

# Developmental Characteristics of 4th Graders

Every child's development is unique. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of milestones, we cannot say exactly when a child will reach each and every stage. Every child has his or her own timetable. The characteristics below are offered only as a reference to give you a better understanding of your child. Feel free to contact your pediatrician and/or your child's school if you have any questions.

## The Nine -Year-Old

### Physical Development

- Girls generally ahead of boys in physical maturity
- Improve coordination and reaction time
- May have poor posture; lots of physical habitual movements; fingers in hair, slouching, picking at nails
- Stomach aches, headaches, leg pains common
- High energy, often playing to the point of fatigue
- Inconsistent appetite and sleep patterns

### Social and Emotional Development

- Enjoy being a member of a club
- Increased interest in competitive sports
- Learning to take responsibility for his/her own actions
- Begin to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings; sees adult inconsistencies and imperfections
- Peer conformity in dressing is important
- May begin to be interested in the opposite sex
- Self-aware
- Concerned about being right or wrong, being fair; may complain about fairness issues
- Have great need to be in a group, but are also individualistic
- Need to be in control of some choices
- May become deeply attached to a best friend
- Can be sullen and moody

## Intellectual Development

- Concrete Operations Stage of Thinking is solidified for most children, they can reason logically and organize thoughts coherently. However, most thinking is done about actual physical objects. They cannot handle abstract thinking very well unless abstractions are related to something they have directly experienced. Even if they can make abstractions, they still learn best through active, concrete experiences
- Showing signs of being more responsible, inner directed, an independent worker
- Appreciate being trusted
- Interested in many different types of reading: fictional stories, magazines, how-to project books, and non-fiction informational books
- May develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- Better able to understand concepts
- Are becoming much less egocentric and are able to understand the perspectives of others; better understanding the concept of “audience” when writing
- Less interested in fantasy; more involved in the real world
- May have problems with increased homework demands
- Age of negatives: “I can’t,” “boring”
- May be less imaginative than at earlier grades

## The Ten -Year-Old

### Physical Development

- Girls are generally ahead of boys in physical maturity; onset of puberty for some girls
- Increase body strength and hand dexterity
- Large muscle development is advanced
- Handwriting often sloppier than at nine
- Have improved coordination and reaction time
- Desperately need outdoor time and physical challenge
- Complaints like stomach aches, headaches, leg pain, etc. usually less than at nine
- Snacks and rest periods helpful for growing bodies

- Appetite fluctuates but is generally good

#### Social and Emotional Development

- Fairness issues peak and can be solved
- Like clubs, activities, sports
- Humor is broad, labored, and usually not funny to adults
- May discuss contemporaries in terms of capabilities; his reading or his math
- Usually direct, matter fact, clear-cut
- Generally easygoing, content, friendly, and balanced
- Usually less anxious, exacting, and demanding than at nine
- Talkative; likes to tell stories about something they have seen, heard, or read about; can talk something “into the ground”
- May belittle or defy adult authority, but are closer to their families than at many other levels
- Enjoy both family and peers
- Developing more mature sense of right and wrong, good at solving social issues
- Often interested in caring for animals, boys and girls may be interested in horses, but girls are especially interested
- Shrug off responsibility; can usually toss off criticisms and bad grades
- Likes and dislikes are described in very specific terms
- Note passing, sometimes about the opposite sex

#### Intellectual Development

- Can be voracious readers
- Expressive, talkative, like to explain
- Cooperative, competitive and inquisitive
- Classification and collections of interest; like to organize
- Able to concentrate, read for extended periods
- Good problem solvers
- Like to complete a task but doesn't usually wish to enlarge or elaborate on it; wish to try
- everything
- Interest span is short
- Have a stricter ethical sense than most other ages
- Very concerned about fairness

- Generally love to memorize, but don't generalize or correlate facts, or care what to do with
- the knowledge
- Often enjoy "place" geography--names of states, capitals, but vague about actual geographic
- characteristics
- Not able to plan own work, need schedules
- Better able to see the perspectives of others
- Most interested in concrete learning experiences and learning of specifics
- Like to talk and listen more than work

Reference: "GCISD - Curriculum Guides and Developmental Characteristics." 2002. Grapevine-Colleyville ISD. 7 Dec. 2007 .