

Common Developmental Characteristics of Kindergartners

*Adapted From Yardsticks, by Chip Wood. Published by Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.

Social

- Early in the year, like to help, follow rules, and be “good”
- Later, may test or oppose adult authority or show uncertainty (not sure whether to be ‘good’ or ‘naughty’)
- Need consistent rules and enforcement; respond well to clear and simple expectations
- Need empathetic discipline as they test limits and make mistakes

Physical

- Better control of running, jumping, and other large movements
- Need lots of physical activity, including free play
- Early in the year, pace themselves well; later, tire quickly
- Pencil grip changes from three-fingered to other grips
- Able to see close objects best; not yet able to sweep focus smoothly from left to right
- Read one word at a time
- Copying from blackboard is hard

Cognitive

- See only one way to do things; rarely see other viewpoints
- Imaginative and believe toys and other objects are alive
- Thinks very literally
- Often reverse letters and numbers
- Early in the year, like to copy and repeat activities; later, like to try more new activities
- Often like to think out loud before acting
- Learn best by exploring materials such as blocks, clay, rocks and shells