

Common Characteristics of Five-Year-Olds

Five, overall, is a time of great happiness. Life is “good,” says the five-year-old. Five is also a time of great change. During this one year, children may go from being cautious and compliant to uncertain and oppositional.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- v Early in the year, like to help, follow rules, and be “good”
- v Later, may test or oppose adult authority or show uncertainty (not sure whether to be “good” or “naughty”)
- v Need consistent rules and enforcement; respond well to clear and simple expectations
- v Need empathetic discipline as they test limits and make mistakes

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- v See only one way to do things; rarely see other viewpoints
- v Imaginative and believe toys and other objects are alive
- v Think very literally (raining cats and dogs means they are falling from the sky)
- v Often reverse letters and numbers
- v Early in the year, like to copy and repeat activities; later, likes to try more new things
- v Often think out loud before acting
- v Learn best by exploring materials such as blocks, clay, finger paints, rocks, shells

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- v Better control of running, jumping and other large movements
- v Need lots of physical activity; including free play
- v Still awkward with writing, handcrafts and other small movements
- v Early in the year, pace selves well; later, tire quickly
- v Pencil grip changes from three-fingered to other grips
- v Able to see close objects best; not yet able to sweep focus smoothly from left to right

Age Developmental Characteristics: 6 Year Old:

Physical:

1. Good supply of energy.
2. Muscular control becoming more effective with large objects.
3. There is a noticeable change in the eye-hand behavior.
4. Legs lengthening rapidly.
5. Big muscles crave activity.

Social:

1. Self-centered and has need for praise.
2. Likes to be first.
3. Enjoys group play when groups tend to be small.
4. The majority enjoy school associations and have a desire to learn.
5. Boys like to fight and wrestle with peers to prove masculinity.

Emotional:

1. Restless and may have difficulty in making decisions.
2. Emotional pattern of anger may be difficult to control at times.

3. Behavior patterns may often be explosive and unpredictable.
4. Jealousy toward siblings at times; at other times takes pride in siblings.
5. Greatly excited by anything new.

Intellectual:

1. Knows number combinations up to ten.
2. Can define objects in terms of what they are used for.
3. Knows right and left side of body.
4. Will contribute to guided group planning.
5. Conversation usually concerns own experience and interests.
6. Curiosity is active and memory is strong.
7. Identifies with imaginary characters.

Age Developmental Characteristics: 7 Year Old:

Physical:

1. More improvement in eye-hand coordination.
2. Tires easily and shows fatigue in the afternoon.
3. Has slow reaction time.
4. Endurance relatively low.
5. Coordination is improving with throwing and catching becoming more accurate.
6. Whole-body movements are under better control.

Social:

1. Wants recognition for individual achievements.
2. Not always a good loser.
3. Conversation often centers around family.
4. Learning to stand up for own rights.
5. Interested in friends and is not influenced by their social or economic status.
6. May have nervous habits such as nail biting, tongue sucking, scratching or pulling at ear.
7. Gets greater enjoyment from group play.

Emotional:

1. Curiosity and creativity desires may condition responses.
2. May be difficult to take criticism from adults.
3. Wants to be more independent.
4. Overanxious to reach goals set by parents and teachers.
5. Critical of himself/herself and sensitive to failure.
6. Emotional pattern of anger is more controlled.

Intellectual:

1. Is able to listen longer.
2. Reads some books by himself/herself.
3. Reaction time is still slow.
4. Learning to evaluate the achievements of self and others.
5. Concerned with own lack of skill and achievement.
6. Becoming more realistic and less imaginative.

Age Developmental Characteristics: 8 Year Old:

Physical:

1. Interested in games requiring coordination of small muscles.
2. Arms are lengthening and hands are growing larger.
3. Eyes can accommodate more easily.
4. Some develop poor posture.
5. Accidents appear to occur more frequently.
6. Appreciates correct skill performance.

Social:

1. Girls are careful of their clothes, but boys are not.
2. Leaves many things uncompleted.
3. Has longer periods of peaceful play.
4. Does not like playing alone.
5. Starts collections.
6. Enjoys school and dislikes staying home.
7. Likes variety.
8. Responds well to group activity.
9. Interest will focus on friends of own sex.

Emotional:

1. Dislikes taking much criticism from adults.
2. Can give and take criticism in his own group.
3. May develop enemies.
4. Does not like to be treated as a child.
5. First impulse is to blame others.

Intellectual:

1. Can tell day of month and year.
2. Becoming more aware of adult world and his place in it.
3. Ready to tackle almost anything.
4. Like to memorize.
5. Not always good at telling time, but very much aware of it.

Age Developmental Characteristics: 9 Year Old:

Physical:

1. Increasing strength in arms, hands and fingers.
2. Endurance improving.
3. Needs and enjoys much activity; boys like to shout, wrestle, and tussle with each other.
4. A few girls near puberty.
5. May tend to over-exercise.

Social:

1. Wants to be like others, talk like others, and look like them.
2. Girls are becoming more interested in their clothes.

3. Is generally a conformist and may be afraid of that which is different.
4. Able to be on his/her own.
5. Able to be fairly responsible and dependable.
6. Some firm and loyal friendships develop.
7. Increasing interest in activities involving challenges and adventures.

Emotional:

1. May sometimes be outspoken and critical of the adults he knows, although he/she has a genuine fondness for them.
2. Responds best to adults who treat him/her as an individual and approach him/her in an adult way.
3. Likes recognition for what he/she has done and responds well to deserved praise.
4. Does not mind criticism or punishment if he/she thinks it is fair, but is indignant if he/she thinks it is unfair.

