult. To develop trust - the feeling that someone will take good care of him.</p> <p><u>Personality Traits:</u> Often reaches peak of thumb sucking at 15 months. May throw temper tantrums. General emotion is "happy". Anger chiefly aroused by interference with physical activity. Cries because she can't put wishes into words.</p>	<p>A special, caring adult should look after the child.</p> <p>Ignore thumb sucking. Calling attention can only make it worse. Do not give in to his demands, but do not punish child - he is expressing himself the only way he knows how. Be sure you aren't demanding too much.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Conscious of adult approval and disapproval.</p>	

TWO TO THREE YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>Large Muscle:</u> Runs, kicks, climbs, throws a ball, jumps, pulls, pushes... Enjoys rough-and-tumble play.</p> <p><u>Small Muscle:</u> Can turn some doorknobs. Scribbles. Eats easily with a spoon. Helps dress and undress self. Can build a tower of six or seven blocks. Can begin to control bowels – bladder control comes slightly later.</p>	<p>Provide lots of room and many experiences in which the child can use arms and legs.</p> <p>Provide activities that use fingers – clay, finger paint, pick-up-objects, stacking objects, large crayons for scribbling. Gradually start toilet training – consult authority if unsure of methods.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Continues to learn through senses. Still is very curious.</p> <p>Has short attention span.</p> <p><u>Language:</u> Uses three to four word sentences. Begins to enjoy simple songs and rhymes.</p>	<p>Provide sensory experiences. Allow child to explore – have as few “no-no’s” as possible. Don’t make him do one thing for more than a few minutes. Talk often with the child. Explain things simply. Songs need to have repetition, be low key and have short range. Read to the child daily.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>With Adults:</u> Considers mother still very important. Does not like strangers. Imitates. Dawdles. Helpful with adults.</p> <p><u>With Peers:</u> Enjoys playing by herself. Enjoys having other children near but does not play with them much. Punches, kicks, bites and pushes when angry – usually caused by interference with physical activity or her possessions.</p>	<p>Allow her time to do things for herself and explore.</p> <p>Provide the child chances for uninterrupted play. Don’t force children to play together.</p> <p>Don’t allow children to hurt each other.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>Needs:</u> Begins to develop a sense of self. Needs to do some things for himself, enjoys praise.</p> <p><u>Personality Traits:</u> Tests his powers – says “no!” often. Shows lots of emotion – laughs, squeals, throws temper tantrums, cries violently, etc.</p> <p><u>Fears:</u> Loud noises, sudden movements, high places, large animals, mother’s departure.</p>	<p>Provide simple experiences in which the child can successfully do things for himself. Praise him often.</p> <p>Be firm in following through with your instructions, but do not punish the child for expressing his feelings and independence.</p> <p>Avoid sudden situations involving these fears. Do not force the child or ridicule him.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Child usually appears self-reliant and wants to be good, but is not yet mature enough to be able to carry out most of his promises.</p>	

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>Large Muscle:</u> Runs easily, jumps. Begins to climb ladders. Can start to ride tricycles. Tries anything. Is very active.</p> <p><u>Small Muscle:</u> Dresses herself fairly well – cannot tie shoes. Can feed herself with spoon or fork. Scribbles in circles. Likes to play with mud, sand, finger paints, etc. Can begin to put together simple puzzles and construction toys. Takes care of toilet needs more independently – can stay dry all day but may not stay dry all night.</p> <p><u>Sex:</u> Becomes interested in his body and how it works.</p>	<p>Carefully supervise opportunities for large muscle activity. Set limits for distances. Child tends to wander too far.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for child to practice small muscle skills. These activities strengthen and coordinate small muscles.</p> <p>Name all body parts without judgment, and answer questions about body functions simply and honestly.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Continues to learn through senses. Still is very curious.</p> <p>Has short attention span.</p> <p><u>Language:</u> Uses three to four word sentences. Enjoys simple songs and rhymes.</p>	<p>Provide sensory experiences. Allow child to explore – have as few “no-no’s” as possible. Don’t make him do one thing for more than a few minutes.</p> <p>Talk often with the child. Explain things simply. Songs need to have repetition, be low key and have short range. Read to the child daily.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>With Adults:</u> Can leave mother for short periods of time, although she is still important. Begins to notice differences in the way men and women act. Imitates adults.</p> <p><u>With Peers:</u> Starts to be more interested in others, begins group play – likes company. Is not ready for games or competition – prefers loosely organized group.</p>	<p>At the start of sex-role development, she will act in ways she sees you act – so do what you want the child to do.</p> <p>Provide enough materials so that several children can use them together. Help the child learn socially acceptable ways of dealing with others.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is anxious to please adults and dependent on other’s approval, love and praise.</p> <p>May strike out emotionally at situations or persons when he has troublesome feelings.</p> <p>Is sensitive to the feelings of other people toward himself.</p> <p>Is developing some independence and self-reliance. May have fear of unusual people, the dark, animals.</p>	<p>Give your approval through facial expressions, gestures and verbal responses. Avoid negative remarks about the child. Emphasize the family’s love for the child.</p> <p>Offer love, understanding and patience. Name child’s emotion to help her understand and express her own emotions.</p> <p>Express and show love for her and confidence in her.</p> <p>Encourage her to do things for herself. Don’t force the child to participate in frightening activities. Don’t ridicule.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Begins to know right from wrong. Finds other’s opinions of him are important. Increased self-control and less aggression. Uses verbal threats.</p>	<p>Provide clear limits – enforce them consistently but not harshly.</p> <p>Praise the child whenever you honestly can.</p>

