

Emotional/Social Characteristics of Children

Thoughtful guidance and teaching can only occur if coaches know the emotional and social development characteristics of children.

The emotional characteristics of **children ages 6-7** are that they need praise, warmth, and patience. They're dependent on adult approval, they have a short attention span, and they have the ability to assume some responsibility. They also are often tense, upset, and unpredictable. Their social characteristics are that they're indecisive and sensitive to feelings of adults and peers.

For children ages 8-9 their fears are related to failure, trouble at home, making mistakes, and competitive situations. They want to do well but lose interest if discouraged or pressured. They're also sensitive to criticism and resent being treated as a child. Socially they're still striving for greater independence. They may be argumentative and careless but they're alert, friendly, and interested in others. They need and seek others.

Children ages 10-11 are awkward, restless, and lazy as a result of rapid and uneven growth. There are wide individual differences in maturity with this group. They resent authority, worship heroes, and have a fear of ridicule. Socially they identify with their own sex, and peers are more important than family.

For the 12-14 age range children have emotional instability characterized by a "know it all" attitude as well as being oversensitive. They are preoccupied with social acceptance with a fear of ridicule and being unpopular. They often strongly identify with an admired adult.