



Typical Child Development

Knowledge of typical child and adolescent development can help teachers determine whether a student's behavior is developmentally appropriate or cause for concern. We will focus on emotional, social, and cognitive development, as these areas are closely related to mental health. Emotional development includes the skills needed to regulate feelings and emotions, and cope with difficult emotions in healthy ways. Social development refers to the skills needed to successfully interact with others, develop healthy relationships, and understand the perspectives of others. Cognitive development involves the abilities needed to learn and successfully solve problems.



Typical Development: Ages 5-8

Emotional

- Awareness of different emotions
- Fewer angry outbursts, more frustration tolerance
- Self-control increasing
- Making decisions allows children to practice self-regulation and self-control

Social

- Nurturing to others
- Learning how to resolve conflict with peers
- Tattling is a common strategy for getting adult attention
- Sensitivity to others' feelings
- Age hierarchy
- Commanding to younger children but follows older children

Cognitive

- Common fears: Problems in the family, failure, peer rejection
- May still be afraid of the dark or monsters
- Becoming more self-conscious
- Defining themselves by appearance, activities, and possessions
- Seeing the point of view of others more clearly

Typical Development: Ages 9-12

Emotional	Social	Cognitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to control anger most of the time• Able to express emotions• Increased mood swings• Difficulty dealing with failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peers begin to play a more important role• Seeking connection with adults outside family: teacher, club leader, coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a sense of identity• Competitive! Want to win, lead, or be first• Like to be in charge• Sensitive to negative feedback• More self-sufficient with homework and organizational skills

Typical Development: Ages 13-18

Emotional	Social	Cognitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belief that no one else has ever experienced similar emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing intimacy with others, exploring sexuality• Interest in novel experiences• Highly sensitive to peer acceptance• Problem-solving skills apparent when alone, but may display lapses in judgment when with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploring and establishing identity• Seeking autonomy• Heightened self-consciousness• Invincible: Feeling that "it can't happen to me"• Concerned about justice and fairness• Building abstract thinking skills

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