

Ages & Stages: 8-10 Year Olds

Our Bodies: *Physical Development & Abilities*

- We are **more coordinated** than we used to be. Sports, games and other physical activities help us to develop our new coordination and practice our motor skills.
- Our bodies are beginning to grow and develop. Some of us, especially girls, are in the beginning stages of puberty. **Physical differences** become more pronounced.
- We are becoming more aware of what others think of how we look, and become **self-conscious** about things about us that are different, like being short or tall or having glasses. Physical appearance begins to play a more important role in how we think about ourselves and others.

Our Minds: *Cognitive Development*

- We are able to hold **more than one concept in our mind at once**. We are able to understand how something works, but we need concrete materials to help us develop that understanding.
- Our thinking has become more **flexible, with room for grays, not just blacks and whites**. We are able to classify things by type or category and order things in a logical progression.
- We like to have jobs and designated roles where we can demonstrate and **practice what we know**.
- Along with our newly developed logical thinking, we have a **high level of natural curiosity** about why things are and how things work.

Our Ears & Mouths: *Language Development*

- We are able to think and talk about the future and the **consequences of our actions**.
- We are learning how to use metaphors and **symbolic language**.
- We may try out using **sarcasm**, but we still often do not understand when and how someone is being sarcastic when they speak.

Our Hearts & Souls: *Social & Emotional Development*

- We know how to **express our feelings with words**, but if we are very upset, sometimes we forget and need reminders.
- We are beginning to develop **close friendships**.
- We are able to recognize that other people have feelings and to imagine their perspective, but it is still hard for us to **work cooperatively**. We can learn how to work with others by seeing older children and adults model that for us.
- We are beginning to notice our status in groups and to become **concerned with popularity**. We worry about how others see us.
- We develop a **sense of achievement and self-confidence** when we master skills and find things we can be successful at.
- **Rules are not so rigid** anymore. We want to know the reasons for the rules we are asked to follow.

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TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

- Help us to find things we are good at and give us plenty of **opportunities to be successful** and take pride in our accomplishments.
- Provide us with lots of **activities** that give us opportunities to show off our newly developed fine motor skills.
- Give us **chances to ask questions** when there is time to really discuss the responses.
- Let us be **involved in making the rules**, so we have a good understanding of what they are and why they exist.
- **Teach by example.** Remember, we are watching you and listening to you, and we understand more than you realize.

Ages & Stages: 11-13 Year Olds

Our Bodies: *Physical Development & Abilities*

- We are fast approaching adulthood and our **bodies are changing rapidly**.
- There is a **wide variation about how we are physically developing**—some of us have hit growth spurts and some of us have not.
- Due to the rapid changes of puberty, we often feel **uncomfortable** about our bodies.
- For those of us, especially girls, who have physically matured earlier, we are sometimes the **subject of unwanted attention** from adolescents and adults. Just because our bodies seem more adult does not mean we are.

Our Minds: *Cognitive Development*

- Our thinking has become more complex, and we realize that most things don't have single, simple answers. We can **think more abstractly**, without needing concrete examples or demonstrations.
- We are becoming interested in the adult world, including political, social and environmental issues. Our **sense of fairness and justice** is often quite strong.
- Although we can plan ahead, we are still mostly **unable to think in long-range terms** and to consider the seemingly far-off future.
- We may **challenge rules** or attempt to manipulate adults, but we still want and **need firm limits**.

Our Ears & Mouths: *Language Development*

- Our vocabulary and **language skills are expanding**.
- We enjoy discussing and debating particularly concerning issues of **fairness and justice**.
- We are beginning to realize that sometimes the way we speak at home or with our friends is **not necessarily appropriate in every setting**.

Our Hearts & Souls: *Social & Emotional Development*

- Our friends are very important to us. We have begun to develop a few **lasting close friendships**. We also occasionally have **conflicts with friends** and power struggles in groups. These issues can seem like the most important thing in the world.
- We want **privacy** with our friends to discuss the changes we are going through.
- We are interested in boys or girls and curious about **sex and sexuality**.
- We do not want to be associated with anything that we consider to be for kids, However, we may actually **still enjoy playing games and hearing stories**.
- We want **opportunities to contribute**.
- We experience many **mood swings** and varying energy levels, along with the rapid physical changes we are going through.

Ages & Stages: 11-13 Year Olds

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

- Provide **opportunities for us to discuss issues** that are important to us and to express our opinions.
- Give us our space. **Respect our privacy** while still letting us know that you are available to us.
- **Do not single us out** in front of our peers for praise or criticism.
- **Provide opportunities for us** to participate in community service, work in groups, and make things creatively.

Ages & Stages: 14-18 Year Olds

Our Bodies: *Physical Development & Abilities*

- Most of us have overcome the awkwardness of puberty and are **approaching physical maturity** with our development.
- Some of us—especially boys—are **still experiencing growth spurts** and our voices deepen.
- Acne, weight, exercise, and other physical changes make us **self-conscious**.
- We are very **concerned with our body image**, and we are swayed by images we see in advertising and the media. We worry if we fit into society's standards of beauty.

Our Minds: *Cognitive Development*

- We are capable of high levels of abstract thought and solving complex problems. We need our learning and activities to be **meaningful, complex, and challenging**. So challenge us!
- We think about the meaning of life. We enjoy having philosophical discussions and we are developing our own **personal philosophies**.
- Setting and attaining **goals** is important to us.
- We are better able to plan for the future and to imagine the future consequences of our actions. We have started thinking about our **future** goals and ambitions, including our career and post-secondary aspirations.
- We are very curious and we may experiment with drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other **risky behaviors**.

Our Ears & Mouths: *Language Development*

- We enjoy discussing and debating, particularly concerning issues of **moral rights and privileges** and the meaning of life.
- We are realizing that sometimes the way we speak at home or with our friends is **not appropriate in every setting**.
- We want to become experts in our chosen art and forms of **self-expression** such as music, poetry, drama, visual arts, and creative writing.

Our Hearts & Souls: *Social & Emotional Development*

- We try out different answers to the question, "**Who Am I?**" At different points in our identity formation, we may feel uncertain about our gender, sexual, religious, ethnic and/or racial identities.
- Our friends remain very important to us, but our **social networks are growing**. Our social standing is important to us, and we want to be **recognized as unique** individuals.
- We care about the wellbeing of others. We are developing a **community consciousness**, including a sense of social justice.
- We are gaining our **independence** and further distancing ourselves from our parents.
- Developing our **self-confidence** is important to us, as is receiving respect for our skills and contributions. We often want to take on adult **leadership roles** and demonstrate our knowledge and skills.

Ages & Stages: 14-18 Year Olds

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

- Give us **opportunities to demonstrate our independence** and skills by involving us in the planning of our learning experiences and giving us adult responsibilities.
- Push us to stretch our thinking by providing us with **real life problems to solve**, make decisions, reflect, and evaluate.
- Give us opportunities to **positively contribute** to our communities.
- Hold us to high standards and **hold us accountable** for the success or failure of our plans to keep us on our toes.
- Challenge us on our thinking on our identity, values and beliefs. Encourage us with learning experiences related to **self-discovery, self-understanding, and getting along** with others.
- Help us plan for our futures by **providing guidance** on and exposure to career and post-secondary options.
- Don't make comments criticizing our appearance. Give us opportunities to **critically examine media** messages about what is considered "normal."
- Answer our questions and give us information about sex, relationships, and health **without judging or minimizing our opinions.**