CHARACTERISTICS OF 5-8 YEAR OLDS

Physical

- Are mastering physical skills
- Have better control of large muscles than small muscles
- Slow, steady growth

Social

- Are learning how to be friends and may have several "best friends" at a time
- Opinions of peers are becoming more important
- Often care more about being successful in front of peers than parents
- Are beginning to better observe other people
- Are beginning to experience empathy for others, but still learning about and wrapped in self
- Are family-oriented
- Dependence on another adult besides parent becomes a new experience

Emotional

- See fairness as "the golden rule"
- Cooperative games are especially enjoyable
- Competition with others is inappropriate
- Seek parental or adult approval but are becoming emotionally steadier and freer from parents
- Tend to behave in ways to avoid punishment
- Like to play games. Rules and rituals become paramount, but not yet ready to accept losing

Intellectual

- Generalize from their own experiences. Very concrete at this age–like to see it, hear it, taste it, feel it, smell it
- More interested in process than the final product and will continue working on a project rather than completing it
- Base their thinking in reality and accuracy
- Are learning to sort things into categories and series
- Are beginning to develop a sense of cause-effect
- Handle well only one mental operation at a time
- Can distinguish between reality and fantasy–but still afraid of scary figures
- Enjoy activities that is real and tangible
- You must demonstrate an activity - not just verbally describe how to do it

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CHARACTERISTICS OF 9-12 YEAR OLDS

Physical

- Experience steady increases in large muscle development, strength, balance & coordination
- Growth is slow for most children of this age range
- Are quite active with boundless energy. Activities should encourage physical involvement
- Are maturing at differing rates between the sexes
- Are increasing in manual dexterity; small muscle coordination

Social

- Generally see adults as authority and follow rules out of respect for adults
- Believe punishment should be a direct consequence of misbehavior
- Want to know how they have improved and what they should do to be better next time
- Don't like comparisons with others
- Feel loyal to group, club, gang. Enjoy code language and passwords
- Identify with same-sex group. May prefer to be with members of the same sex
- Prefer working in groups in cooperative activities
- Individual evaluation by an adult is preferable to group competition

Emotional

- View right behavior as "obeying rules set by those in authority"
- Accept parent/family beliefs
- Admire and imitate older boys and girls
- Are developing decision-making and leadership skills
- Are making some movement toward taking responsibility for own actions
- Emphasize the similarities between self and friends
- Are beginning to question parental authority
- Look to adults for guidance and approval
- Find comparisons with the success of others difficult and eroding of self-confidence
- Still don't handle competition well
- Strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile

Intellectual

- Vary greatly in academic abilities, interest and reasoning skills
- Concrete thinkers–like to see, feel, smell, hear or taste
- Have increased attention span, but have many interests that change rapidly
- Are beginning to think logically and symbolically. Still prefer concrete ideas
- Are learning to use good judgment
- Judge ideas in absolutes–right/wrong; great/gross; fun/boring
- Want to use their skills to explore and investigate the world
- Have interest in collections and hobbies

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CHARACTERISTICS OF 13-15 YEAR OLDS

Physical

- Exhibit a wide range of sexual maturity and growth patterns between genders and within gender groups. This is a time of great developmental variety.
- Experience rapid changes in physical appearance; makes teens uncomfortable.
- Growth of hands and feet, nose and ears may be faster than arms or legs and face, causing concern for appearance and clumsiness and embarrassment.

Social

- Are interested in activities involving the opposite sex; learning to co-exist
- Are looking more to peers than parents. Seek peer recognition.
- Seek acceptance and trust from peers and adults.
- Search for adult role models; may belong to fan clubs
- Tend to reject ready-made solutions from adults in favor of their own
- Begin to question authority and family values; testing values.

Emotional

- Compare themselves to others, but would rather have adults compare them to their past performance.
- Are concerned about physical development and emerging sexuality
- See themselves as always on center stage; emotions on a roller-coaster ride.
- Body changes can set up situations of great embarrassment
- Are concerned about social graces, grooming and being liked by friends
- Abandon view of parents as all-powerful
- Strive for independence, yet want and need parent's help
- Seek privacy from adults/parents
- Want to be part of something important; service projects are of great interest
- Need to be re-assured that some uneasiness about self is normal at this time.

Intellectual

- Find justice and equality to be important
- Moving from concrete to thinking abstractly and hypothetically.
- Are developing skills using logic. Understand cause-effect
- Can solve problems that have more than one variable. Enjoy mental problems.
- Can imagine consequences. Can think about thinking.
- Are ready for in-depth, long-term experiences.
- Have moved from fantasy to realistic focus on their life's goals
- Challenge assumptions or ready-made solutions provided by adults.
- Want to explore the world beyond their community; concerned for environment.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF 16-18 YEAR OLDS

Physical

- Are concerned about body image, but more comfortable with their adult appearance
- Exhibit smaller range in size and maturity among peers than other ages; they "fit" their bodies better and are less awkward and clumsy
- Tend to have realistic view of limits to which body can be tested
- Some late-maturing boys still experience growth spurts at this time
- Able to perfect some athletic abilities during intense training and competition

Social

- Tend to romanticize sexuality; but are moving toward a more realism
- Search for intimacy; test sexual attractiveness to others
- Willing to make commitments; Can commit to follow through with service
- See adults as fallible but they want adults to provide consistency to their lives
- Desire respect; friendships at this stage are intense, close and long-lasting
- Renegotiate relationships. Teens may be wrapped up in themselves
- Want to take on adult leadership roles; want to be recognized as individuals

Emotional

- Desire respect, independence and identity. Seek status and approval of peer group
- Are beginning to accept and enjoy their own uniqueness
- Look for confidence of others in their decisions
- Develop their own set of values and beliefs
- Take on multiple roles. Gain autonomy
- Are introspective. Can see self from viewpoint of others
- Take fewer risks than earlier age groups
- Can initiate and carry out their own tasks without the supervision of others
- Search for career possibilities

Intellectual

- Are mastering abstract thinking. Find it difficult to compromise on important issues
- Can imagine impact of present behavior on the future
- Enjoy demonstrating acquired knowledge
- Are apt to reject goals set by others
- Can consider many perspectives of a given issue
- Create new possibilities from information
- Will lose patience with meaningless activities; time is too precious to waste

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