**Developmental Characteristics of Fifth Graders**

Every child’s development is unique. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of milestones, we cannot say exactly when a child will reach each and every stage. Every child has his or her own timetable. The characteristics below are offered only as a reference to give you a better understanding of your child. Feel free to contact your pediatrician and/or your child’s school if you have any questions.

**The Ten -Year-Old**

**Physical Development**

* Girls are generally ahead of boys in physical maturity; onset of puberty for some girls
* Increase body strength and hand dexterity
* Large muscle development is advanced
* Handwriting often sloppier than at nine
* Have improved coordination and reaction time
* Desperately need outdoor time and physical challenge
* Complaints like stomach aches, headaches, leg pain, etc. usually less than at nine
* Snacks and rest periods helpful for growing bodies
* Appetite fluctuates but is generally good

**Social and Emotional Development**

* Fairness issues peak and can be solved
* Like clubs, activities, sports
* Humor is broad, labored, and usually not funny to adults
* May discuss contemporaries in terms of capabilities; his reading or his math
* Usually direct, matter fact, clear-cut
* Generally easygoing, content, friendly, and balanced
* Usually less anxious, exacting, and demanding than at nine
* Talkative; likes to tell stories about something they have seen, heard, or read about; can talk something “into the ground”
* May belittle or defy adult authority, but are closer to their families then at many other levels
* Enjoy both family and peers
* Developing more mature sense of right and wrong, good at solving social issues
* Often interested in caring for animals, boys and girls may be interested in horses, but girls are especially interested
* Shrug off responsibility; can usually toss off criticisms and bad grades
* Likes and dislikes are described in very specific terms
* Note passing, sometimes about the opposite sex

**Intellectual Development**

* Can be voracious readers
* Expressive, talkative, like to explain
* Cooperative, competitive and inquisitive
* Classification and collections of interest; like to organize
* Able to concentrate, read for extended periods
* Good problem solvers
* Like to complete a task but doesn’t usually wish to enlarge or elaborate on it; wish to try
everything
* Interest span is short
* Have a stricter ethical sense than most other ages
* Very concerned about fairness
* Generally love to memorize, but don’t generalize or correlate facts, or care what to do with
the knowledge
* Often enjoy “place” geography--names of states, capitals, but vague about actual geographic
characteristics
* Not able to plan own work, need schedules
* Better able to see the perspectives of others
* Most interested in concrete learning experiences and learning of specifics
* Like to talk and listen more than work

**The Eleven -Year-Old**

**Physical Development**

* Vast appetite for food, physical activity, and talking
* Growth spurt of early adolescence for some girls, may feel awkward and clumsy
* Girls ahead of guys in physical maturity; boys’ big growth spurt may not start until 14; Boys worry if they are ever going to grow
* Wide differences among individuals in rate of development
* Curious about opposite sex; girls usually interested first
* Tiredness; need for more sleep
* Often uncomfortable with questions and observations about how much they have grown and physical changes
* Increased need for personal hygiene

**Social and Emotional Development**

* Less overt affection and attention shown to parents, with occasional rudeness; tests limits
* Impulsive, unaware
* Focus on self, alternating between high expectations and poor self-concept
* Have tendency to return to childish behavior, particularly when stressed
* Experience extremes of emotions
* Inclusive/exclusion; height of cliques, seek to belong, discovery of telephone
* Experimenting with behavior, roles, appearance, self-image
* Difficulty with decisions but need to be able to make some choices for themselves
* Demand privileges, but may avoid responsibilities
* Feel unique; believe that no one else has ever felt the way they do; suffered so much, or been so misunderstood

**Intellectual Development**

* Mostly interested in present, limited thoughts of the future
* Intellectual interests expand
* Increased ability to de-center and see world from various perspectives
* Development of ideals and selectin of role models
* May experiment with dangerous risk-taking behaviors
* Even if students can make abstractions, they learn best when activities are active, hands-on, and related to personal experiences
* Concerned with rules, standards of behavior and fairness, especially for themselves
* Do not distinguish between what they are thinking and what others may be thinking; assume that every other person is as concerned with their behavior and appearance as they are better at planning than carrying out the plan

*Reference: "GCISD - Curriculum Guides and Developmental Characteristics." 2002. Grapevine-Colleyville ISD. 7 Dec. 2007 .*