FOUR TO FIVE YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is very active – constantly on the go. Is sometimes physically aggressive.</p> <p>Has rapid muscle growth. Would rather talk or plan than eat.</p>	<p>Provide plenty of play space both indoors and out.</p> <p>Provide for rest – he will fatigue easily. Child needs ample protein in diet. Introduce new, healthy foods.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Has large vocabulary – 1,500 to 2,000 words. Has strong interest in language; fascinated by words and silly sounds.</p> <p>Likes to shock adults with bathroom language. Has insatiable curiosity. Asks numerous questions – incessant talker.</p> <p>Can reason a little, but still has many misconceptions.</p>	<p>Provide interesting words, stories. Play word games.</p> <p>Ignore bad language. Answer questions patiently.</p> <p>Provide experiences that will expand his reasoning ability such as riddles and guessing games. Be alert to clarify misconceptions.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Wants to play with others. Relationships are often stormy. Has tendency to exclude some from the group.</p> <p>Likes to imitate adult activities. Good imagination – loves to pretend. Relies less on physical aggression.</p> <p>Is learning to share, accept rules and take turns.</p>	<p>Send her to a good nursery school or play group if possible.</p> <p>Provide props for dramatic play.</p> <p>Help her learn positive social behavior without pushing or scolding. Expect her to take simple responsibilities and follow simple rules, such as taking turns.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Exhibits a great amount of demanding, threatening, name-calling.</p> <p>Often bossy, belligerent. Goes to extremes – bossy, then shy. Frequently whines, cries and complains.</p> <p>Often tests people to see who he can control. Is boastful, especially about self and family.</p> <p>Has growing confidence in self and world. Begins to develop some feeling of insecurity.</p>	<p>Keep a sense of humor.</p> <p>Provide outlets for emotional expression through talking, physical activity or creative media.</p> <p>Establish limits and adhere to them. Provide opportunities for talking about self and family. Strengthen his positive self concept by pointing out the things he can do for himself. Assure him of your love and his birthparent's love.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is becoming aware of right and wrong; usually has the desire to do right. May blame others for his wrongdoings.</p>	<p>Help him learn to be responsible for his own actions and behavior and teach him the importance of making right choices.</p>

