

# Developmental Stages, K-8 Students

## Kindergarten

*Ranges from 4 to 6 years old*

Focus: 4 years old and 5 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Always on the move and a little clumsy
- Difficulty switching focus from near and far
  - Tend to focus on nearby objects
- Fine motor skills are barely developed

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Friendly but fearful
- Taking turns is new but they love working collaboratively
- Finding the words to express themselves can be challenging
- Model appropriate behavior and let them practice
- Require consistency in routines, rules, and expectations

Who are they as learners?

- Learn best through imaginative play, but have short attention spans
- Enjoy learning new words
- Repetition of new ideas, words, techniques is key to their understanding

What does this mean for Mia?

- Colors, shapes, patterns, and animals
- Making noises or striking poses with clear direction given
- Avoiding big numbers (like dates or dimensions) but instead giving relative descriptions ("Taller than me" or "heavier than a book")

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

## First Grade

*Ranges from 5 to 7 years old*

Focus: 6 years old and 7 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Bring a new enthusiasm and excitement to their world but still highly sensitive
- Less clumsy than their kindergarten friends but work with a lot of tension in their bodies

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Anxiety is rooted in their performance and they're fairly competitive with peers
  - Serious, perfectionists
- Encouragement helps combat their sensitivity to criticism
  - They can be moody so an adult's reassurance helps their confidence
- Will work collaboratively but often prefer working independently

Who are they as learners?

- Tend to prefer quantity over quality
  - 7 year olds are more inclined to work towards quality over quantity
- Feel best supported when adults express their encouragement
- Love color, drawing, and painting
- Enjoy sorting and classifying what they're learning about

What does this mean for Mia?

- Colors, shapes, patterns, and animals
- Making noises or striking poses with clear direction given
- Avoiding big numbers (like dates or dimensions) but instead giving relative descriptions ("Taller than me" or "heavier than a book")
- Compare and contrast

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

## **Second Grade**

*Ranges from 6 to 8 years old*

Focus: 8 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Move restlessly and quickly
- Short breaks to play or move their bodies help them stay focused
- Experiencing a growth spurt so the clumsiness can return in their physical movements

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Very social, energetic explanations of their ideas, jokesters
- Like working as a group but begin to seek their peers' approval and not just their teacher's
- Confidence is growing and bounce back faster from mistakes

Who are they as learners?

- Quickly get engrossed in what they're learning while simultaneously having short attention spans
- Easily forget what they just learned or were tasked with
- Curiosity in how things work or are made (process and product)

What does this mean for Mia?

- Colors, shapes, patterns, and animals
- Making noises or striking poses with clear direction given
- Avoiding big numbers (like dates or dimensions) but instead giving relative descriptions ("Taller than me" or "heavier than a book")
- Compare and contrast
- Incredibly simple explanations of how things are made ("The artist got metal really hot then it turned into a liquid and then they used a mold like a cookie cutter to give it this shape")
- Opportunity to try "pair and share" or "turn and talk" with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

-

## **Third Grade**

*Ranges from 7 to 9 years old*

Focus: 9 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Restless but tire easily
- Coordination is improving but it takes practice
- Anxiety comes out in fidgeting

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Attention spans, mood, and emotions change quickly and unexpectedly
- Patience and kindness from adults will alleviate anxiety
- Competitive and critical

Who are they as learners?

- Curious thinkers who begin to understand larger, more complex concepts or ideas
- Asking how and why

What does this mean for Mia?

- Introduce big numbers (like dates or dimensions) and support by giving relative descriptions (“Taller than me” or “heavier than a book”)
- Introduce places and support with a visual
- Compare and contrast
- Incredibly simple explanations of how things are made (“The artist got metal really hot then it turned into a liquid and then they used a mold like a cookie cutter to give it this shape”)
- Opportunity to try “pair and share” or “turn and talk” with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

## **Fourth Grade**

*Ranges from 8 to 10 years old*

Focus: 10 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Exercise and activity helps redirect their energy
- Frequent breaks even though they're always in a hurry

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Talkative but also active listeners and perspective takers
- Incredibly sensitive but easily forgive
- Enjoy group activities and collaboration
- Able to think abstractly
- Feel good when given an adult's attention

Who are they as learners?

- Able to concentrate for longer periods of time
- Enjoy collecting, sorting, organizing
- Pay close attention to directions and logic

What does this mean for Mia?

