

Developmental Stages

can be organized into six areas that we call **domains**.

- **Physical Development:** This area includes body size and structure and the ability to perform various gross motor tasks such as walking, running, skipping, and fine motor tasks such as coloring, buttoning a shirt, grabbing objects. This area also includes sensory development such as sight, taste, hearing, smell, touch.
- **Intellectual Development:** This area involves the ability to make sense of the world and includes tasks related to concept development, thinking, perception, memory, problem-solving, and language.
- **Emotional Development:** This area involves our abilities to recognize, understand, and control our feelings.
- **Social Development:** This area focuses on our abilities to relate and to form meaningful relationships with other people and to understand those interactions.
- **Moral/Spiritual Development:** This area involves our abilities to determine what is right and wrong and to act in accordance with our beliefs.
- **Sexual Development:** This area includes anatomy and physiology, puberty, body image, sexual identity and orientation, reproduction, and sexual behavior. It also encompasses values and beliefs about relationships, gender roles, and sexual health.

Adapted from Search Institute (2012). *Parent further: Ages & stages*. Retrieved August 1, 2012 from <http://www.parentfurther.com/ages-stages>.

Typical Child Development



Developmental Overview: Ages 0-2

Physical Development

- Children will first learn to hold their head up. Little by little, they begin to roll and to sit (usually by six months).
- Kids learn to creep, then crawl, pull themselves up, walk while holding onto furniture, stand, and then walk two or three steps without assistance (usually by 12 months).
- At 24 months, children can begin to run, kick a ball, and walk up and down stairs (while holding onto someone's hand).

Intellectual Development

- Children at this age learn by exploring with their hands and mouth. They bang, throw, drop, shake, and put items in their mouths.
- Hiding things will get more difficult when your child starts to look for hidden objects. By 24 months, he can find things hidden under two or three other items.
- Learning how to use everyday objects is an important development at this age. Kids learn how to use a spoon. They learn to drink from a cup. They learn to comb their hair.
- By age 2, a child typically will have a vocabulary of 50 words. As she learns to speak, she'll use two- and three-word sentences, like "More juice," "Me want cookie," and "Up, up."

Typical Child Development: Ages 0-2 Overview continued

Emotional Development

- Crying is the primary means of communication when infants' and toddlers' needs are not being met.

Social Development

- You can expect your child to imitate facial expressions, and even develop a social smile by three months.
- Talking begins with babbling, which leads to gradually learning to say and respond to simple words and phrases.
- Toddlers will play in parallel—near another child, but not with that child.

Moral/Spiritual Development

- Sees him/herself as the center of the world.
- From 0-6 months has no sense of right or wrong.
- Awareness of and beginning to learn simple right and wrong.
- Responds to simple rules; cries to "no".
- Responds to rewards.
- Likes to please.
- Likes to resist.

Sexual Development

- You can expect your child to touch his/her own genitals when diapers are being changed, when going to sleep, when tense, excited, or afraid.
- Exploring differences between males and females, boys and girls is common, and toddlers may display this curiosity through an interest in looking at nude people.
- Due to curiosity, children may make attempts to touch the "private parts" of familiar adults and children.
- Older toddlers are interested in watching people doing bathroom functions.
- Children at this stage like to be nude.
- Boys may have erections.

Adapted from: ParentFurther...a Search Institute resource for families
Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph. D. 2002., IMPACT, August 2005. Developmental Stages for Children/Youth

Typical Child Development

Developmental Overview:

Ages 3-5



Physical Development

- Hopping, climbing, swinging, and doing somersaults begin at this stage. By age 5, many kids can stand on one foot for at least 10 seconds.
- Children can draw a person with up to four body parts by age 5. They draw circles and begin to learn how to copy a square and some capital letters. They learn how to use scissors.
- Kids often become frustrated with wanting to do something physically and not being able to do it yet. Thus, they have lots of falls and mishaps.

Intellectual Development

- Imaginary play is a notable milestone of this stage.
- Children begin to name colors and begin to understand simple counting.
- It's important to stimulate your child intellectual development by reading aloud to him/her every day.
- Kids gradually begin to understand the concept of time.
- By age 3, preschoolers know 300 words. That expands to 1,500 words by age 4 and to 2,500 words by age 5. Stimulate their language development through reading, talking, and asking them questions.