FIVE TO SIX YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Can dress and undress herself. Has tendency to be farsighted – may cause hand and eye coordination problems. Prefers use of one hand or other.</p> <p><u>Toileting:</u> Is able to care for own toilet needs independently.</p> <p><u>Sex:</u> Knows differences in sexes – interest lessening: more modesty, less bathroom play.</p> <p><u>Eating:</u> Has a bigger appetite. May have stomach-aches or vomiting when asked to eat disliked foods. Prefers plain meals but accepts more food choices.</p>	<p>Don't try to teach the child skills that require continued eye coordination such as reading.</p> <p>Don't force child to change preferred hand.</p> <p>Offer appealing variety of foods without force.</p> <p>She's more sensitive to spicy foods than adults.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>Language:</u> May stutter if tired or nervous. Tries only what she can accomplish. Will follow instructions and accepts supervision. Knows colors, numbers, etc. Can identify penny, nickel, dime, etc. May be able to print a few letters.</p>	<p>Don't emphasize – it's only temporary. This is a good age to begin group experiences on a half-day basis.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p><u>With Adults:</u> May fear mother won't return for him – mother is the center of his world. Copies adults. Likes praise.</p> <p><u>With Peers:</u> Plays with both boys and girls. Is calm, friendly and not too demanding in relations with others. Can play with one child or a group of children. Likes conversation during meals. If she doesn't like school, she may develop nausea and vomiting. Is experiencing an age of conformity, is critical of those who do not conform.</p>	<p>Avoid leaving until child is prepared – he needs mother's reassurance of return.</p> <p>Encourage child to find activities at school she enjoys: offer comfort; provide secure, non-critical environment. Help child learn the value of individual differences.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>In general, is reliable and well adjusted. Though not a fearful age, may show some fear of dark, failing, dogs or bodily harm. If tired, nervous or upset, may develop tension outlets of nail biting; eye blinking, throat clearing, sniffing or nose twitching. May still suck thumb. Is concerned with pleasing adults and easily embarrassed.</p>	<p>Increases in temporary nervous habits are normal. Try not to appear overly concerned. Deal with the cause of tension rather than the habits it creates. Offer distractions. Child may need resting times.</p> <p>Show your love.</p> <p>Be sensitive to things that embarrass her.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is interested in being good. May tell untruths or blame others for wrong doings because of intense desire to please and do right. Is aware of right and wrong.</p>	<p>Help her know right and wrong. Do not be shocked if she tells an untruth; help her to learn to accept responsibility for own actions. Teach appropriate behaviors and attitudes for daily living.</p>

SIX TO SEVEN YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is vigorous, full of energy; has general restlessness. Is clumsy; poor coordination. Is in the “ugly duckling” stage.</p> <p>Toileting: Rarely has accidents – may occur when emotionally upset or overexcited.</p> <p>Sex: Shows marked awareness of sexual differences, investigate each other. Engages in sex play and show. May play “doctor” and “hospital”. Begins to suppress masturbation.</p> <p>Eating: Shows unpredictable preferences and strong refusals. Often develops passion for peanut butter. Uses fingers to eat; talks with mouth full. Develops more colds, sore throats and other diseases. Should have been inoculated for chicken pox, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, German measles, mumps.</p>	<p>Accept accidents calmly – child is apt to be embarrassed.</p> <p>The child will accept idea that a baby grows in the womb.</p> <p>There are attempts to gather information. This is usually just curiosity.</p> <p>Child needs honest, simple answers, given in a calm manner.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Language: May develop stuttering when under stress. Wants all of everything – finds it difficult to make choices.</p> <p>Begins to have organized, continuous memories. Can read and write.</p>	<p>Remember symptoms are temporary – may disappear of own accord.</p> <p>Do not offer excessive choices, but provide opportunities for making decisions.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>With Adults: Blames mother for anything that goes wrong. Identifies more strongly with father. Doesn’t like being kissed in public. Expands outside the family. Considers teacher important.</p> <p>With Peers: Friendships are unstable. Is sometimes unkind to peers. Gives negative responses often. Is a tattler. Must be a winner – changes rules to fit own needs. Has no group loyalty.</p> <p>In school, may develop problems if over-placed; can’t keep mind on work; fools around</p> <p>Eating: When eating, makes meals difficult because of perpetual activity. Feels pressure, so breakfast is the most difficult meal. Not a good meal finisher.</p>	<p>Help the child to see that adults care about him, but do not attempt to replace parents.</p> <p>Needs guidance in making and keeping friends. Needs help learning to be a graceful loser.</p> <p>Allow extra time for morning meals.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Feels insecure as a result of drive toward independence. Difficulty accepting criticism, blame, punishment. Is the center of his own world. Generally is rigid, negative, demanding, inadaptably, slow to respond; tantrums reappear. If no winner often makes accusations of cheating.</p>	<p>Give time, leeway, more chances. Be patient and understanding. Support drive for his independence by providing opportunities to do things for himself. Set reasonable limits, offer explanations of limits, and help the child keep within the limits. Be consistent. Avoid games that designate a winner.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is very concerned with good and bad behavior, particularly as it affects family and friends. Sometimes blames others for wrongdoings.</p>	<p>Teach the child to be concerned and responsible for her own behavior and how to improve it. Assure her that everyone makes mistakes. Teach simple repentance.</p>

