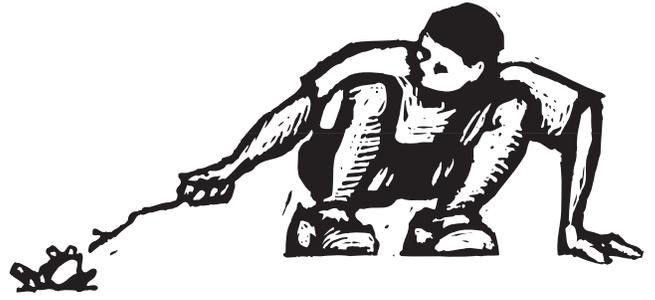


Understand Youth Development Ages and Stages



Young Children (grades K-3)

Physical development

- In a period of slow physical growth
- Learning to master physical skills
- Lack muscular coordination skills

Emotional development

- Are egocentric/self-centered (4-H should provide experiences which require sharing/cooperation to help children move beyond self-centeredness).
- Need and seek approval from adults (By the end of this stage begin to compare themselves with others, like to play games, but can't accept losing).
- Intellectual development



- More interested in doing things than in the end product (Need practice focusing on one thing at a time to move to the next stage).



- Thinking is concrete (Learn through senses by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, and hearing rather than by thinking alone, verbal instruction should be accompanied by demonstration).



Social development

- Learning to be friends with others.
- Younger kids enjoy playing together, but by the end of the stage, boys and girls will separate.
- Fighting occurs but does not have lasting effects.

School Age Children (grades 4-8)

Physical development

- Very active and enjoy things which involve movement, cannot sit still for long periods of time.
- Beginning of adolescence is marked by a growth spurt which occurs across a wide range of ages, with females maturing before males. (Rapid physical changes are often a source of embarrassment for young teens.)

Emotional development

- Have a weak sense of individual identity (Need to feel accepted and worthwhile, successes should be emphasized and failures kept in perspective as learning opportunities).
- By the end of the period, begin to demonstrate Kohlberg's post-conventional moral thinking.
- During puberty, changes in hormones and changes in thinking contribute to mood swings.
- Begin to test value, (Justice and equality become regarded as important issues).
- Feel the need to be part of something important.

Intellectual development

- Until around age 10 or 11, think concretely in absolutes (black/white, right/wrong), but are beginning to think logically (new ideas are best understood if related to previous experiences),
- Around age 10 or 11 begin to demonstrate formal operational thinking and think abstractly, but still tend to think in all-or-nothing terms.
- Will intensely explore subjects of interest.
- Often reject solutions offered by adults in favor of finding their own solutions.

Understand Youth Development Ages and Stages *(continued)*

Social development (Grades 4-8, continued)

- Joining clubs and groups becomes very important around age 9-10, (will form clubs with a group of others similar to themselves).
- Have difficulty understanding others' thinking, but understand the benefit of making others happy.
- Satisfaction in completing projects comes more from pleasing adults in their lives than from the value of the activity itself.
- By the end of this period:
 1. ready to start being responsible for actions;
 2. move away from dependence on parents toward eventual independence;
 3. dependence on opinions of adults shifts to dependence on opinions of peers;
 4. enjoy doing activities away from home.



Emotional development

- Searching for independence and identity, usually achieved around age 16.
- Seeking emotional autonomy from parents.
- Younger teens have difficulty with compromise.
- Unsettled emotions are common.
- Take pride in responsibility and respect of others.

Intellectual development

- Continue to gain cognitive and study skills, can adapt language to different contexts.
 - Mastering abstract thinking.
 - Exploring and preparing for future careers and roles.
 - Set goals based on feelings of personal needs and priorities, likely to reject goals set by others.



Social development

- Generally self-centered, but capable of empathy.
- Relationship skills are well developed.
- Dating increases and moves from group dates to double dates to couple only dating.
- Acceptance by opposite sex is of high importance.
- Want to belong to groups, but be recognized as unique individuals within the groups.
- Employment and education fill the need for social relationships which were earlier filled by club and group activities.

High School Age Youth

Physical development

- Physical changes are accepted by most teens, and most awkwardness is past, although some boys are still growing quickly.
- Most females reach maximum height by age 14, most males by age 16, males gain muscle, females gain fat. Both sexes are still developing bone mass.