Developmental Guidelines – Kindergarten (Ages 5-6)

Physical
» Enjoys a variety of physical movement
» Not proficient in motor skills, yet displays enthusiasm for trying new activities
» Learns best through movement, touch, and physical manipulation

Cognitive
» Knows the difference between fact or fiction (real and make believe)
» Begins to show understanding of order, such as a story having a beginning, middle and end
» Can follow directions containing up to three steps
» Can speak sentences of five to eight words
» Speaks in front of groups
» Predictable routines help with security and stability

Emotional / Social
» Plays in small groups
» Enjoys dramatic play
» Cooperates with others, but may choose to exclude other children
» Tends to be bossy
» Can share and take turns
» Impatient
» Knows the difference between right and wrong
» Can communicate needs and feelings verbally
» Developing a sense of humor
» Draws emotional stability from interactions with “secure” adults and from feeling understood and responded to in regular and predictable ways
» Increasing awareness of others’ emotions

Sexual
» Becoming aware of differences
Developmental Guidelines – 1st Grade (Ages 6-7)

Physical
» Enjoys a variety of physical movement
» Not proficient in motor skills, yet displays enthusiasm for trying new activities and sports
» Learns best through movement, touch, and physical manipulation

Cognitive
» Interested in the difference between truth and lies
» Predictable routines help with security and stability
» Enjoys figuring out how things work
» Responds well to encouragement and praise
» Needs to know mistakes are appropriate and acceptable at this age and encourage learning

Emotional / Social
» Developing self-esteem is a central task; requires attentive and accepting adults
» Confident; expresses delight in showing talents
» Displays an increasing awareness of his/her own feelings
» Beginning to develop self-control
» Enjoys sharing toys and snacks with friends, although conflicts may remain quite frequent
» Draws emotional stability from interactions with “secure” adults and from feeling understood and responded to in regular and predictable ways
» Susceptible to peer influence due to identifying more with friends and seeking to please friends
» Increasing awareness of others’ emotions
» Can label others’ feelings (e.g., happy, sad, and angry) and begin to identify reasons for others’ feelings (e.g., says, “he’s feeling sad because...”)
» May start to gravitate toward playing with children of her/his own gender

Sexual
» Often developing modesty related to their bodies
» Aware of gender (own and differences)
Developmental Guidelines – 2nd Grade (Ages 7-8)

Physical
» Improving motor skills and coordination enables increased participation in games and sports

Cognitive
» May try to solve problems on own before asking an adult for help
» Uses creative strategies when problem solving
» Improving comprehension including following directions
» Can be self-critical at this stage; may shy away or disengage from activities because of feelings of inadequacy
» Developing language skills at a fast pace including understanding new words in context
» Thinking in more abstract ways
» Benefits from asking questions and summarizing information with adults

Emotional / Social
» Enjoys planning activities
» Appreciates structure of day-to-day schedules and repetition and routine
» Considers friends important and is likely to have a group of friends based on environment, such as classroom or a shared sports team
» May begin noticing impact behavior has on other people
» Gaining increase in awareness of others’ emotions
» Family is an important part of identity; likely to relate stories and experiences by comparing it to own home environment
» Increasingly understanding emotions; practicing strategies to cope with uneasy emotions
» Growing independence; working to solve social problems through negotiation
» Improving conversation skills; both listening and exchange are becoming more natural
» Seeks to please important adults, such as parents and teachers
» May mimic others’ behaviors
» May start to ask about or use technology independently from parents or caregivers including both cell phones and internet

Sexual
» Continued increase in different gender roles and activities
Developmental Guidelines – 3rd Grade (Ages 8-9)

Physical
» Improving motor skills and coordination enables increased participation in games and sports

Cognitive
» Creates engaging and detailed stories, as well as reports that are increasingly persuasive, informative, and entertaining

