

Widely Held Expectations in Emotional and Social Development

Source: The Primary Program: Growing and Learning in the Heartland (1993). Nebraska Department of Education

5 - 7 Years

- May continue to show intense emotions (One moment will say, "I Love you" and the next "You are mean.")
- May appear anxious once again when separated from familiar people and places (beginning school, sleepovers).
- Are learning to cooperate with others for longer periods of time; friendships may change frequently.
- Continue to develop feelings of independence by becoming able to do certain things (making a simple breakfast or riding a bicycle).
- May begin to talk about self and to define self in terms of what they have or own.
- May feel they are being treated unfairly if other get something they do not.
- Begin to see themselves as bad, good, clever, and may seem very hard on themselves.
- Begin to develop the ability to share possessions and take turns.

7 - 9 years

- May continue to show bursts of emotion and impatience less frequently.
- May show emotions that are both judgmental and critical of themselves and others.
- Continue to feel some anxiety within the larger community when separated from familiar people, places, things (going to camp, sleepovers, shopping malls)
- Are becoming more outgoing.
- Are developing closer friendships with others; may begin to play mainly with children of the same sex.
- Show a generally increased sense of self-confidence
- Will eagerly take on tasks and activities likely to be successful but usually will not take risks.
- May define self as a particular name, age, size hair color, or other characteristics ("I'm Elizabeth Ann, and I'm seven years old!").
- Are sensitive to criticism and display feelings of success or failure depending on how adults respond to them.
- Continue to develop the ability to share possessions and to take turns if they understand something is not always "lost" by doing so.

9 - 11 years

- May appear relatively calm and at peace with themselves and occasionally become angry, sad or depressed, but these moments are usually short-lived.
- Often hide feelings of anxiety when introduced to new experiences by appearing overconfident.
- Continue to be very sociable and spend time with parents, friends of the same sex, and often have a "special" friend.
- Are generally positive about themselves and beginning to understand what they are good at doing; may comment easily, "I can do that" or "I can't do that."
- Often define self by physical characteristics and possessions as well as likes and dislikes.
- Often vary between the sexes in their view of what is important in dress and physical appearance.
- Are sensitive to criticism and display feelings of success or failure, depending on how adults and peers respond to them.
- Continue to develop the ability to work and play with others.
- May not want to be disturbed when involved in an activity or game.