

October 16, 2026 BT PD
Rethinking Expectations and Responding to Behaviors
Agenda

1. Opening Discussion: "What is one thing you wish you would have known in August?"
2. Developmentally appropriate Expectations
 - a. Reminders
 - i. Developmentally appropriate does not mean consequence-free. Students still need clear boundaries and accountability.
 - ii. A skill that is still developing may need to be taught, practiced, and reinforced.
 - iii. Repeated behavior is information. If multiple students struggle with the same expectation, examine the routine, directions, task demands, environment, and level of support.
 - iv. Developmental differences are not the whole story. Disability, language needs, stress, unmet needs, and individual circumstances may also affect behavior. Avoid assuming that all students of the same age have the same abilities.
 - v. Adjusting support is not lowering standards. It is building a path toward meeting the standard.
3. Responding to Behaviors
 - Proactive strategies
 - Teach and practice classroom routines.
 - Use a visual schedule or written agenda.
 - Give concise directions and check for understanding.
 - Break lengthy assignments into smaller steps.
 - Provide movement opportunities and appropriate choices.
 - Pre-correct before a predictable difficult transition.
 - Use specific praise to acknowledge desired behavior.
 - Establish an engaging task for students who finish early.
 - Corrective strategies
 - Move closer to the student without interrupting instruction.
 - Use a nonverbal signal or visual reminder.
 - Give a brief, neutral verbal redirection.
 - Restate the expectation and provide a clear next step.
 - Offer two acceptable choices.
 - Privately check in with the student.
 - Pause and allow processing time instead of repeating directions louder.
 - Give the student an opportunity to correct the behavior.
 - Follow-through strategies
 - Require cleanup or restoration after a mess.
 - Have a student complete missed work or a reasonable alternative when appropriate.
 - Temporarily restrict a privilege directly connected to the behavior.
 - Use a documented parent or caregiver communication when warranted.
 - Follow the school's established referral or support process for repeated behavior.
 - Create an individualized behavior support plan when patterns persist.
 - Facilitate a restorative conversation after harm has occurred.
4. Reflections/Questions/Open Discussion

Common Developmental Traits by Age

(Adapted from *Yardsticks: Child and Adolescent Development Ages 4–14*,
4th edition, by Chip Wood, 2018, Center for Responsive Schools)



Age	Physical	Language/Cognitive	Social/Emotional
4	Energetic and active, but often clumsy Learning to switch between near and far focus for visual activities Fine motor skills are not yet well-developed	Short attention spans Learn best through hands-on exploration Love imaginative play and take delight in words (including bathroom talk!)	Friendly and talkative, but sometimes fearful or worried Love being with friends and learning to work together Need adult help to find words to express needs instead of reacting physically
5	Still awkward with tasks requiring small movements Visual focus is on objects close at hand Need lots of physical activity	See one way to do things Imagination can be vivid, which can lead to believing toys are alive Interpret words in their literal sense—"We're late, we've got to fly" means "We've got to fly like birds." Express themselves in few words Think out loud before acting	Younger fives want adult approval; they like to be "good" Older fives may challenge adult authority and seem oppositional at times Need consistent routines, rules, and discipline
6	Love to be active Noisy, sloppy, and in a hurry Tire easily	Very curious; love new ideas and asking questions Ambitious; may choose projects that are too hard Better understanding of past and present; can begin to understand real history markers	Enthusiastic, eager, competitive Rush to be first or dawdle to be last Care a great deal about friends Extremely sensitive; severe criticism can truly be traumatic Challenge boundaries and authority Enjoy working in groups
7	Often keep eyes focused on small, close area Writing is very small Improved coordination for both gross and fine motor skills Can be sensitive to physical and psychosomatic hurts	Need support for sustained, quiet work periods Like to collect, sort, and classify Rapidly develop their vocabularies Listen well and speak precisely Bothered by mistakes and try hard to make their work perfect Enjoy hands-on exploration	Need security, structure, and stability Sometimes moody or pouty Often have a best friend, although their best friend might change frequently Rely on adults for help and reassurance Prefer working and playing alone or with one friend Dislike taking risks or making mistakes