Emotional / Social
» Developing a subjective psychological concept of self
» Developing increased self-esteem and self-image compared against other people’s expectations
» Values friends greatly; makes them an increasingly important part of life
» Beginning to understand the concept of masking emotions; can vary coping strategies to deal with challenging situations
» Very attached to home although increasing separation from parents is considered healthy
» Imitates both good and bad adult behavior
» Communicates well with others without assistance; able to communicate needs, wants, and emotions in healthy ways
» Gaining knowledge of social customs and emotions that are appropriate to express
» Recognizes the views of others in classroom interactions, good partner in play, shares ideas, understands others’ points of view, and can work cooperatively toward a shared goal
» Participates in games with more abstract rules; enjoys making up fantasy games and situations
» Notices the impact of personal behavior on others and may modify behavior as a result; realizes that others have a similar awareness
» Becoming increasingly skilled at settling conflicts with peers and considers various perspectives when resolving differences
» Able to remain friends after a conflict and continue to work together
» Generally compliant as is still accustomed to adult-directed play and rule setting
» Develops friendships related to activities and proximity, (i.e., the children in his/her classroom, neighborhood, at church or daycare, on a team or in a dance class)
» Increasing time away from home for social events and sleepovers, but happy to return home
» Wants structured, time-limited activities
» May blame someone else when something goes wrong
» Desires adult guidance and communication about what is right and wrong

Sexual
» Tends to be inclusive in play and generally kind and helpful to peers of both genders
Developmental Guidelines – 4th Grade (Ages 9-10)

Physical
» Enjoys physical activity as strength and motor skills improve and may frequently exercise

Cognitive
» Creates engaging and detailed stories, as well as reports that are increasingly persuasive, informative, and entertaining
» Has developed a stronger sense of justice and right or wrong choices
» Can complete tasks which require more time, his/her work is approached with more determination showing a high quality of work
» Will pay attention for longer periods of time in group settings, even when activities are less stimulating and require more listening than participation
» Asks questions which are complex and relevant to the topic being discussed, often displaying deeper analytical thinking

Emotional / Social
» Wants to be like his/her group of friends; will make choices to help fit in with his or her peer group (clothes, style, language)
» Becomes more responsible and looks forward to challenging tasks
» Has exclusive friendships and works hard to create stability and loyalty with one another (this often includes having a “best friend” and missing that person when they are not around)
» Appreciates being treated in a respectful adult manner when approached by adults
» Thinks critically about adults’ choices; verbalizes disagreement if the relationship is comfortable
» Responds well to deserved praise and wants to have individual recognition
» Able to take turns in conversation
» Beginning to show emotions more boldly as they gain confidence and self-identity
» Describes their identity with behaviors and personal choices (“I am great at sports”)
» Examines different situations with more than one perspective

Sexual
» Boys generally have same-sex friendships; may have a few best friends and casual acquaintances based on mutual interests
» Boys are seldom interested in girls, except to tease them or scare them; some will have a “girlfriend” but tend to be very casual about it
» Girls have same-sex friendships, and may be more possessive of their friends; enjoy shared secrets with friends, and care deeply about best friends
» Girls are not consumed by romantic interest in the opposite sex; most show little interest in boys, though some will begin to have crushes
Developmental Guidelines – 5th Grade (Ages 10-11)

Physical
» Enjoys physical activity as strength and motor skills improve and may frequently exercise
» Develop hand-eye coordination quickly
» May complain of growing pains/muscle cramps

Cognitive
» Capable of considering multiple possibilities in order to solve problems
» Can reason out the consequences of an action and generate hypotheses
» Seek help with academics when needed, and exhibit self-control, accept feedback, assume responsibility, show quality in work, observe school rules, can work independently, follow directions, use time wisely, have cooperative attitudes, and generally like school

Emotional / Social
» Highly attuned to the peer group and recognize their place in it
» Views acceptance by peer group as critical
» May commonly request sleepovers
» Plays well in groups or team sports
» Possesses the ability to sense the emotions of others and to read facial expressions and body language
» Quickly changing emotions
» Often enjoys reading or being read to and enjoys adventures, mysteries, and biographies of famous people
» Generally compliant to parents and other authority figures
» May begin using social media

Sexual
» Boys may have a few best friends and casual acquaintances based on mutual interests, such as membership in a club or sports team
» Seldom interested in girls, except to tease them or scare them; some boys will have a “girlfriend” but tend to be very casual about it
» Shows few signs of puberty and are far less concerned about physical maturity than girls
» Girls have mostly same-sex friendships; becomes more possessive of their friends, enjoy shared secrets with friends, and care deeply about best friends
» Girls are not consumed by romantic interest in the opposite sex; most girls show little interest in boys, though some will begin to have crushes
» Beginning to show physical signs and an awareness of approaching puberty
Developmental Guidelines – 6th Grade (Ages 11-12)

