

Ages and Stages

Grade:	Characteristics:	Implications:
K - 3	Physical - still learning to master physical skills, have large muscle control, working on small muscle control.	Plan activities using large muscles like running, playing games, etc. Small muscle skills like cutting, gluing, tracing, etc. need more help.
	Learning - can't multi-task, basic reality-based thinking skills, more interested in doing things than in the quality of the result.	Plan short activities 10-15 minutes. Focus on the doing rather than the end product. Let them explore and ask questions.
	Social - just learning how to be a friend, fights are common but don't last long, by the end of 3rd Grade boys and girls separate.	Small group activities help them build social skills, but they still need individual attention. Plan for making a variety of mixed groups.
	Emotional - self-centered, don't share well, need lots of adult praise and approval, they are sensitive, don't want to get punished or fail.	Be positive!!! Praise their effort and hard work. Plan activities that are not competitive, everyone wants to feel successful.
4 - 8	Physical - move all the time, can't sit still, growth spurt, girls mature before boys.	Plan active learning with chances to move around, varied tasks. Avoid competition between boys and girls.
	Learning - until 11, think concretely (black or white), begin to understand new ideas and make connections with their own experiences. Begin to think abstractly and to choose favorite subjects. Want to do it themselves rather than get help.	Give short, simple directions and brief learning experiences, 30 - 40 minutes. Have a wide range of different activities to ensure that everyone is successful in math, science, art, etc.
	Social - Clubs and groups become important, very influenced by what others think. Want to please adults by completing the project, more than enjoying the project.	Use group learning with same-sex groups, they are intimidated by mixed groups. Bring in older mentors/ students to work with these groups.
	Emotional - not a strong sense of their own identity, group driven. Need to feel like they are part of something very important. May get moody. Justice, equality and fairness matter.	Help them find their own identity, by focusing on their strengths and past progress. Don't compare them to each other.
9 - 12	Physical - lots of physical changes, boys growing quickly, girls have slowed down.	Be ready to answer questions about physical changes, they are very focused on it. Don't make comments about shapes and sizes, etc.
	Learning - have gained thinking and study skills and are mastering abstract thinking. Lots of focus on future, careers, roles. Like to make their own goals based on their needs rather than others, and may reject help.	Work best with real-life, real-world problems and issues. Let them make their own decisions and evaluate the outcomes. Encourage service learning, community service. Plan enrichment around colleges or businesses.
	Social - Self-centered, but understand other's feelings. Are able to have relationships with many different kinds of people. Need acceptance by the opposite sex, want to belong but also to be unique.	Let them plan their own programs and create an environment that offers them lots of peer support. Praise their personal development and growth.
	Emotional - Searching for their own identity, usually set on it around 16. Want to be independent from parents. May have lots of unsettled emotions and trouble compromising. Trying to be seen as responsible and respected.	Give them more responsibility and expect follow through. Help them sort out their identity, values, beliefs, and individual skills. Encourage them to work with other teens and adults.

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