SEVEN TO EIGHT YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Large Muscle: Drives himself until exhausted.</p> <p>Small Muscle: May have permanent pout on face. Experiences minor accidents. Loves pencils instead of crayons.</p> <p>Sex: Is less interested in sex – drop in sex play and experimentations. Can be very excited about new babies in the family.</p> <p>Eating: Shows less of an appetite.</p> <p>In General: Experiences fewer illnesses, but may have colds of a long duration. May develop nervous habits or assume awkward positions.</p>	<p>Distract child before he gets to the point of complete exhaustion.</p> <p>She now has well-established hand-eye coordination.</p> <p>Be patient with annoyances and do not draw attention to the awkwardness.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is eager for learning. Uses reflective, serious thinking. Thoughts beginning to be based on logic and he can solve more complex problems. Attention span is good.</p> <p>Enjoys hobbies and skills. Likes to collect things, tell about things he has worked on, such as projects, writing and drawings.</p> <p>Favors reality.</p> <p>Likes to be challenged, to work hard and to take time completing a task.</p>	<p>Ask many thought-provoking questions. Stimulate her thinking with open-ended stories, riddles, thinking games, discussions, etc. Give many opportunities for decision making and selecting what he would do in a particular situation</p> <p>Encourage the pursuit of hobbies and interests. Most stories and situations should deal with reality.</p> <p>Give challenges that are right for her ability level; allow plenty of time to accomplish a task.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>With Adults: Will avoid and withdraw. Has strong response to teacher – may complain teacher is unfair or mean. Likes more responsibility and independence.</p> <p>Is often concerned that he will not do well.</p> <p>With Peers: Participates in loosely-organized group play; concerned with herself and how other people treat her. May fight or battle out problems. Starts division of sexes (girls play with girls/boys with boys).</p> <p>School: May fear being late; has trouble on the playground; “kids are cheating” or “teacher picks on me” often expressed.</p>	<p>Show understanding and concern.</p> <p>Assign responsibility and tasks that she can carry out and then praise her for her efforts and accomplishment. Help her assume responsibility for wrong doing.</p> <p>Provide peace and quiet.</p> <p>Attempt to prevent conflicts before they get to the fighting stage.</p> <p>Help child see her interactions realistically.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Complains a lot: “nobody likes me,” or “I’m going to run away.” May not respond promptly or hear directions – may forget. Easily distracted.</p> <p>May stay on the edge of the scene in an attempt to build a sense of self through observation. Is attempting to control nervous habits, but blinking, scowling, headaches and dizziness disappear.</p> <p>Experiences visual fears – night, scary places. Dislikes criticism, eager for peer approval.</p> <p>More sensitive to his own and others’ feelings. Is often self-critical and a perfectionist. Is often dreamy, absorbed and withdrawn. More inhibited and cautious. Is less impulsive and self-centered.</p>	<p>He needs reasonable sympathy.</p> <p>He may need reminding and checking.</p> <p>She needs personal support and reassurance.</p> <p>Continue to help the child develop social skills.</p> <p>Build her confidence: Instead of criticizing, look for opportunities to give approval and affection.</p> <p>Accept her need for peer approval and her need to belong. Offer love, patience and sensitivity. Let her know she has progressed and continue to encourage her. Encourage her and give her self-confidence. Accept moods and aloofness.</p> <p>Encourage her to express herself and to turn her interests to others.</p>

