

Characteristics of children

Knowledge about what is typical of children of various ages can help you to understand the child better. If a child behaves in a particular manner but you know that the behaviour demonstrated is developmentally appropriate, then you are less likely to overreact to the child. Overreacting to a child can cause discipline problems. Understanding your child can give you a certain comfort level in knowing what to expect. The following tables describe some characteristics of children at different levels.

Six Year- Olds

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six years -old is an age of transition. While the child might have been confident and robust last year, he is likely to be hesitant and indecisive as a six year- old.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He is often inconsistent in his conduct, being very good at times and very bad at other times – wide swing behaviours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The six year -old always wants to win but also wants to be loved best.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He does not lose gracefully
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parties with six year -olds are high spirited and chaotic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The six year- old likes social routines and a certain amount of sameness but also constant activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They like to manipulate scissors, glue and markers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• His shoes, if he ties them himself, are often tied too loosely. He likes to take off his shoes and often has trouble keeping track of them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Girls at this age are prone to giggling.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six year- olds love praise and do not like to be corrected. Corrections must be done judiciously.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor injuries can be catastrophic to six year - olds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some six year- olds are very afraid of being late to school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six year -olds are very possessive of their belongings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six year -olds bring lots of stuff to school from home. They especially like to show it to their teacher.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They like possessions but are careless about them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six year- olds respond well to praise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is very common for a child of this age to reverse letters and numbers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The six year- old can print lower case letters (common letters) but often reverts to capitals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children of this age can leave a task incomplete and return to it the following day.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children of this age are beginning to know left and right on themselves but cannot distinguish left and right on another person.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When a six year- old is resistant to what you want him to do, the best way to deal with him is to give him several choices of things to do. It gives him some sense of control to be able to select .

Seven Year -Olds

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven year- olds are a relief after six year olds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven is an assimilating age when children have periods of calmness and self-absorption. It is a pleasant age.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven year- olds are good listeners. They take in more than they give out.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven year-olds are good guessers and they stick to their guesses, even when challenged.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven year –olds are very fond of their teachers, like to be near them and touch them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seven year-olds use their erasers so much that it sometimes appears that they write in order to have something to erase.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At seven, children begin discriminating between bad and good.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't like cheaters or liars, but take pencils and other articles from others without thinking of that as stealing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year-old likes time limits. If someone doesn't tell him to stop, he may work on a task forever. He perseveres.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year – old can be very sensitive to disapproval, to the point of tears.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year-old is easily distracted by things or thoughts. At times, he seems deaf because he is so engrossed in what he is doing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He can get very tired, especially in the afternoon.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year-old does not like to be wrong and can get very angry with himself when he makes a mistake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His desire to be perfect is so great that he may take home only 100% papers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year –old is conscientious and takes responsibilities very seriously.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is not too keen on trying new situations on his own. He wants and needs support of a familiar person with him when he tries something new.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When something does not please a seven year-old, he is likely to withdraw rather than make a scene.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year-old can spend long periods of time by himself.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven year –olds love riddles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year-old is not a good messenger between home and school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seven year – old has a messy desk because he likes to accumulate things.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of this age cannot copy easily from the blackboard to their books.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of this age tend to read fast.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His spelling is usually behind his reading ability,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven year-olds like to plan their day.

Eight Year-Olds

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year – old is more active than the seven year – old. He speeds about and is more expansive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year-old gets his feelings hurt very easily and shows this by crying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He likes to collect things and loves to look at catalogs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although he likes to eat, he also has food dislikes and will not budge from them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year-old is generally not sick as often as children younger than he.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight year-olds do not have a good sense of their abilities. They tend to think that they are better than they really are.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year-old tends to be very dramatic verbally and exaggerates a lot.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He likes things that he thinks of himself.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward system work well with children this age and they tend to be almost obsessed with money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight year-olds tend to prefer to play with children of their own sex and they do not play well alone, as seven year-olds do.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He likes to be given directions but may have to have them repeated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He doesn't always do things right and loves to make excuses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year-old is interested in things that happened in the distant past. Boys, especially, like dinosaurs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year-old wants to be treated as an adult and can become offended if he thinks he is being condescended to.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher is less important to the eight year-old as she (teacher) was to the seven year-old.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children this age like teachers who are factual and businesslike but can have a good time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight year-olds begin to have secret clubs but they usually do not last long.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight year-olds are impatient with slow children. Speed is a big thing for children of this age.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the age at which children begin to prefer to read silently to reading orally.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversals in writing are rare at this age.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight year-old is worldlier than children who are younger.

