

NINE YEAR OLDS

The information presented here about the ages and stages of children is only a guide. Physically, emotionally, and intellectually, each child grows and develops at his own rate. Some youngsters may be early bloomers. That is, they may have reached a stage of emotional or physical development beyond their chronological years. Understanding the characteristics of an age can be helpful to adults who work with or care for children. But if adults are to foster optimal growth and development in children, they also must remain sensitive and responsive to children as individuals.

General

Nine is a developmental middle zone. The nine-year-old shows a new maturity, self-confidence, and independence from adults. There is an increase in maturity and refinement of behavior. Nine-year-olds can evaluate themselves, find that they are lacking, but not feel guilty about it.

Self-Concept and Independence

- * Nine-year-olds tend to be inner-directed and self-motivated.
- * They have occasions of intense emotion and impatience, but their outbursts are less frequent and they show greater self-control. The inner-directed quality of their behavior allows nine-year-olds to become intently involved in activities.
- * If forced to interrupt an activity, nine-year-olds will usually come back to it on their own.
- * They can think and reason for themselves.
- * They can be trusted.
- * They may withdraw from surroundings to get a sense of self. They do not, however, retreat as much as they did when they were seven.
- * Nine-year-olds do not feel impelled to boast and attach to protect themselves.

Relating to Other Children and Adults

- * In their relationships with both adults and peers, they show consideration and fairness beyond that shown at a younger age.
- * They can accept their own failures and mistakes, and they are willing to take responsibility for their own actions.
- * Nine-year-olds have an increased awareness of sex and sex-differentiated behaviors.
- * Girls can become concerned about their clothing and appearance. They take more interest in the "right" fashion.
- * Friendships tend to be more solid, but occasionally nine-year-olds can have an intense dislike of the opposite sex, preferring to be with children of their own age and sex. Boys and girls both may begin to form clubs around various activities.
- * Although their independence can be trying at times, they are often easier to work with than younger children who make great demands on adults.
- * They are anxious to please and love to be chosen.
- * Most of the mother-child conflict of the eight-year-old has disappeared, and the nine-year-old makes fewer demands on parents.
 - * Nine-year-olds usually have no problems with young children or older brothers and sisters. In fact, they can be very loyal to siblings.

Games and Activities

Nine-year-olds spend much time in solitary activities of their own choosing. Bicycling, roller and ice-skating, and swimming are physical activities they enjoy. They continue to enjoy the advanced table games they learned at eight. Materials and information attract the nine-year-old. Organized games or activities such as baseball, football, and basketball are popular. Many children at this age also have mastered basic reading and arithmetic and can use these skills to gain information, to solve problems, and to participate in games and recreation.