Typical Child Development: Ages 3-5 Overview continued

Social Development

- Interaction with other children increases.
- A great deal of social development occurs through fantasy play and imagination.
- Children this age need to learn how to deal with conflict and how to solve problems without so much emotion.

Emotional Development

- Kids move easily between fantasy and reality and can become quite emotional about their imaginary play. They often do not know the difference between fantasy and reality, so imaginary monsters under the bed or in the dark are as frightening to them as a real threat.
- Take your child's emotions seriously. Help him/her make sense of their emotions. Some preschoolers can throw wild, long tantrums. Calm her down and teach her how to deal with her strong emotions.
- See a pediatrician if your child is extremely aggressive or fearful at this age.

Moral/Spiritual Development

- Kids are concerned with what behavior works to bring about rewards or consequences.
- Guilt develops.
- Children take ownership of rules and stand up for his/her rights.
- Right and wrong not consistent.
- Children still need outside controls as a child's conscience is relatively unformed.
- Children have an active imagination and are open to the supernatural.
- You might be surprised to hear your child say insightful or profound things about God, the world, and life.
- Kids respond to concrete spiritual stories, symbols, and experiences.

Typical Child Development: Ages 3-5 Overview continued

Moral/Spiritual Development continued

- Your child will tend to be a black-and-white thinker. Thus, he knows about good and evil.
- Children at this age begin to use the religious or spiritual language of the family.

Sexual Development

- You can expect your child to touch his/her own genitals when diapers are being changed, when going to sleep, when tense, excited, or afraid.
- Exploring differences between males and females, boys and girls is common, and toddlers may display this curiosity through an interest in looking at nude people.
- Due to curiosity, children may make attempts to touch the "private parts" of familiar adults and children.
- This is a time when children are interested in watching people doing bathroom functions and are also interested in their own feces.
- Children at this stage like to be nude and may want to show others his/her genitals.
- It is normal for boys to have erections.
- Questions about genitals, breasts, and babies may occur.
- Kids will pick up on and use "dirty words" for bathroom and sexual functions.
- Children will play doctor inspecting other's bodies and play house, acting out roles of mommy and daddy.

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Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph. D. 2002., IMPACT, August 2005. Developmental Stages for Children/Youth

Typical Child Development

Developmental Overview:

Ages 6-9

Physical Development

- More physical abilities will develop. Many children can dribble a ball with one hand by age 6. Most learn how to ride a two-wheel bike. They become more skillful at skipping and catching and throwing a ball.
- Kids this age like to move. Many become restless and wiggle if they sit for too long, which is why school can be difficult for some children at this age.
- Your child may practice balancing a lot. They balance on curbs, chairs, and other high places. Monitor their balancing acts to make sure they're safe.



Intellectual Development

- Kids learn to read gradually. Children who are read to aloud and are encouraged to read tend to develop more quickly intellectually.
- Your child will become more sophisticated in understanding the concept of time. They enjoy hearing about times past.
- By age 6, most children can count to 100. By age 9, they are beginning to learn how to multiply.
- Engaging the bodies as well as the minds of children this age will help them learn.

Typical Child Development: Ages 6-9 Overview continued

Emotional Development

- Children still tend to be self-centered. Most want to be first, and most want all the attention. Squabbles can break out when your child feels slighted.
- You'll notice periods when your child sulks, pouts, and worries. Help him deal with disappointments and worries.
- Children tend to have their feelings easily hurt. They also tend to assume that people who hurt them "did it on purpose." Help your child not feel victimized or always jump to acting on revenge.

Social Development

- Children this age become more adept at relationships, but they also may have many conflicts with their peers.
- Many children are competitive and can become argumentative and quarrelsome when they lose.
- Children in this age group can be hard on their younger siblings.
- At age 6 or 7, kids tend to do best with one friend, but by age 8 or 9 they can begin working well in small groups of three or four.

