

TEN YEAR OLDS

The information presented here about the ages and states 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

Ten is the high point of childhood. Ten-year-olds have worked through the difficulties of home, school, and community. They now can take pride in their ability to fit in at home, at school, and at play with their peers. On occasion, there can be outbursts of anger, depression, or sadness, but these moods are short-lived and soon forgotten.

Girls are slightly more advanced sexually than boys and already there is some evidence of the rapid sprint to maturity that will make them taller and heavier than boys their own age in a couple of years. Their bodies are rounding out and the softening of contours may begin. Some girls may even experience the first stages of breast development. Girls become concerned about their bodies and menstruation and about sexual activity in general.

For boys physical changes are less marked, thus concern for the body and physical maturity is much less noticeable.

Self-Concept and Independence

Ten year olds accept themselves as they are without worrying too much about their strengths and weaknesses. They are much less interested in evaluating themselves. They like their bodies and like what they can do both athletically and academically, Their self-acceptance is heightened by the acceptance accorded them by peers, families, and school.

Relating to Other Children and Adults

Ten-year-olds like and enjoy their friends. Boys may move into loosely organized groups. Within these groups, boys may have particular friends, but there is a lot of switching around. Girls usually move in smaller groups and are likely to form more intense friendships and have more serious "falling outs" with their friends being "mad" and "not playing " or "not speaking" to one another as a result. There are times when ten-year-olds may seem to value their peer group more than their families.

Teachers and other adults who interact with this age group are popular if they are fair and not partial to particular children in the group. Adults working with ten-year-olds need to be firm but not strict. At this age children like adult leaders to schedule activities and like to keep to the schedule.

Games and Activities

They like outings and trips. They like organized games and belonging to clubs and groups. When working on a project they may need to get up and move about.

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