Intellectual:

1. Individual differences are clear and distinct.
2. Some real interests are beginning to develop.
3. Beginning to have a strong sense of right and wrong.
4. Understands explanations.
5. Attention span is greatly increased.
6. Able to make up his/her own minds and come to decisions.
7. Range of interest in reading in that many are great readers while others may be barely interested in books.

Age Developmental Characteristics: 10 Year Old:

Physical:

1. Individuality is well-defined, and insights are more mature.
2. Physically active and likes to rush around and be busy.
3. Interested in the development of more skills.
4. Reaction time is improving.
5. Muscular strength does not seem to keep pace with growth.

Social:

1. Moving more into a peer-centered society.
2. Both boys and girls are amazingly self-dependent.
3. Great team loyalties are developing.
4. Boys show their friendship with other boys by wrestling and jostling with each other, while girls walk around with arms around each other as friends.
5. Interested in social problems in an elementary way and likes to take part in discussions.

Emotional:

1. Can be readily inspired to group loyalties in his club organization.
2. Each sex has an increasing tendency to show lack of sympathy and understanding with the other.

3. Boys' and girls' behavior and interest becoming increasingly different.

Intellectual:

1. Works with executive speed and likes the challenge of mathematics.
2. Shows a capacity to budget time and energy.
3. Can attend to a visual task and at the same time maintain conversation.
4. Some become discouraged and may give up trying when unsuccessful.
5. The attention span has lengthened considerably, with the child able to listen and to follow directions and retain knowledge more easily.
6. Developing a scientific approach.
7. Better oriented with respect to time.
8. Ready to plan his day and accept responsibility for getting things done on time.

Age Developmental Characteristics:11 Year Old:

Physical:

1. Shows fatigue more easily.
2. Some girls and a few boys suddenly show rapid growth and evidence of the approach of adolescence.
3. On the average, girls may be taller and heavier than boys.
4. Uneven growth of different parts of the body.
5. Willing to work hard at acquiring physical skills, and emphasis is on excellence of performance of physical feats.
6. Boys are more active and rough in games than girls.
7. Eye-hand coordination is well developed.
8. Bodily growth is more rapid than heart growth, and lungs are not fully developed.

Social:

1. Does a number of socially acceptable things, not because they are right or wrong.
2. Although obsessed by standards of peers, he is anxious for social approval of adults.
3. Need for social companionship of children their own age.
4. Girls are more likely to be self-conscious in the presence of boys and are usually much more mature than boys.
5. Team spirit is very strong.
6. Often engages in silly behavior, such as giggling and clowning.
7. Girls are more interested in social appearance than boys.

Emotional:

1. If unskilled in group games and game skills, he/she may tend to withdraw.
2. Boys may be concerned if they feel they are undeveloped.
3. Moods change quickly.
4. Increase in self-direction and in a serious attitude toward work.
5. Need for approval to feel secure.
6. Beginning to have a fully developed idea of own importance.

Intellectual:

1. Increasing power of attention.

2. Interested in scientific experiments and procedures.
3. Can carry on any individual intellectual responsibilities.
4. Able to discuss problems and to see different sides of questions.
5. May lack maturity of judgment.
6. Attention span is increasing, and concentration may be given to a task for a longer period of time.
7. Growing in ability to use several facts to make a decision.

Age Developmental Characteristics:12 Year Old:

Physical:

1. Becoming more skilled in the use of small muscles.
2. May be relatively little body change in some cases.
3. Ten hours of sleep is considered average.

Social:

1. Increasing identification of self with other children of own sex.
2. May see himself as a child and adults as adults.
3. Getting ready to make the difficult transition to adolescence.
4. Pressure is being place on individual at this level to begin to assume adult responsibilities.

Emotional:

1. The process of sexual maturation involves structured and physiological changes with possible perplexing and disturbing emotional problems.
2. Personal appearance may become a source of great conflict, and learning to appreciate good grooming or the reverse may be prevalent.
3. May be very easily hurt when criticized or made the scapegoat.

Intellectual:

1. Learns more ways of studying and controlling the physical world.
2. The use of language (on many occasions his own vocabulary) to exchange ideas for explanatory reasons.
3. More use of reflective thinking and greater ease of distinction.
4. Continuation of development of scientific approach.

Characteristics of a Typical Thirteen Year Old

Physical:

- High physical energy
- Skin problems emerging; hygiene a key issue
- Girls: 95% of mature height in average girl; menstruating has begun for most
- Boys: voice change for many; growth spurt about a year behind girls

Social:

- Neatness a key issue with personal appearance, not with personal environment
- The mirror is their best friend and worst enemy
- Often quieter than 12's or 14's

- Like to be alone at home
- Feelings easily hurt and can easily hurt other's feelings
- Mean = scared
- Touchy; flaring anger
- Close friendships more obviously important to girls
- Boys hang in groups or formal gangs
- Girls more interested in older boys
- Strong sports interest in both genders
- Telephone, computer, video games and other electronic diversions a major factor
- Music becoming a major preoccupation
- Peer pressure increasing regarding dress, language, music, in-out, being cool
- Worries about school work
- Humor highlighted by growth of sarcasm
- Horseplay, practical jokes still high in boys
- Collections of things (jewelry, make-up, CD's)

Language:

- One word answers to adult questions (minimal feedback)
- Street language/peer language important
- Extreme language and volume in face of parental involvement
- Rudeness

Cognitive:

- Withdrawn and sensitive nature is protective of developing self-concept and intellectual ideas that remain not fully formed
- Abstract reasoning and "formal operations" begin to be functional in some 13's
- Tentative approach to difficult intellectual tasks; not willing to take big learning risks
- Like to challenge intellectual as well as social authority