

## Abilities by Age (Children)

Children grow up very quickly. They always seem to be changing! Sometimes it can be difficult to keep up with them! Being aware of how they grow and develop can help us as we plan for their care and comfort in our classrooms. It can also help us understand how to better plan and present our lessons and activities.

Each child, as it grows, develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. What follows is a brief discussion of how children typically grow in each of these areas. This list is not all-inclusive and is meant only to help guide you as a teacher.

### Children – Birth to 2 years

- Changing rapidly with increasing age
- Learning about themselves and close family
- Learning language (hearing and then speaking)
- Learning to move around and walk
- Learning to follow simple commands
- Learning to trust
- In the Classroom:
  - Create a positive atmosphere (Lots of love!)
  - Sing songs to the children
  - Clap hands together
  - Repeat words and then short phrases
  - May want to have soft music in classroom.
- Children this age enjoy individual play with adult watching or participating
- Spiritual Messages they need to hear:
  - You are loved.
  - God loves you.
  - God loves your Mommy and Daddy.

### Children – 2-3 Years Old

- Exploring and learning about the world around them
  - Often explore things by trying to put them in their mouths (be careful!)
- Developing large motor skills (leg and upper arms)
  - Perfecting walking
  - Running and jumping
  - Climbing
- Talking
  - Learning to use complete sentences
  - Lots of questions and answers
- Learning shapes, colors, names of things

- Children this age enjoy individual play, side-by-side in a room with others
  - Blocks, simple puzzles, dolls, stuffed animals, balls
- Can do some small group activities for short periods of time
- Spiritual Messages they Need to Hear
  - God Loves you
  - God loves your family
  - God made everything
  - Jesus loves you
  - We can Pray
  - God is...(Good/ Truthful/ Caring)

#### Children – 3-4 Years Old

- Learning how they relate to their family (and to people outside of their family)
- Learning to separate from family members for short, predictable periods of time
- Learning to tell stories of their own, using more than one sentence or thought
- Learning numbers in sequence, and how to count small objects
- Learning the alphabet and simple songs
- Perfecting large motor skills (legs and upper arms)
  - Running, Jumping, Climbing
  - Standing on one foot/ balancing
  - Walking up and down stairs
  - Dancing, Hopping, Marching
  - Kicking a ball, throwing a ball
- Developing fine motor skills (hand and fingers)
  - Clapping hands, picking up small objects, early coloring
  - Working with clay / Play-Doh, very early drawing, Finger-painting
  - Early writing and tracing skills
  - Songs with hand and finger motions
  - Very early work with things like scissors and glue (with lots of supervision! ☺)
- Children in this age group enjoy these types of play:
  - imagining things and “pretend” play
  - playing in groups of 2 or 3 children their own age
  - playing games with larger groups of children for short periods of time
  - exploring new sounds, textures, colors, smells, tastes
  - sorting by color, shape, size, and similarities
- Hearing and Understanding Bible Stories
  - Able to listen to and understand short Bible Stories
  - Able to remember main person in story
  - Able to remember and repeat a few main points in story
- Very concrete in their thinking

- Spiritual Messages they Need to Hear
  - God cares about you and your family (mother/father/brothers/sisters/etc)
  - God made everything.
  - God/Jesus loves you.
  - God made you.
  - You are special and unique (and valuable to God and others.)
  - God hears our Prayers.
  - God is... (Dependable, Trustworthy, Always Good)
  - There is a difference between Right and Wrong

