



Stages of Social & Emotional Development

Why is knowing important?

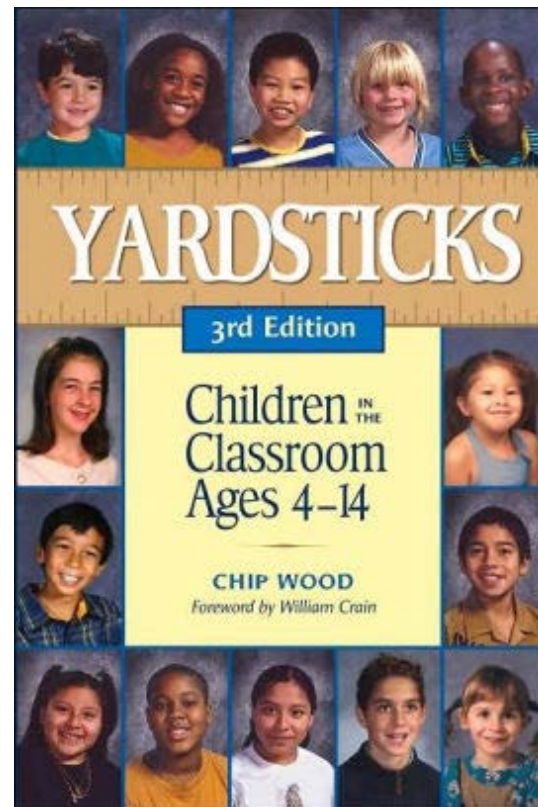
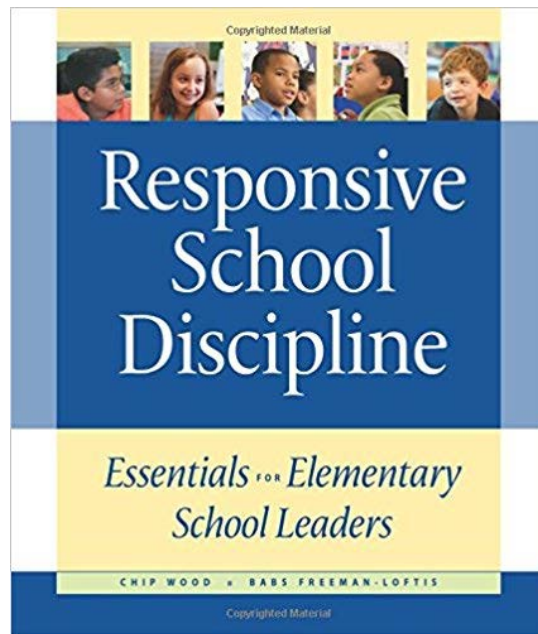
- You can model and teach the skills that will help them to successfully complete the “jobs” of their age
- You can be more patient
- You will be less likely to blame yourself or the children when they behave in frustrating, yet developmentally appropriate ways
- You can affirm children for practicing/mastering their developmental tasks



Yardsticks by Chip Wood

Published by Northeast Foundation for Children Inc.

Center for Responsive
Schools, Inc.





Five-year olds (kindergarten)

Social

Need consistent rules and enforcements; respond well to clear and simple expectations

Need empathetic discipline as they test and make mistakes

Physical

Need lots of physical activity, but tire quickly

Able to see close objects best: not yet able to sweep focus smoothly from left to right

Cognitive

See only one way to do things, rarely see other viewpoints

Imaginative toys and other objects are alive

Think out loud



Six-year olds -1st grade

Social

Competitive, not always good sports

Easily upset when criticized or discouraged

Love encouragements, surprises and treats

Physical

Eyes maturing, so reading is easier

Often chew pencils, hair or fingernails

Like lots of activity, but tire easily

Cognitive

Beginning to understand past and present

More able to see other viewpoints

Learn well through games, poems, songs

Learn well from field trips



Seven-year olds - 2nd grade

Social

May be moody, shy, sulky and feel “nobody likes me”

Rely on adults for help and reassurance

Needs security of rules, routines and physical boundaries

Physical

Often keep their eyes focused on a small, close area

Can do quiet work for longer periods

Cognitive

Better at understanding ideas such as time, space and quantity

Enjoy learning about how things work

Enjoy repeating tasks and reviewing learning



Eight-year olds - 3rd grade

Social

Love group activities

Like to talk and explain ideas

Good sense of humor

Adjust well to change, bounce back quickly

Physical

Eyes able to focus well on objects near and far

May have growth spurt

Limited attention span

Cognitive

Industrious, impatient and full of ideas

Listen well but may not always remember

Interested in rules, logic, and fairness



Nine-year olds - 4th grade

Social

Very competitive, yet may form cliques

Need adults to be patient and explain clearly

Need lighthearted humor, and encouragement

Physical

Coordination is better, like to rough-house

Restless; can't sit for long

Cognitive

Less imaginative than at eight years old/want factual explanations

Begin to see the bigger world, issues of justice and fairness

Have trouble understanding abstractions (large numbers, vast areas, long time periods)



Ten-year olds - 5th grade

Social

Work very well in groups/able to enjoy cooperative activities

More mature sense of right and wrong/able to resolve questions of fairness

Listen well

Physical

Large muscles are developing rapidly

Snacks and rest periods benefit rapidly growing bodies

Cognitive

Good at memorizing facts, classifying

Increasingly able to think abstractly, logic and solving problems

Can concentrate for long periods of time



Eleven-year olds - 6th grade

Social

Moody, self-absorbed
and sensitive

Like to challenge rules
and test limits

Impulsive

Need adult empathy,
humor and sensitivity

Physical

Restless and very
energetic

Needs lots of food,
physical activity and
sleep

Many girls are
experiencing early
adolescence

Cognitive

Becoming more adept at
abstract thinking

Can establish and modify
rules and develop
hypotheses

Increasingly able to see
the world from various
perspectives



12-year olds - 6th/7th grade

Social

Capable of self-awareness, empathy

Enthusiastic and uninhibited, appear to feel secure

Care more about peer opinions

Physical

Very energetic, need lots of sleep, exercise and food

Growth spurts

Girls show signs of puberty

Cognitive

Can and will see both sides of an argument

Increasingly able to organize their thoughts

Interested in history, civics, environmental issues, and pop culture