Nine Year-Olds

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self -motivation is the dominant characteristic of the nine year-old.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He likes to perfect his skill and will do things over and over in order to become perfect at the skill.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old likes to plan in advance and be told the steps that he should follow in order to do something.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He often is not very motivated by money or allowances.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old is relatively well-organized and likes to assess himself and others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He can be very accurate in his estimates of other people so do not try to fool a nine year-old.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old can accept blame if it is his fault.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old is speedy like the eight year-old but his speed is under control and less noticeable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is persistent and likes to complete what he plans. He can tolerate interruptions, however.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine year-olds are loyal and devoted friends. They stand by their friends. Usually they tend to have one special friend.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many nine year-olds love to read. They may even get up early in the morning so that they may have time to read.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of this age like school but have difficulty remembering to take to school the things that are needed for a special project or activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the favourite complaints of the nine year-old is that he doesn't have a good memory.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this age, he may not only prefer to read silently but he may even hate to read in front of the class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine year-olds either love or hate Mathematics.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine year-olds often have good intentions but may fail to carry them out.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine year –olds sometimes have annoying habits such as shaking a leg, jiggling a leg, humming, whistling etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine year –olds want and expect the teacher to be reasonable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He often thinks that his teacher is either wonderful or awful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old wants to succeed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys shout and girls whisper and giggle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of this age have an increasing interest in magazines.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old needs to know his own progress and to be given individual assistance apart from the class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nine year-old can use a dictionary easily.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually the nine year-old prefers cursive writing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine year-olds are concerned about right and wrong.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children at this age may return to incorrect grammatical usage.

Ten Year-Olds

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ten year-old is well-balanced, content and comfortable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He can take things in stride.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ten year-old can do two things at once with ease.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten year-olds often love food and eats lots of it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most ten year-olds are extremely careless about clothing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches and stomachaches are common tensional outlets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can be revengeful and like to get even when they feel they have been wronged.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten year-olds are easy-going and matter of fact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of this age have poor posture, especially when eating.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this age, children may pay more attention to the teacher than to the parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are ten tend to appreciate firmness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten year-olds can be quite disdainful of outgrown activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By this age, there is much variation in behaviour and reading tastes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten year-old children hate teachers who talk too much, give no time for questions or show favouritism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not like to be picked or nagged at. This means that teachers and parents must be careful in what they choose to criticize.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten year-olds cannot plan their work and they need schedules.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairness is very important to ten year-olds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten year-olds feel that they are never at fault. They try to assign blame to someone else.

These age characteristics are not given so that you could memorize them or even be overly concerned about them. They are listed so that you can have some sense of what is typical and what is not, when to make an issue of something and when to ignore. For instance, if you are dealing with a ten year-old who constantly blames others for everything that happens, you will probably waste your time if you try to reform him. What he is doing is typical of a ten year-old. He will soon outgrow that behaviour and reach another developmental stage. It is something that will take care of itself and you need not be worried. In such a case, an astute parent/teacher will keep an eye on such a behaviour and if persists beyond the accepted level or if it becomes a serious problem, then an intervention becomes necessary.

In closing, I wish to make two very important points:

- (a) Some children are behind developmentally – that is, a nine year-old may behave more like an eight year-old. While this is not totally acceptable, it occurs. Parents with children who show these tendencies must figure out why this is happening and work to improve it.
- (b) These are generalizations and may not fit every child. They are merely presented as guidelines for your reference.