EIGHT TO NINE YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is busy, active, speedy, has frequent accidents. Makes faces.</p> <p>Toileting: May need to urinate in connection with disagreeable tasks.</p> <p>Sex: May handle genitals if worried. Tells dirty jokes – laughs, giggles. May peep at each other and parents. Wants more exact information about pregnancy and birth. May question father’s parts.</p> <p>Eating: Has good appetite; wolfs down food. Belches spontaneously. May accept new foods.</p> <p>In General: Has improved health with a few short illnesses.</p>	<p>Continue to be available to answer questions.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Wants to know the reason for things. Often overestimates her own ability. Often cries upon failing – “I never get anything right!”</p>	<p>Direct child towards attempting what she can accomplish, but still provide a challenge. Stress what the child has learned, not her end product.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>With Adults: Demands close understanding with mother.</p> <p>With Peers: Makes new friends easily; works at establishing good two-way relationships. Enjoys school, doesn’t like to miss school and tends to talk more about school. Develops close friends of own sex – separation of the sexes. Consider clubs and groups important.</p> <p>Eating: Is not as interested in family table conversation; will want to finish meal so he can go about his own business. May become sensitive to killing of animals for food.</p>	<p>Provide the opportunity for peer interaction not only on a personal level, but also on a group and club basis.</p> <p>Offer simple explanation for the killing of animals for food – remain understanding of her feelings.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Has more “secrets”. May be excessive in self-criticism – tends to dramatize everything; is very sensitive.</p> <p>Has fewer and more reasonable fears; may have some earlier tension patterns but will be less persistent. May argue and resist requests and instructions but will obey eventually. Could want immediate (cash) reward. Is usually affectionate, helpful, cheerful, outgoing and curious; but can also be rude, selfish, bossy and demanding – variable. Is sometimes giggly and silly.</p>	<p>Needs a locked box or drawer. Praise; do not criticize. Encourage efforts and let her know you see her progress. Teach that others also make mistakes.</p> <p>Keep instructions simple and avoid unnecessary urging in order to avoid the “I already know” responses. Guide her toward overcoming negative emotions and developing positive ways of showing interest and enthusiasm. Let her enjoy humor when appropriate and be patient with the giggling.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>May experience guilt and shame.</p>	<p>Do not compare one child to another. Praise and build self confidence.</p>

NINE TO TEN YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Active, rough and tumble play is normal, especially for boys. Great interest in team games. Has good body control. Is interested in developing strength, skill and speed. Likes more complicated crafts and shop work.</p> <p>Girls are beginning to develop faster than boys.</p>	<p>Provide many activities to sustain interest. Include team games. Give opportunities for developing skills, such as handicrafts and active games. Include many activities in which he uses his hands and has an opportunity to use small muscle skills. Do not compare boys to girls or force them to interact.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Has definite interests and lively curiosity; seeks facts. Capable of prolonged interest. Can do more abstract thinking and reasoning on his own. Likes to memorize. Individual differences become more marked. Likes reading, writing and using books and references. Likes to collect things.</p>	<p>Give specific information and facts and support the child's interests. Do not give all the answers; allow time to think, mediate and discuss. Respect and be aware of the individual differences when making assignments and delegating responsibilities. Provide opportunities for reading, writing and checking references; however, do not tire the child. Help with hobbies.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Boys and girls differ in personalities, characteristics and interests. The child is very group and club oriented, but prefers socializing with the same sex. Sometimes silly within the group. Boys, especially, begin to test and exercise a great deal of independence. Friends and activities absorb her. Likes group adventures and cooperative play.</p>	<p>Accept natural separation of boys and girls.</p> <p>Recognize and support the need they have of acceptance from the peer group.</p> <p>Be warm, but firm. Establish and enforce reasonable limits. Encourage friendships and help children who may have few or no friends.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Worries. May have some behavior problems, especially if he is not accepted by others.</p> <p>Is becoming very independent, dependable and trustworthy.</p>	<p>Use positive guidance; let her know you accept her, even though you do not approve of her behavior. Provide many experiences for exercising her independence and dependability. Praise for these positive characteristics.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is very conscious of being fair. Is highly competitive. Argues over fairness.</p> <p>Has difficulty admitting that she behaved badly or has made a mistake; but is becoming more capable of accepting her own failures and mistakes and takes responsibility for her actions.</p> <p>Is clearly acquiring a conscience.</p> <p>Is well-aware of right and wrong; wants to do right, but sometimes overreacts or rebels against an overly-strict conscience.</p>	<p>Be fair in dealings and relationships with her. Give her opportunities for competing, but help her learn to be a good loser.</p> <p>Do not ridicule her or tear her down for wrongdoings, but help her learn to take responsibility for her own behavior.</p> <p>Express your love and support for her often.</p>