Age	Physical	Language/Cognitive	Social/Emotional
8	Increase in small motor coordination Restless; play hard and tire quickly Eyes focus well on objects near and far Growth spurts lead to some awkwardness	Industrious, impatient, full of ideas; like to talk and explain ideas Often take on more than they can Handle Generally able to pay attention, but don't always remember what they've heard or are supposed to do Can handle increasingly complex tasks but tire easily	Love to share humor Adjust well to change; bounce back from disappointments Love group activities May prefer working and playing with some classmates more than others Growing awareness of fairness issues
9	Improved coordination Like to push physical limits, but tire easily Restless; can't sit still for long Often report aches and pains	Industrious and curious, beginning to be aware of a bigger world of ideas Worry about global issues Take pride in attention to detail and finished work, but may jump quickly between interests Look hard for explanations of facts, how things work, and why things happen as they do Difficulty with abstractions such as large numbers Love descriptive language and wordplay	Competitive; may form cliques Critical of self and others; need adult lightheartedness and humor Like to work with a partner of their choice; can work in groups but with lots of arguing Often feel worried or anxious Can be sullen, moody, aloof, one minute and goofy and fun-loving the next
10	Large muscles needed for big movements are developing quickly Need lots of outdoor play and physical challenges Enjoy precision tasks Benefit from frequent snacks and rest periods	Listen well and enjoy talking and explaining; can appreciate others' perspectives Hardworking; take pride in schoolwork Increasingly able to think abstractly Enjoy categorizing and classifying; like rules and logic Good at memorizing Can concentrate on reading and thinking for long periods Enjoy choral reading, poetry, plays, singing	Eager to reach out to others Quick to anger and to forgive Open to learning meditation or problem-solving skills Developing a more mature sense of right and wrong Appreciate their efforts noticed Cooperative and flexible; do well with group activities and cooperative learning
11	Restless and very energetic Need lots of food, physical activity, and sleep Have growth spurts	Like "adult" tasks, such as conducting Internet research Enjoy brain teasers and puzzles Would rather learn new skills than refine old ones Challenge assumptions—their own and those of adults More adept at abstract thinking	The common age for cliques Need a reasonable amount of time to talk with peers Moody; self-absorbed Sensitive about changing bodies Like to challenge rules, argue, and test limits

Age	Physical	Language/Cognitive	Social/Emotional
12	Very energetic Need lots of food, physical activity, and sleep Have growth spurts Stay up late and want to sleep late	May begin to excel at a subject or skill More able to think abstractly about complex issues Increasingly able to plan, organize thoughts and work, and set short-term goals Able to see both sides of an issue but like to argue one point of view	Care more about peers' opinions than those of adults Enjoy conversation with adults Capable of self-awareness, insight, and empathy Enthusiastic and spontaneous May reach out to classmates they have not been friends with
13	Lots of physical energy Most boys showing first signs of puberty; most girls are menstruating and have reached almost full physical development Skin problems are common; hygiene becomes more important Health and sex education classes can embarrass them and lead to silly or rude behavior	Often tentative, worried, and unwilling to take risks Abstract reasoning skills continue to grow May have strong opinions about likes and dislikes Often highly judgmental of the adults in their lives Often complain about fairness and tend to argue when working in groups	May experience a bumpy transition to increasing independence Can be moody and sensitive, may isolate themselves Acts of meanness may come from insecurity Increasingly sarcastic Feel and exert a lot of peer pressure May use social media extensively Personal appearance is a top concern, but neatness of their room is not
14	Energetic, loud, rambunctious Need lots of snacks, sleep, and exercise Girls are almost fully developed; boys have growth spurts and upper body strength begins to develop More interested in sex at this age	Respond well to academic challenges Like learning how things work Small cooperative learning groups are appealing to them Take pleasure in developing individual skills May say "I'm bored" when they mean "I don't understand" to save face	Tend to feel that they "know it all" Dislike and respond poorly to adult lectures May express contempt with facial expressions or body language as they try to distance themselves from adults Still depend on adults for empathy and boundaries More willing to make mistakes and learn from them Enjoy tackling big ideas