

Emotional Development Flow Chart

6 -7 Emotional Development

- Sense of security is reliant on relationships with close adults. Very much relies on "secure base" relationships with adults (parents, teachers) to feel secure and comfortable. Trust in these relationships is based on feeling understood and responded to in a regular and predictable way. The skills the child demonstrates in non-social areas (such as at school) often are dependent on feeling safe and secure with the adults present in that situation.
- Describes self based on external characteristics, such as physical attributes, name, possessions and age (e.g., says, "I am six and I have brown hair."). Often evaluates own abilities highly (e.g., when asked if he is good at painting, he looks somewhat mystified and says, "Yes, I am a good artist."); such evaluations can be inaccurate or based on limited views. Copes poorly with failure and does not take criticism well.
- Begins to show an increasing awareness of own and others' emotions. Can label what others are feeling (e.g., frustrated, excited). Begins to identify reasons for others' feelings (e.g., says, "He's feeling sad because..."), but typically offers reasons for others' feelings based on direct observations or experiences (e.g., "...he fell down." or "...he didn't get to stay up late.").
- Can express needs and wants in appropriate ways, but may express self impulsively. Shows uneven ability to describe and practice techniques for self control. Enjoys routines and may become easily overwhelmed by excitement. Prefers to make transitions slowly. Finds predictable routines and activities both comforting and desirable. Experiences either "positive" or "negative" emotions, rather than mixed feelings. Expresses negative feelings less frequently with age. May cope with negative emotions by relying on direct support (e.g., physical comfort and contact) from caregivers or distraction (e.g., watching TV).

Social Development

- Communicates needs and emotions to others under supportive and fairly positive situations; may be explosive under stress. Demonstrates the ability to work with a partner, and can both lead and follow. In play activities, may be bossy and demand own way, as well as tease or be critical of others. Participates in simple group games and board games. Can display good sportsmanship and treat others with respect during play in non-stressful circumstances. May also change rules to achieve a desired outcome. Continues to take part in more pretend or dramatic group play, which becomes increasingly more elaborate.
- Identifies close friends on the basis of proximity and frequency of interaction (e.g., neighbours, school peers). Shares food and toys with friends. Friendships at this age have little permanent status and are easily established and terminated. There is little sense of liking or disliking the stable personal traits of another child.
- Is aware that other people have different perspectives, thoughts and feelings about ideas and circumstances (e.g., says, "Her brother will be mad because she took his toy.").
- Has the ability to resolve conflict in socially-acceptable ways (e.g., talking things through, asking an adult for help). Wants to make up with others when there is a fight. Most conflict resolution at this age typically involves adult help or separation from peers.

7-8 Emotional Development

Seven-year-olds enjoy having and making friends, and take pleasure in imitating the actions of friends and peers at school. They may prefer structure and routines, but may also choose to work or play independently when frustrated. Children this age often choose to develop games with rules and are likely to treat peers with respect during play. In addition, they start to experiment more with handling their emotional and social lives independently; they show that they can take some initiative socially and that they have the capacity to understand others' actions and feelings.

Initiative, Engagement, and Persistence

- Still very much reliant on adults for a sense of security as at 6. Can communicate needs in more sophisticated ways (e.g. using words) and across larger distances and time spans. Sense of self-worth and security in self is emerging and growing and displayed in confident interactions with peers and adults. At times will prefer peers to close adults. May

imitate the actions of friends in an effort to feel sense of security and belonging and will prefer familiar peers. May express feelings that things are frequently unjust.

- Describes self based on external characteristics and behavioural characteristics and traits (e.g., says, "I like to play ball and I have a cat."). Begins to differentiate personal competence across particular areas (e.g., says, "Math is hard but reading is easy."). Can be highly self-critical and may require frequent reinforcement. May walk away from a group game or family project because of a sense of inferiority.
- Is able to describe the causes and consequences of various emotions, most often on the basis of situational factors that can be readily observed (e.g., says, "He got mad because the kids were mean to him.").
- Regulates emotions and controls impulses in most situations. Reacts to situations impulsively when under stress, tired or feeling insecure. Shows improved self-management skills (e.g., may want to work alone in a quiet space when frustrated). Values routines and may find transitions uncomfortable. Will be open to shifts in the schedule, but prefers consistency. Shows more complex emotional expressions over time. Starts to use self-calming strategies (e.g., taking deep breaths; repeating phrases) to cope with uncomfortable emotions.

