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Ages & Stages: 8-10 Year Olds

Our Bodies: *Physical Development & Abilities*

- We are more coordinated than we used to be. Sports, games and other physical activities help us to develop our new coordination and practice our motor skills.
- Our bodies are beginning to grow and develop. Some of us, especially girls, are in the beginning stages of puberty.
- Physical differences between girls and boys are becoming more pronounced. Even though boys do not actually gain superiority in muscular strength until after puberty, boys already tend to outperform girls in sports and other physical activities. Whether this is based on socialization or other factors is a matter of some debate.
- We are becoming more aware of what others think of how we look, and become self-conscious about things about us that are different, like being short or tall or having glasses. Physical appearance begins to play a more important role in how we think about ourselves and others.

Our Minds: *Cognitive Development*

- We are able to hold more than one concept in our mind at once. We are able to understand how something works, but we need concrete materials to help us develop that understanding.
- Our thinking has become more flexible, with room for grays, not just blacks and whites. We are able to classify things by type or category and order things in a logical progression.
- We like to have jobs and designated roles where we can demonstrate and practice what we know.
- Along with our newly developed logical thinking, we have a high level of natural curiosity about why things are and how things work.

Our Ears & Mouths: *Language Development*

- We are able to think and talk about the future and the consequences of our actions.
- We are learning how to use metaphors and symbolic language.
- We may try out using sarcasm, but we still often do not understand when and how someone is being sarcastic when they speak.

Our Hearts & Souls: *Social & Emotional Development*

- We know how to express our feelings with words, but if we are very upset, sometimes we forget and need reminders.
- We are beginning to develop close friendships.
- We are able to recognize that other people have feelings and to imagine their perspective, but it is still hard for us to work cooperatively. We can learn how to work with others by seeing older children and adults model that for us.
- We are beginning to notice our status in groups and to become concerned with popularity. We worry about how others see us.
- We develop a sense of achievement and self-confidence when we master skills and find things we can be successful at.
- Rules are not so rigid anymore. We want to know the reasons for the rules we are asked to follow.

Tips for Educators: *8-10 Year Olds*

- Help us to find things we are good at and give us plenty of opportunities to be successful and take pride in our accomplishments.
- Provide us with lots of activities that give us opportunities to show off our newly developed fine motor skills.
- Give us chances to ask questions when there is time to really discuss the responses.
- Let us be involved in making the rules, so we have a good understanding of what they are and why they exist.
- Teach by example. Remember, we are watching you and listening to you, and we understand more than you realize.