- Introduce big numbers (like dates or dimensions) and support by giving relative descriptions (“Taller than me” or “heavier than a book”)
- Introduce places and support with a visual
- Introduce brief historical context where appropriate
- Compare and contrast
- Explanations of how things are made (“The artist took a piece of soft clay and rolled it in their hands until it was long and skinny like a rope. They started with one end of their clay rope and began wrapping it into the shape of a [insert appropriate shape]. This is called the ‘coil method.’ Once they were done wrapping they smoothed out the rope shape and let it harden.”)
- Limited choice-based learning (here are two options to choose from, where should we start?)
- Opportunity to try “pair and share” or “turn and talk” with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

## **Fifth Grade**

*Ranges from 9 to 11 years old*

Focus: 11 years old

What’s going on with their bodies?

- Beginning to develop and experience growth spurts
  - Girls may begin to show signs of puberty
- Require lots of food, activity, and rest

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Speak before they think
- Strong perspective takers
- Testing limits

Who are they as learners?

- Like to be challenged but require the support and time to work through things
- Enjoy learning new content and taking on more responsibility

What does this mean for Mia?

- Introduce big numbers (like dates or dimensions) and when possible support by connecting it to a historical event they may be familiar with (invention of TV, World War II, etc.)
- Introduce places and be sure to clarify
- Introduce historical context where appropriate
- Compare and contrast
- Explanations of how things are made
- Limited choice-based learning (here are two options to choose from, where should we start?)
- Opportunity to try “pair and share” or “turn and talk” with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

-

## **Sixth Grade**

*Ranges from 10 to 12 years old*

Focus: 12 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Incredibly energetic but growth spurts require lots of sleep and food

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Testing the waters with maturity and self-expression
- Empathetic and self-aware, and while they see multiple sides of an argument they like to argue only one point of view
- Gaining confidence in their own ideas and like discussing with adults and peers
- Important to have adults outside of their family and teachers act as listeners and supporters

Who are they as learners?

- Current events and history are interesting to them as they see the relevance to their own lives

What does this mean for Mia?

- Introduce numbers (like dates or dimensions)
- Introduce places and be sure to clarify
- Introduce historical context where appropriate
- Compare and contrast
- Explanations of how things are made
- Connect theme or artwork to current events or historical events
- Limited choice-based learning (here are two options to choose from, where should we start?)
- Opportunity to try "pair and share" or "turn and talk" with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

## **Seventh Grade**

*Ranges from 11 to 13 years old*

Focus: 13 years old

What's going on with their bodies?

- Beginning to show signs of puberty for girls and boys, but girls are much further along in the process
- Easily embarrassed and leads to silly or rude behavior

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Seeking more independence but also insecure
- Sarcasm is more common
- Great attention is paid to their peers and social expectations are a stressor

Who are they as learners?

- Scared to take risks in learning
- Better at abstract thinking and reasoning
- Often highly judgmental of their adults and prefer independent work as opposed to groups
- Best when given short, digestible tasks

What does this mean for Mia?

- Introduce numbers (like dates or dimensions)
- Introduce places and be sure to clarify
- Introduce historical context where appropriate
- Compare and contrast
- Explanations of how things are made
- Connect theme or artwork to current events or historical events
- Allow opportunities for independent exploration in the galleries (choice-based learning)
- Opportunity to try “pair and share” or “turn and talk” with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

## **Eighth Grade**

*Ranges from 12 to 14 years old*

Focus: 14 years old

What’s going on with their bodies?

- Loud and rambunctious
- Girls development is slowing and boys are entering an awkward stage

How are they feeling socially and emotionally?

- Do not respond well to being lectured and feel they know more than you
- Expressive through their face and body language, often times looking frustrated or bored
- Secretly look for adult guidance and support

Who are they as learners?

- Enjoy big ideas and group discussions
- Respond well to an academic challenge, exploring cause and effect, and finding new solutions
- “I’m bored” is more often than not “I don’t understand”

What does this mean for Mia?

- Introduce numbers (like dates or dimensions)
- Introduce places and be sure to clarify
- Introduce historical context where appropriate
- Compare and contrast
- Explanations of how things are made
- Connect theme or artwork to current events or historical events
- Allow opportunities for independent exploration in the galleries (choice-based learning)
- Opportunity to try “pair and share” or “turn and talk” with a peer

Highlights from our guest speakers:

- 

*This information is adapted from [Responsive Classroom](#). Click to learn more!*