



## Preparing Volunteers Guide

### Children - Ages & Stages

If you haven't had recent experience with a child in the age group you'll be matched with, we have some information to help you work successfully with your Little.

We've created handouts for each of the age categories listed below. These handouts are designed to provide you with some general characteristics of children in each of the four different age categories:

- 5-7 year olds
- 8-10 year olds
- 11-13 year olds
- 14-16 year olds

These handouts may help you understand what your Little might be like depending on his/her age. They also include some suggested activities. Just ask your Support Specialist for copies.

As you read the handouts:

- Keep in mind that they are generalizations.
- While they may provide a description of children in general, you may encounter something slightly different with your Little. This does not mean that there is something wrong with your Little. It may mean that they are not like the average child.
- Sometimes a child's development may be delayed because of trauma or negative experiences or simply a slower or faster development than others, so the stage they're in at present may not correlate to their age in years.



### 5-7 YEAR OLDS

#### **General Characteristics**

- Eager to learn, easily fatigued, short periods of interest.
- Learn best when they are active while learning.
- Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive.

#### **Physical Characteristics**

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks. They like to do things that are fun and involve use of energy.
- Need rest periods.
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles are difficult (i.e., working on models with small pieces).
- May tend to be accident prone.

#### **Social Characteristics**

- Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
- Can be very competitive. May cheat at games.
- Are very imaginative and involved in fantasy playing.
- Are self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first, less cooperative than at five, and boastful.
- Learn best through active participation.

#### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Are alert to feelings of others but are unaware of how their own actions affect others.
- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced; regress when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders.

#### **Mental Characteristics**

- Are very eager to learn.
- Like to talk.
- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Have difficulty making decisions.

#### **Developmental Tasks**

- Sex role identification.
- Early moral development.
- Concrete operations - the child begins to experience the predictability of physical events.



### 8 - 10 YEAR OLDS

#### **General Characteristics**

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others but expects more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, accident prone, interest in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion, often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.

#### **Physical Characteristics**

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- May tend to be accident prone.

#### **Social Characteristics**

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their friends.
- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular.
- Worshipping heroes, TV stars, and sports figures is common.

#### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friend's rules. You can help by your honesty and consistency.

#### **Mental Characteristics**

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious and are collectors of everything. However, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

#### **Developmental Tasks**

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation/Skill learning
- Team play.



### **General Characteristics**

- Testing limits, "know-it-all attitude."
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

### **Physical Characteristics**

- Small-muscle coordination is good, and interests in art, crafts, models and music are popular.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size.
- Are very concerned with their appearance, and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

### **Social Characteristics**

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Tend to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Interested in earning own money.

### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

### **Mental Characteristics**

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.



### **General Characteristics**

- Testing limits, "know-it -all attitude."
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

### **Physical Characteristics**

- Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.

### **Social Characteristics**

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to "belong."
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Tend to manipulate others ("Mary's mother says she can go. Why can't I?").
- Going to extremes, emotional instability with "know-it-all" attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Strong identification with an admired adult.
- Girls usually more interested in boys than girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

### **Mental Characteristics**

- Can better understand moral principles.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

### **Developmental Tasks**

- Physical maturation.
- Formal operations.
- Membership in the peer group.
- Relating to the opposite sex.



## Volunteer Orientation Supplemental Handouts

5-7	8 –10	11-13	14-16
Bake and frost cut out cookies	Start a scrapbook with a page for pictures of favorite things	Watch a TV program and identify negative stereotypes	Figure out how to use a new gadget (Little maybe teaches Big!)
Fly a kite on a windy day	Go on a camera scavenger hunt to find odd objects to photograph	Look up your state on the internet: major industry? Biggest cities?	Research what happened on the day and year each of you was born
Go on a walk and collect interesting rocks, leaves or other items	Make greeting, get well or holiday cards to give to special people	Build and paint a bird house – watch for occupants	Check out the classified ads and discuss what each job requires in terms of education and experience
Feed the ducks at the park	Make a bug cage and catch lightening bugs together	Rent rollerblades and learn to skate, safely	Visit a fish market, meat market or other place where food is not prepackaged
Make a present for someone special	Visit the zoo at feeding time	Make a list of people you admire – look them up on the internet	Go out for dinner at an ethnic restaurant; who else is eating there? Favorite dishes?
Play UNO, Crazy 8s, Old Maid	Read a selected book out loud and voice record it	Take a long ride on public transportation to the end of the line	Explore a new radio station together; discuss ads and target audience
Play badminton or croquet	Play Miniature golf or go bowling	Visit the animal and offer to walk the dogs	Plan, shop for ingredients and cook dinner
Go for a walk and find interesting places to practice "balancing"	Play Monopoly, Life, Sorry, hangman	Mow the lawn or wash the car together	Go to a concert featuring a favorite performer
Have a peanut and jelly sandwich picnic	Go on a field trip to the museum – focus on one exhibit and discuss it	Play computer and video games together	Try mastering something difficult: juggling, cooking a soufflé, water color painting
Visit a pet store and decide which is the oddest pet	Call ahead and visit the local fire station or police station	Plan and plant a garden or visit a community garden and offer to help	Watch a professional or semi-professional sporting event