

Developmental Characteristics and Interests of School Age Children

Physical (Grades K-1)	Social-Emotional (Grades K-1)	Cognitive (Grades K-1)
Enjoy long periods of free play	Eager to receive adult praise	Understand language better than they speak
Developing eye-hand coordination	Enjoy dramatic play	Are interested in present; vague concepts of past/future
Enjoy small group cooperative games	Eager to engage in new activities/adventures led by involved adult	Eager to learn
May require rest after high energy play	Eager to identify with older children	Ask many questions
Improved body coordination; yet still can fall easily	Enjoy exploring new materials and equipment	Define things by their use
	Can be easily frightened by novel or strange events	Developing a sense of humor
	Prefer play in small groups	Communicate best within a small group of peers
	Like responsibilities they can handle	May need guidance of adult when starting a new task
	Learning to cooperate with others, but may at times display selfish behavior	

Physical (Grades 2-3)	Social-Emotional (Grades 2-3)	Cognitive (Grades 2-3)
Enthusiastic about games	Have a strong drive toward independence	Like to talk; use language to express feelings/tell stories
Experiencing improvement in both gross and fine motor skills	Develop a strong sense of loyalty to friends	Developing a sense of time
Possess a high activity level	Need to belong to a group	Enjoy collecting things
Practice to most variations of movement for physical activities	Play with and are friends with the same-sex peers	Enjoy problem-solving games like treasure hunts
Enjoy games that allow for comparison of skills	Like to take on responsibility	Can plan and carry out projects with adult support
Enjoy games that allow for self-improvement	Live in a world of games, rituals and humor inhabited only by children	Becoming more self-directed in activities
	Like to have a best friend	Better able to understand and appreciate differences of opinion
	Have a rigid sense of right and wrong	
	Need help accepting peers who are different or left out of a group	

Physical (Grades 4-6)	Social-Emotional (Grades 4-6)	Cognitive (Grades 4-6)
May be careless about their clothes, room and body cleanliness	Enjoy small, peer-dominated group discussions	Ask many questions and want thoughtful answers
Girls may have sudden growth spurt and beginning signs of puberty	Like to join organized groups	Can often understand other points of view
Enjoy physical activities that master specific skills	Are anxious to grow up	Developing strong interests, hobbies and collections
Enjoy competitive games	Are intensely loyal to their peer group	Enjoy rule-based games
Possess a high activity level	Form a close one-on-one friendship	Are beginning to develop view about social/global issues
Enjoy games that allow for comparison of skills	Have a growing desire to assert individuality and independence	Beginning to enjoy humor by telling jokes and understanding sarcasm
Enjoy games that for self-improvement	Can be daring and competitive	
	Can be critical of peers and adults	
	Are self-conscious of their abilities	

*Developmental characteristics and interests of school-age children obtained from www.ohioafterschool.org