Moral/Spiritual Development

- Right and wrong are black-white; no gray.
- Children in this stage have a strong sense of fairness, values, citizenship, and respect of others.
- Rules are important and must be followed.
- Kids begin to wonder more about the world around them, and they are more likely to ask why things happen.
- Your child may ask cause-and-effect questions, such as "What happens after Grandpa dies?" or "What will happen if someone breaks a window?"
- Children at this age begin to notice that friends may have different spiritual practices.

Typical Child Development: Ages 6-9 Overview continued

Sexual Development

- At this age kids think the other gender children are “gross” or have “cooties”.
- Your child will want privacy when in the bathroom or changing clothes.
- Kids at this stage like to hear and tell “dirty” jokes and look at nude pictures.
- You may notice genitals drawn on human figures for artistic expression or because figure is being portrayed in the nude.
- Children may pretend to be the opposite gender.
- Kids may want to compare genitals with peer-aged friends.
- In this stage there may be interest in touching genitals, breasts, buttocks of another same-age child, or have child touch his/hers.
- During this time children may develop an interest in the breeding behavior of animals.
- Children allow kisses {pecks on lips or cheeks} with familiar adults and children.

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Typical Child Development



Developmental Overview: Ages 10-14

Physical Development

- This is the age when kids need to start using deodorant and learning more personal hygiene. Some go overboard and spend hours in the bathroom. Others resist, refusing to bathe.
- Puberty reigns at this age. Puberty, however, has five stages for both boys and girls, which is why you'll see kids developing at different rates between the ages of 8 and 18.
- With growth spurts come clumsiness and a lack of coordination. It isn't easy for a person to grow six inches within a few months without his sense of balance being disrupted.
- Typically, between ages 12 and 14, kids become very aware of their own sexuality and others' sexuality. Some are nervous about developing too fast. Others are worried about developing too slowly.
- If your child is not athletic, help her find a sport or physical activity she enjoys. At this age, kids who don't excel athletically are tempted to avoid all physical activity. Consider martial arts such as kung fu, judo, karate, or tae kwon do, which often appeal to this age group.

Typical Child Development: Ages 10-14 Overview continued

Intellectual Development

- Most kids enjoy the social aspects of learning. This works well when teachers encourage learning in small groups.
- Around ages 11, 12, and 13, shifts occur in kids' thinking. Keep them engaged in school and learning. Encourage their curiosity. Many are strongly influenced by friends, so if they have friends who only want to socialize and not learn, emphasize the importance of having friends and working hard to learn.
- Many kids move from "concrete" thinking to "abstract" thinking. Concrete thinkers focus on the here and now, such as a particular house cat. Abstract thinkers focus on issues that are disassociated from a specific instance. Thus, an abstract thinker can talk about domestic and wild cats, how they're similar and different, and which ones they believe have more skills than others.
- Because kids this age have strong emotions, they tend to either "love" school or "hate" it. If your child happens to "hate" school, help her identify parts that are more enjoyable—even if it's recess, gym, and lunch.
- Most kids at this age think there is too much homework. Emphasize how homework helps kids learn. Do homework with them. Make it fun. Applaud their learning and new knowledge.

Emotional Development

- Moodiness and roller-coaster emotions emerge during puberty. Kids can be happy one moment and then violently angry or very depressed the next—and you often won't be able to figure out why. Be patient and gentle with kids, as they experience strong emotions that can quickly change.
- Many talk in violent terms. "I'll kill him." "I want to beat her up." "He's so bad, he should die." Some deal with anger and injustice verbally. Others slam doors or stomp their feet. If they act out in destructive ways, get them help with expressing strong emotion.
- Emotionally, young teenagers bristle at any physical affection from their parents. Some like a lot of physical affection from their friends while others like to keep their distance.
- Many kids can become very emotionally sensitive. They're easily offended and easily hurt.

Typical Child Development: Ages 10-14 Overview continued

Emotional Development continued

- Some kids will give you the silent treatment when they become angry—or if they don't get their way. Give them time to simmer down. They'll talk to you again (usually when they need something from you).
- Some kids begin dabbling in more serious risk behaviors (such as self-harm, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, or having sex). Help kids steer clear of these behaviors. Talk with them about what they're experiencing—and what they're seeing going on with their peers. Some are struggling with difficult issues.