Curiosity and Eagerness to Learn

- Joins in playground games and regularly works with peers in the classroom. Is likely to display good sportsmanship and treat others with respect during play. Can take others' point of view when supported to do so. Will be more demanding and critical of others under stress. Begins to participate in games with rules. Enjoys creating rules and guidelines for various situations.
- Typically develops several close friendships that are mutual and based on a mixture of time spent together (e.g., classmates), shared attributes and overlapping interests. Will identify a best friend that shares interests and activities.
- Will notice the impact of personal behaviour on others and realises that others have a similar awareness.
- Is increasingly able to handle conflict independently. Can start to negotiate and work on solutions when conflicts arise, but may not always be successful.

8-9 Emotional Development

Eight-year-olds enjoy sharing their viewpoints on a variety of topics. They have a clearly-developed sense of self-worth and may express frustration in response to activities that they perceive as areas of personal weakness. Eight-year-olds begin to understand the concept of masking emotions and can vary their use of coping strategies to deal with challenging situations. In peer interactions, they may start to engage in leadership, goal-setting, elaborate fantasy play and an assortment of interactive games. Eight-year-olds still rely on adults for a sense of security, but are proud of their independence and will want to express it. Under emotionally-stressful circumstances, they will seek adults in less direct ways but still need contact.

Initiative, Engagement, and Persistence

- Readily communicates needs and wants to adults and relies on their support in increasingly indirect ways. However under stress, will seek direct (e.g. physical) contact from secure-base adults and enjoys such contact even when not stressed. Sense of self as an independent person is evident in interactions with adults and peers. Has capacity to take others' perspectives, problem-solve in social situations. Identifies a best friend. May want to be part of the adult world and be frustrated by personal limitations. May feel confident in expressing viewpoints and asserting needs.
- "More likely to describe self-based on behavioural characteristics and tendencies (e.g., says, "I don't get into fights.").
- Starts to describe and explain thoughts, feelings and knowledge (e.g., says, "I am feeling sad today because of what happened at school."). Has a more clearly formulated sense of competence in particular areas (e.g., says, "I am good at art and bad at multiplication."). Is more realistic in self-assessments. Begins to use personal and situational resources to cope with frustrations or negative information about self. Becomes more balanced in coping with failure or frustration. May demonstrate awareness of task goals and expectations, and so may "gear up" for upcoming activities or assignments."
- Demonstrates knowledge of social customs for when and to whom certain emotions are appropriate to express (e.g., receives an undesirable gift, and demonstrates arousal by biting lip, but says, "Thank you for the doll."). Becomes increasingly able to mask true feelings when it is understood how expressions might affect others.

- "Is typically more dramatic, explosive, demanding and outgoing than last year. Increases use of self-management skills, stable emotional expressions and use of more indirect methods of self-control (e.g., reading a book, leaving a group that is losing control). May still insist on having own way but is able to listen to reason. May act rude or unreasonable if things do not go as desired, but will recognise behaviour and apologise. May start to independently experiment with shifts in routine and will make better transitions when the schedule changes. Relies less on predictable routines and activities to maintain attention or a steady emotional state. Has a more complex emotional life made up of mixtures and blends of feelings (e.g., an emotion like "frustration" can be directed at self and at a situation, and can be combined with "resolve and focus" or "disappointment and resignation"). Increasingly seeks out peers to help cope with uncomfortable emotions, but is beginning to rely on own resources, too. Continues to develop additional coping alternatives for challenging situations, including cognitively-oriented coping strategies for situations in which he has no control (e.g., thinks, "I know how to do this because I've done things like this before." or "This is not something I know how to do; I can try and see what happens. Whatever happens is OK since this is all new.")

Social Development

- Communicates needs, wants and emotions in healthy ways. Consistently recognises the views of others in classroom interactions. Has become a good partner in play, shares ideas, sees others' points of view and can work cooperatively toward a shared goal. Participates in games with more abstract rules; enjoys making up elaborate fantasy games and situations.
- Values friends greatly and makes them an increasingly important part of life. Friends are those with whom they cooperates, exchanges good deeds and shares experiences. Critical features of friendship include mutual trust, shared interests, a willingness to give and take, the ability to respond to each other's' needs and desirable qualities like kindness. Having at least one close friend (a best friend) is a key developmental accomplishment at this age. This year is also when children first begin to experience loneliness based on missing a close friend.
- Notices the impact of personal behaviour on others and may modify behaviour as a result; realises that others have a similar awareness. Recognises also that people can be aware of each other's' thoughts, feelings and perspectives. Is conscious of the fact that mutual awareness influences each person's view of the other (e.g., says, "He won't be mad that I ate his cookie because he knows that I forgot my snack and was so hungry.").
- Shows skills at settling conflicts with peers and may demonstrate leadership in this area. Can talk things through and consider various perspectives when resolving differences. Is also able to stay friends after a conflict and continue to work together.