Physical
- Enjoys physical activity and sports
- Rapid growth may cause clumsiness and awkwardness

Cognitive
- Thoughts focus on the present more so than the future
- Can see the world from different perspectives
- Begins to think more abstractly
- Idealistic
- Needs learning activities that are active, hands-on, and better if related to the real world or personal experiences
- Shows interest in such things as current events, politics, and social justice
- Selects role models
- Shows concern for rules and standards of behavior
- Has a sense of fairness, especially as it relates to themselves
- May question parents’ religious and/or political beliefs and values
- Demonstrates off-color humor and silliness

Emotional / Social
- Moody, easily frustrated
- Demonstrates emotional extremes
- Can express feelings verbally
- Egocentric
- Seeks to belong
- Forms cliques
- Shows less overt affection toward parents
- Experiments with behavior, roles, appearance, and self image
- Sees themselves as unique
- Sees parents as an interference with independence
- Has difficulty making decisions

Sexual
- Curious about opposite sex, usually demonstrated by girls before boys
- Sees friendships with both boys and girls as important
- Shows signs of puberty, including the onset of menarche for girls
- Boys may begin to grow facial hair and experience a change in their voices – cracking and deepening
Developmental Guidelines – 7th Grade (Ages 12-13)

**Physical**
- Enjoys physical activity and sports
- Rapid growth may cause clumsiness and awkwardness
- Has high energy levels, but needs a lot of rest
- Increasing need for personal hygiene

**Cognitive**
- Increasing ability to think abstractly
- Lack of understanding of cause and effect; don’t think about the consequences of their actions beforehand
- Uses speech for self-expression
- Idealistic
- Focuses thoughts more on present than future
- Likes to challenge answers; don’t take things at face value
- May show emerging ability in a particular skill or content area
- Selects role models & develops ideals
- Metacognitive skills improving

**Emotional / Social**
- Moody, easily frustrated
- Desires more privacy
- Demonstrates emotional extremes
- Increasing concerns for body image
- Expresses less affection for parents
- Struggles with sense of self-identity
- Has difficulty making decisions
- Struggles with peer pressure
- Sees themselves as unique; think no one will relate to them or understand what they are going through
- Constantly feeling judged by their peers
- Has a better understanding of what to say in different situations
- Develops a sense of pride
- Friendships with both sexes become increasingly important

**Sexual**
- Onset of menarche for many girls
- Becomes interested in “dating” due to the need for assurance and acceptance
- Boys develop changes to their voices; deepening and cracking
Developmental Guidelines – 8th Grade (Ages 13-14)

Physical
» Has high energy levels and needs more physical exercise; eats more throughout the day
» Boys growth spurt continues, upper body strength begins to develop
» Girls almost fully developed

Cognitive
» Abstract thinking and formal operations developing
» Developing self-concept
» Hormonal & physical demands of puberty slow down intellectual growth
» Longer attention spans
» Learns better by being actively involved with ideas connected to their personal lives
» Increasing risk-taking behaviors and impulsivity
» Begins analyzing behavior
» Memorizes information quickly
» Starts to use flexible thinking
» Develops a set of values

Emotional / Social
» High self-consciousness
» Struggles with sense of identity
» Overly concerned with physical attractiveness
» Struggles with peer pressure
» Adult personalities developing
» Likes to do as much as possible; having a lot of activities and events to attend makes them feel accomplished
» Close friendships are important; tend to value close friends over crowds
» Test rules & limits; push boundaries
» Sees themselves as unique; think no one will relate to them or understand what they are going through
» Peer group influences much of their behavior
» Desires to try new things
» Increasing desire for independence
» Sensitive to others’ criticisms

Sexual
» Sexual experimentation begins
» Girls and boys will start to flirt
» Girls almost fully developed sexually
Developmental Guidelines – 9th Grade (Ages 14-15)