#### Children – 4-7 Years Old

- Learning how they relate to God, to family members, and to other people in the world
- Learning more and more about the world (outside of home) and what it is like
- Learning to separate from family members for extended periods of time in a day
  - Learning new skills to help take care of themselves when away from family
  - Building confidence in their new abilities
  - Making friends (outside of family members and other familiar people)
- Learning to read, but usually not yet “fluent” readers
  - For purposes of curriculum, this age group is referred to as “Pre-Readers”
  - Learning to write name well
  - Learning to write all of the letters
  - Learning to read, write, and copy individual words and short sentences or phrases
  - Learning the fundamentals of spelling
- Learning about numbers and arithmetic
  - Counting numbers, and learning to write numbers (up to 10, 100, and 1000+)
  - Learning to do Addition and Subtraction
  - Multiplication and Division introduced (or taught)
  - Early mathematical word problems
    - Q. Fred has two apples, if he gives you one, how many will he have left?
    - A. None... Fred ate his apple! 😊 (*Just kidding!*) Real Answer: One
- Perfecting large motor skills (legs and upper arms)
  - Running, Jumping, Climbing, Standing on one foot/ balancing
  - Rhythmic Movements such as: Dancing, Hopping, Marching
  - Complex skills such as: kicking a ball to someone else, throwing a ball into something, batting a ball, running a race with others, jumping rope, etc
- Perfecting fine motor skills (hand and fingers)
  - Clapping hands, Snapping fingers, Picking up and working with small objects
  - Coloring (simple to complex drawings) with crayons and markers
  - Drawing stick-figures, persons, animals, things, and places (house, etc.)
  - Finger-painting, and eventually Painting with a brush

- Creating objects with clay / Play-Doh
- Songs with more and more complex hand and finger motions
- Writing letters, numbers, name, words, and later short phrases or sentences
- Children in this age group enjoy these types of play:
  - imagining things and “pretend” play
  - playing in progressively larger groups of children for longer periods of time
  - discovering more about sounds, textures, colors, smells, tastes
  - Working with paint, colors, markers, glue, scissors, string, yarn and other media
  - Playing simple instruments: drums, cymbals, bells, etc. (Usually very **loudly!**)
  - Singing familiar songs as a group
  - Dancing, marching, and moving to music
  - Simple games that require some new skill
  - Acting out stories and re-telling stories
- Spiritual Messages they Need to Hear
  - God loves you.
  - God loves everyone. (Family, friends, neighbors.)
  - God made everything perfectly.
  - God knows you.
  - God made you special and unique
  - You are valuable to God and to others.
  - God hears our Prayers.
  - God is... (Dependable, Trustworthy, Always Good)
  - There is a difference between Right and Wrong
  - God has been involved with us through history.
  - God has a plan for the future.
  - Jesus is God's Son.
  - Jesus loves you.
  - Sometimes we sin (We choose to do things that we know are wrong/bad).
  - Reassure child that we all make mistakes. Mistakes are not the same as “sins.”
  - Jesus came to pay for all our sins.
  - Because of what Jesus did for us, we can live with Him forever.
  - We can accept Jesus as our Savior.
- Hearing and Understanding Bible Stories
  - Able to understand (and answer questions about) the main points of story
  - With Timeline, better able to understand how stories go together historically
  - Beginning to understand abstract concepts such as: self-sacrifice, love for others, faith, doubt, sin, guilt, and forgiveness.
- Learn to pray together

## Children – 8-10 Years Old

- Goals for this age
  - Accepting self; learning about strengths and gifts
  - Making friends; learning to get along with others
  - Understanding that we are all different – accepting differences
- Beginning to learn about their role in society, responsibilities to family, friends
- Early Readers – Able to read with increasing ease/ Reading for information
  - Learning to look things up in the Bible
  - Able to copy passages from Bible or textbook
  - Able to answer written questions with short answers or sentences.
  - Play written word games
  - Learning to write paragraphs and give oral reports
- Learning to do different types of chores and work at home and school
- Can play complex group games and even competitive sports (soccer, baseball, volleyball)
- Fine Motor Skills
  - Very good with scissors and glue
  - Can do detailed decorations, complex craft projects
  - Can learn basic sewing, knitting, crocheting, baking, cooking, etc
  - Can learn to use a hammer, screwdriver, saw, etc
  - Can learn basic “camping skills” – Putting up tent/ planning a meal/ starting a fire
- Can do word puzzles and play math games (memorizing multiplication tables)
- Memorizing sections of scripture (Examples: 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, Lord’s Prayer, Beatitudes)
- Memorize books of the Bible, names of disciples
- Learn to Pray together and individually
- Can begin to understand historical overview of the Bible
- Spiritual Messages they need to hear
  - Salvation message
  - We can accept Jesus as our Savior.
  - God loves you and everyone else that you know and meet
  - God knows all about you and loves you just like you are
  - God has a wonderful plan for your life
  - God will never leave you or forsake you
  - You can trust God
  - God is all powerful, all knowing, and always present
  - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more than He does
  - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any less than He does
  - Jesus is The Way.
  - We are saved by grace (because God is generous), not by works (or what we do)
  - You can tell others what God has done for you

