

FIFTH GRADE

Child Development: Ages 10 – 11

Physical Development

When observing these students in the classroom, they tend to:

- Be restless and very energetic
- Need lots of food, physical activity, and sleep
- Get ill often (colds, flue, ear infections, etc.)
- Begin to experience puberty

Language and Literacy Development

- These students listen well and are very expressive when they speak.
- They love to read.
- Fifth graders enjoy explaining, arguing, and debating.
- They appreciate humor.
- Fifth graders begin to imitate adult language.



Students from Hollister Elementary School

Self Concept, Identity, and Motivation:

Similar to fourth graders, fifth graders enjoy spending time with their family, peers, and teachers. As they mature and begin to experience puberty, these students can become very moody, self-absorbed, and sensitive. They begin to worry about who's "in" and "out."

Fifth graders are impulsive. They begin to challenge rules, argue, and test their limits. These students may be cruel and sometimes physically aggressive. They behave best when they are away from home. In the classroom, teachers should change learning groups often to ensure student morale and behavior remain high.



Peer Relations

At this age, students may:

- Need teacher empathy, a light attitude, and a sense of humor
- Need private or physical space to think things over to resolve problems.
- Prefer team sports
- Need lots of time to talk with peers. They become heavy users of phones for phone calls and text messages.



Moral Development

Fifth graders develop more adept at abstract thinking. They begin to understand topics such as justice. These students are able to use reasoning skills to establish and modify rules and develop hypotheses.

Fifth graders are increasingly able to see the world from various perspectives and become interested in imagining themselves in adult roles. They are very excited to learn about other cultures, history, biographies, and current events. These students yearn to learn more about older and very young people.



Cognitive Development

Younger Fourth Graders:

- Very good at memorizing facts
- Able to think abstractly
- Enjoy collecting, classifying, and organizing
- Highly productive with schoolwork and take pride in their work.
- Receptive learners
- Enjoy choral reading, singing, poetry, and plays.
- Can concentrate for long periods of time.

Older Fourth Graders:

- Would rather learn new skills than review or improve previous work
- Learn well in collaborative groups
- Like “adult” academic tasks (i.e. researching, interviewing, footnoting)
- Need help with time management and homework skills
- Enjoy exploring areas of languages, music, and mechanics.
- New abilities in deductive reasoning.