Physical
» Biggest year of physical change for boys
» Boys and girls level out in height
» Develops a need for exercise and healthy habits
» Most girls are full height
» Girls tend to be overly concerned with weight

Cognitive
» Increasing ability to set and achieve goals
» Increasing self-discipline
» Easily bored
» Recognizes own strengths and weaknesses
» Increasing ability to understand complex ideas such as justice, equality and religion
» Increasing vocabulary
» Heightening sensitivity to physical appearance and its social value
» Increasing ability to reason; using logic to solve problems

Emotional / Social
» Less egocentric
» More even-tempered; but mood swings still common
» Development of morality system
» Has a desire for more control over aspects of their life
» Idealistic viewpoint
» Begins to discover their identity
» Exhibits impulsive behavior with their peers
» More time spent with peers and less with their parents and siblings
» Friendships are extremely important
» Increasing need for independence
» Tends to be more argumentative

Sexual
» Sexual desire is awakened
» Temptation to be sexually active is common
» Increasing desire to be in a romantic relationship
» Romantic relationships become a priority
Physical
» Boys gain muscle rapidly
» Girls become more concerned with weight
» Girls slowdown in physical development; boys rapidly speed up
» Teens at this age will require more sleep and will eat more

Cognitive
» Has sophisticated communication skills
» Exhibits more defined work habits
» Masters abstract thinking
» Increasing ability to think of the world as a whole
» Writing skills improving
» Increasing ability to reason
» Confidence increasing; developing higher self-esteem
» Morality is almost fully developed

Emotional / Social
» Increasing desire for privacy
» Increasing resistance to peer pressure
» More likely to confide in peers than in parents or siblings
» Less conflict with parents
» Periods of sadness are common
» Increasing independence; especially if they acquire a driver’s license
» Friendships and romantic relationships becoming extremely important and likely consume most of their free time
» Mood swings become less common
» Idealistic viewpoint
» Increasing stress about the future

Sexual
» Increasing desire for sexual activity
» Has a deeper capacity for intimate relationships
» Many teens will become sexually active at this age
» Romantic relationships are important
» Increasing understanding of their sexuality
Developmental Guidelines – 11th Grade (Ages 16-17)

Physical
» Most males and females are fully developed
» Body image issues in both males and females are common
» Teens at this age require more sleep and will eat more

Cognitive
» Developing fluid intelligence
» Mastering abstract thinking; able to think about “what could be"
» Takes fewer risks; less impulsive
» Tends to be more goal-oriented
» Increasing ability to make and keep commitments
» Increasing ability to manage adult leadership roles
» Developing better organizational skills

Emotional / Social
» Periods of sadness common
» Experiences uneasiness about entering adulthood
» Calmer demeanor
» Values dependability; promises and commitments tend to be very important
» Increasing sense of control
» Forms strong relationships and friendships
» Searching for intimacy
» Increasing ability to cope with new problems and different situations
» Less conflict with parents
» Exhibits more independence and responsibility

Sexual
» Increasing desire to engage in sexual activity
» Complex understanding of their sexuality
» Has a deeper capacity for intimate relationships
» Many teens will become sexually active at this age
» Romantic relationships are important
Developmental Guidelines – 12th Grade (Ages 17-18)

Physical
» Fully developed
» Puberty is usually over for most teens by this age
» Reached full height and weight
» Most teens will start to become more comfortable with their bodies

Cognitive
» Future-oriented; tends to make decisions contingent on their future goals
» Adult-like thinking; able to make decisions logically and understand the consequences of their actions
» Philosophical and idealistic
» Stronger stances on social issues; less likely to be influenced by the opinions of their parents or peers
» Understands, plans and pursues long-term goals
» Has expansive vocabularies

Emotional / Social
» Manages emotions more effectively
» Better able to evaluate their opinions
» Less influenced by peer pressure
» More comfortable with seeking advice from parents or other adults
» Calmer demeanor
» Feels both excitement and stress about the future
» Search for intimacy
» Develop better coping skills
» Less conflict with parents
» Exhibits more independence and responsibility

Sexual
» Has a complex understanding of their sexuality
» Increasing sexual drive
» Has a deeper capacity for intimate relationships
» Many teens have been or will become sexually active at this age
» Romantic relationships are important
» Has a better understanding of physical intimacy