Social Development

- This is the age when peer pressure has the most influence. Kids are more interested in "being the same" and "being accepted." Thus, many will do things with others they would never do alone.
- Relationships can become quite complex. Some kids will not speak to others. Some enjoy fighting and making up. Some relationships become very intense.
- Some kids have large shifts in their social circles as they go through puberty. Others withdraw and avoid their peers. Some stick with their friends no matter what.
- Many kids would rather be social than tend to their school work or other responsibilities. Emphasize how all parts of life are important.
- Silliness can rule with some kids. Kids at this age can have a twisted sense of humor.
- Many kids push away from their parents and want to spend most of their time with friends. Some homes become tense with young teenagers who like to argue and test. Other homes are calmer with occasional skirmishes. It all depends on the child's personality.
- Cliques and tight-knit groups can form. Kids become very aware of "who" is in "which group"—even if they're not always sure where they fit.

Typical Child Development: Ages 10-14 Overview continued

Moral/Spiritual Development

- Kids in this age range begin to see contradictions in the world and in religious and spiritual beliefs. Many will confront and question these contradictions.
- A time when a young person begins to experience conflict between parents' values and those of peers.
- Some question or reject their childhood beliefs as they move beyond black-and-white thinking.
- May challenge the values of home.
- Some develop strong, even contradictory beliefs as they "try on" different ideas and beliefs.
- May develop the belief that good behavior is maintained by some presence of authority.
- Many begin to identify or develop interests or gifts about which they're passionate.
- Many begin to rely more on friends and other adults to shape their spiritual beliefs and practices.
- Many religious traditions have "intensive" religious training during these years to help kids sort through their beliefs.

Sexual Development

- Children will become more modest and desire privacy as they begin puberty.
- This stage brings a reluctance to talk to adults about sexual issues.
- For boys and girls, pubic hair appears.
- Girls start to have periods, breasts begin to develop; boys' voices begin to change.
- Your young person will be interested in and engage in purposeful touching private parts, masturbation to a deeper more orgasmic level.

Typical Child Development: Ages 10-14 Overview continued

Sexual Development continued

- With this stage come the beginnings of sexual attraction to and interest in peers and perhaps an interest in dating.
- Children may play games with children their own age that involve sexual behavior, such as “truth or “dare”.
- Children and youth will develop romantic crushes on friends, older teens, celebrities, and other people that play a role in their life like a teacher, coach, or counselor.
- You may notice more curiosity about developed male and female bodies.
- Kids will look at erotic magazines and internet sites, view or listen to sexual content in media, i.e. TV, movies, games, the internet, music.

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Typical Child Development



Developmental Overview:

Ages 15-18

Physical Development

- Older teenagers typically look physically older than they are. Fifteen-year-olds can be mistaken for 21-year-olds, which is why some teenagers find themselves in troubling situations.
- Since all kids go through five stages of puberty, you'll continue to see older teenagers mature. Even during the high school years, you'll notice teenagers maturing at different rates. This is normal, even if teenagers don't feel like it is.
- Most teenagers have trouble waking up in the morning. Part of this is because they stay up later. But part of it is biological. Older teenagers tend to shortchange sleep, which can hinder their development. Don't be afraid to let them sleep until noon—or even until the middle of the afternoon—on weekends.
- Teenagers still need healthy nutrition, but this is the time when parents typically have the least influence on how a teenager eats. Keep offering healthy food but be patient. Modeling healthy eating habits often pays off in the long run and be ready to answer questions about food and health. Even if teens are not eating the way you'd like them to, they are often curious about their bodies and nutrition.
- If your child is not athletic, help him/her find a sport or physical activity he/she enjoys. At this age, kids who don't excel athletically are tempted to avoid all physical activity. Modeling and talking about the importance of exercise can make an impact long term.