## Children – 10-12 Year Olds

- Goals for this age
  - Accepting self; learning more about strengths and gifts
  - Making friends; learning to get along with others well
  - Learning techniques to resolve conflict and to handle own emotions
  - Understanding that we are all different – accepting differences
- Proficient Readers – can read very well either silently or out loud
  - Read for self-enjoyment and relaxation
  - Read for information
    - Able to use information to write reports/ papers
    - Find answers to questions and write them down using paragraphs
- Children this age enjoy this type of play:
  - Complex, thoughtful games such as chess, checkers, and other board games
  - Team games/ competitive sports and athletic events
    - Learn importance of and enforce safety measures for games and activities
  - Complex arts and craft work, as well as other complex skills
    - Paintings/ sculpture/ beadwork/ leatherwork/ t-shirts/ sewing projects
    - Cooking meals/ doing laundry/ cleaning / building small projects
  - These activities mirror adult type activities and help child learn life skills
- Encourage participation in group chores in classroom
  - Cleaning up area each week
  - Preparing and serving snacks to group
  - Taking turns doing other chores
  - Teaching responsibility for self and others in group situation
- Practice service to others
  - Encourage group projects to help the elderly, sick, infirm, or needy
  - Work with younger children/ mentoring them/ encouraging them
  - Supervise younger children (with some adult oversight)
- Pray together or individually; also lead group in prayer
- Bible drills/ Bible passage memorization/ write down favorite verses
- Encourage treating others kindly, both in and out of class
  - Discuss 1 Corinthians 13 “*Love is patient, love is kind...*”
  - Learn that Jesus commands us to “*love one another.*”
  - Discuss and practice treating others with love
  - Discuss ways of resolving conflict in peaceful and mature ways
    - Speaking the truth in love
    - Expressing frustration and anger with calm words, seeking a resolution
    - EX: When \_\_\_\_ happens, and you do \_\_\_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
    - “When we are sitting together, and you pinch me, I feel sad and angry.”

- Encourage spiritual disciplines of praying/ giving offerings/ reading Bible
- Able to understand more “abstract” ideas, such as:
  - Holy Trinity
  - Atonement for Sin
  - Holy Spirit leading us into all truth
  - Prophecy – which foretells the future
  - Old and New Covenants
- Provide a broad overview of whole Bible
  - Finding out how the Bible all ties together historically
  - The Bible tells about Jesus from beginning to end
  - Learn about the different books in the Bible
  - Who wrote different parts of the Bible and why
- Also use Bible to help provide deep answers to specific questions
  - Who is Jesus?
  - Why did Jesus come?
  - Why/How does God love me?
  - What am I supposed to do with my life?
- Spiritual Messages they need to hear
  - Salvation message
  - We can accept Jesus as our Savior.
    - Children this age may wish to accept Jesus as their Savior
  - God loves you and everyone else that you know and meet
  - God knows all about you and loves you just like you are
  - God has a wonderful plan for your life
  - God will never leave you or forsake you
  - You can trust God
  - God is all powerful, all knowing, and always present
  - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more than He does
  - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any less than He does
  - Jesus is The Way.
  - We are saved by grace (because God is generous), not by works (or what we do)
  - You can tell others what God has done for you