

EIGHT YEAR OLDS

General

- * Eight-year-olds are expansive, but on a higher level than when they were six.
- * They are outgoing, curious and extremely social and self-confident.
- * They tend to be critical of themselves and judgmental of others.
- * Eight-year-olds talk constantly and love to gossip.
- * They now concern themselves with the why of events, and they are active and expansive as they seek out new experiences.

Self-Concept and Independence

- * Eight-year-olds have a greater awareness of self; they are less sensitive, less introspective and less apt to withdraw. They are becoming individuals who are aware of themselves in the social world.
- * They are able to judge and appraise themselves and are conscious of the ways in which they differ from other people.
- * Eight-year-olds are concerned about how other people feel about them, and they can be demanding in their efforts to get information about themselves.
- * They can work independently, but need direction.

Relating to Other Children and Adults

- * Eight-year-olds are mature in their social relationships with others. Relationships with friends are positive. Friendships are closer and very important.
- * There is a noticeable separation between boys and girls and both play at games that tend to exclude the opposite sex.
- * They are usually friendly and cooperative, preferring mature jobs that resemble adult-like activities.
- * They are more polite with strangers than they are at home and are able to hold their own in conversations with adults.

Games and Activities

- * Eight-year-olds dislike playing alone. They prefer to be with an adult or another child. Action becomes the focus of all their play.

- * Both boys and girls like cooking and baking and show an interest in foreign places and children from different times.
- * The collections they began at seven now become more organized and classified.
- * They tend to make up their own rules for games and they may even invent new games.
- * Eight-year-olds like dramatic play, especially where they take the role of characters they have read about, seen or heard about.
- * Table games such as cards, checkers and dominoes are very popular with eight-year-olds.
- * When working with eight-year-olds, adults must remember that they are very social and like to be with peers. They gossip and talk constantly, passing notes from one to the other. This often gets out-of-hand when they are in group situations.
- * In addition to their tendency to judge others, eight-year-olds are increasingly self-critical. For example, many children who liked artwork at six or seven may give it up at eight because they see the difference between the quality of their drawings and those of a friend.

The information presented about the ages and stages of childhood is only a guide. Physically, emotionally and intellectually each child grows and develops at his own rate. Understanding the characteristics of an age can be helpful to adults who work with children. But if adults are to foster optimal growth and development in children, they must remain sensitive and responsive to children as individuals.

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