Typical Child Development: Ages 15-18 Overview continued

Intellectual Development

- Abstract thinking becomes more common with older teenagers. They'll gravitate more to the "gray" areas between the "black-and-white" issues of their early years. They'll also change their mind about the "grays" to suit their goals and wishes.
- Older teenagers, such as those in this age range, expand their logic and reasoning abilities, although many still struggle to match their thinking abilities with their actions. Thus, a lot of kids will talk intelligently but then have trouble with planning.
- Their thinking now considers the future. They can think and have thoughtful discussions about war, college, the economy, and their visions of what would make the world better.
- Because older teenagers are more intellectually advanced than a child or younger teens, adults can have more back-and-forth conversations with them. They're better able to understand other people's points of views, and they're more open to other perspectives and ideas.
- Many older teenagers will use their new intellectual capacities as "logical weapons" against their parents. This has more to do with them separating from you. They'll punch holes in your logic, and they'll challenge you with thought-out reason.

Emotional Development

Help your teen learn how to recognize and deal with stress, anger, and sadness; to exercise regularly and eat healthy foods; and to express feelings honestly as well as respect others' feelings in friendships and romantic relationships. Your teen will continue to benefit from continuing to do his part around home and at school, and in taking care of his own well-being.

- Emotionally, teenagers don't typically like physical affection from their parents. Many do, however, like a lot of physical affection from their friends.
- Expect a lot of tension and conflict with your teenager, because your teenager is separating from you. The path to independence is rocky for both parents and older teenagers.
- Some older teenagers will go anywhere—except where their parents are. Be patient with this. Typically, kids will draw closer to parents once they leave home. Once they've experienced "true independence," they discover that their parents aren't as idiotic as they thought when they were older teenagers.

Typical Child Development: Ages 15-18 Overview continued

Emotional Development continued

- Monitor your teenager's emotional states. Most have an emotional state that they're most comfortable with. Some are easygoing. Some get angry easily. Others get depressed. Intervene if emotions are overwhelming your older teenager.
- Some teenagers will give you the silent treatment when they become angry—or if they don't get their way. Give them time to simmer down. They'll talk to you again (usually when they need something from you).
- Some kids begin dabbling in more serious risk behaviors (such as self-harm, drinking alcohol, trying drugs, and having sex). Help kids steer clear of these behaviors. Talk with them about what they're experiencing—and what they're seeing going on with their peers. Some are struggling with difficult issues.

Social Development

- At this age, friendships and romance become more important while cliques become less so.
- Older teenagers are less influenced by peer pressure. They're more likely to seek out experts when they want to know or do something.
- Teenagers are heavily influenced by their friends when it comes to clothing, styles, music, and fads.
- Your child is more likely to seek out advice and help from a friend than from you.
- A lot of teenagers pair off into couples. Dating becomes more pervasive, and some teens develop intense romantic relationships.
- Older teenagers enjoy going to parties. Many like being with large groups of friends. Make sure your older teenager knows what to do at parties where alcohol or drugs are prevalent. Some teenagers can attend these parties without participating in these activities, while other teenagers are more susceptible.
- Since many teenagers spend more time away than at home, make sure you know where your teenager is, who your teenager is with, and what your teenager plans to do. Encourage your teenager to update you if plans change.

Typical Child Development: Ages 15-18 Overview continued

Moral/Spiritual Development

- Youth explore the values of their self and of others and begin to consider a more world view.
- Older teenagers begin to make choices about where intentional spiritual practices fit (or don't fit) in their lives.
- Youth explore the values of their self and of others.
- Young people begin to develop a personal morality code.
- Many become clearer about the activities and things that bring joy and energy in life, including a sense of vocation. Children begin to internalize personal beliefs and practices, which may be similar to or different from those of their parents and their friends.
- Kids can develop strong convictions regarding social and political change. They may become deeply committed to service and social change. Some may even become activists for causes they believe in.
- Your children are more aware of different spiritual and religious traditions. Those who are interested in this area often will seek to understand different forms of spirituality.

Sexual Development

- Youth in this age range want to date.
- Feel pressured by peers to engage in activities, including sexual behaviors that they might not be ready to experience, but go along with because they want to be perceived as "cool."
- Continue to masturbate.
- Fantasize about romantic or sexual scenarios.
- Fall in love.
- Experiment with kissing and touching that may include oral sex and intercourse.

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