TEN TO ELEVEN YEARS

TEN TO ELEVEN YEARS	
Physical Characteristics Girls are concerned with style. Girls – may begin rapid weight increase. Boys – are more active and rough. Demonstrates well-developed motor skills. Has developed 14-16 permanent teeth.	Implications for Parents Help with nutrition.
Mental Characteristics Is alert, poised. Argues logically. Begins to use fractions. Likes to read. Has rather short interest span. Begins to show talents. Concerned with facts.	Implications for Parents Use reasoning. Provide books geared toward interests. Provide lessons for music, art or other interests. Good time to discuss drug abuse.
Social Characteristics May develop hero worship. Shows affectionate behavior towards parents. Finds mother all-important. Is highly selective in friendship – may have one best friend. Has great pride in father. Important to be “in” with peer group.	Implications for Parents Spend time with child.
Emotional Characteristics Is casual and relaxed. Likes privacy. Girls maturing faster than boys. Seldom cries but may cry in anger. Not an angry age. Anger when it comes, is violent and immediate. Main worry concerns school and relationships.	Implications for Parents Provide locked cupboard or box for “treasures” and a “keep out” sign for door.
Moral Characteristics Shows a strong sense of justice and a strict moral code. More concerned with what is wrong than right.	Implications for Parents

ELEVEN TO TWELVE YEARS

Physical Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Girls begin to show secondary sex characteristics.</p> <p>Boys are ahead of girls in endurance.</p> <p>Shows increased awareness of body. Shows increase in muscle growth.</p> <p>May show self-consciousness about learning new skills.</p>	<p>Explain menstruation.</p> <p>Let child take initiative. Rapid growth may mean large appetite, but less energy.</p>
Mental Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Challenges adult knowledge.</p> <p>Shows increased ability to use logic.</p> <p>May have interest in earning money.</p> <p>Is critical of own artistic products.</p> <p>Is interested in her world and community.</p>	<p>This may be a good time for a paper route or other job.</p> <p>The child may like to participate in community drives.</p>
Social Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Is critical of adults – obnoxious to live with.</p> <p>May be quiet around strange adults.</p> <p>Strives for unreasonable independence.</p> <p>Shows intense interest in teams and organized, competitive games.</p> <p>Considers membership in clubs important.</p>	<p>Provide for organized activities in sports or clubs.</p>
Emotional Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Anger is very common. Resents being told what to do. Rebels at routines.</p> <p>Often is moody. Dramatizes and exaggerates his expressions – “You are the worst mother in the world!”</p> <p>Many fears, many worries, many tears.</p>	<p>Allow the child to set the rules and help make decisions about her own responsibilities.</p> <p>Be understanding.</p>
Moral Characteristics	Implications for Parents
<p>Feels strong urge to conform to group morals.</p>	

TWELVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS

TWELVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS	
<p>Physical Characteristics</p> <p>Onset of adolescence is usually accompanied by sudden and rapid increases in height, weight and size. Girls have gradually reached physical and sexual maturity. Boys begin physical and sexual maturity. Development is rapid. Acne may develop. Physical strength increases greatly. Concerned with appearance.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Will need more food.</p> <p>Explain to child what is happening – not to worry if she is not like everyone else.</p> <p>May need special diet or medication to treat acne.</p>
<p>Mental Characteristics</p> <p>Thrives on arguments and discussions. Ability to memorize usually increases. Able to think logically about verbal propositions. Developing the ability to introspect and probe into his own thinking. Able to plan realistically for the future. Shows idealism.</p> <p>Reads a great deal.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Don't allow discussions to turn into arguments.</p> <p>Don't put down his ideas – for they are truly “his” – but do help him to see the reality behind the idea. Help with this planning. Needs to feel important in the world, to know she has something to believe in and a cause to fight for.</p>
<p>Social Characteristics</p> <p>Withdraws from parents, who are “old-fashioned”.</p> <p>Boys usually resist any show of affection. Usually feels parents are too restraining. Needs less family companionship and interaction. Rebels. Needs less intense friendships with those of the same sex. Usually has a whole gang of friends. Girls show more interest in opposite sex than boys. Annoyed by younger siblings.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Don't feel hurt or take it personally. Remember, you are still important, but not in the same way you were when she was a child.</p> <p>Support her striving to be independent.</p>
<p>Emotional Characteristics</p> <p>Sulking is common. Fewer anger responses, but main outbursts are verbal, retort and leaving the room. More worried than fearful – about grades, appearance, popularity. Withdrawn, introspective.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p>
<p>Moral Characteristics</p> <p>Knows right from wrong. Tries to weigh alternatives and arrive at decisions by himself. Is concerned about fair treatment of minorities. Is usually or reasonably thoughtful. Is unlikely to lie, but doesn't always tell the whole truth.</p>	<p>Implications for Parents</p> <p>Offer opportunities.</p>