

## **Child Development through Sports**

Child Development through Sports is based on research which shows that children move through relatively predictable stages as they grow, and that sport participation, can support and enhance their development.

Sport can be a most enjoyable childhood experience. A positive sport environment provides children with unique experiences and many potential benefits. For example, sport can stimulate physical growth, raise self-esteem, contribute to social development and enhance overall health and well-being. To maximise the positive impact of sport on children, sport should be delivered in a manner that is consistent with principles of healthy child development.

This information outlines the stages and changes as children grow in terms of their Physical Development, Emotional Needs, Social Needs and Intellectual Development.

Adapted from: Humphrey, J.H. (2003). *Child Development Through Sports*. New York, USA: Hayworth Press.

## **Physical Development**

Physical development is concerned with the child's physical ability to function at an increasingly higher level.

### **Physical Needs**

It is critical that tennis is planned around the basis of the physical needs of children, especially as physical capabilities develop from participation in children's sports. The following physical characteristics are indicative of the behaviour of "normal" children, however, individuals progress at their own rate and overlap can occur for each of the age levels.

### **Five-Year Old Children**

1. Boys' height, 42 to 46 inches, weight, 17.25 to 22.25 kg; girl's height, 42 to 46 inches; weight, 16.5 to 21.8 kg
2. May grow two or three inches and gain 1.4 to 2.7 kg throughout the year
3. Girls about a year ahead of boys in physiological development
4. Beginning to have better control of body
5. Better development of the large muscles than the small muscles that control the fingers and the hands
6. Usually determined whether they will be right or left handed
7. Incomplete hand-eye coordination
8. May have farsighted vision
9. Vigorous and noisy, but activity appears to have definite direction

10. Tire easily and need plenty of rest

## **Six-Year Old Children**

1. Boys' height, 44 to 48 inches; weight, 18.6 to 24.5 kg; girls' height, 43 to 49 inches; weight, 18.2 to 24.1 kg
2. Gradual growth in height and weight
3. Good supply of energy
4. Marked activity urges; children absorbed in running, jumping, chasing, and dodging games
5. Muscular control with large objects becoming more effective
6. Noticeable change in eye-hand behaviour
7. Legs lengthening rapidly
8. Big muscles crave activity

## **Seven-Year Old Children**

1. Boys' height 46 to 51 inches; weight 20.5 to 27.25 kg; girls' height, 46 to 50 inches; weight, 20 to 26.8 kg
2. Big muscle activity interest
3. More improvement in eye-hand coordination
4. may grow two or three inches and gain 1.4 to 2.25 kg throughout the year
5. Tire easily and show fatigue in the afternoon
6. Have slow reaction time
7. Heart and lungs are small in proportion to body size
8. General health may be precarious; susceptibility to disease high and resistance low
9. Endurance relatively low
10. Coordination improving with throwing; catching becoming more accurate
11. Whole-body movements under better control
12. Small accessory muscles developing
13. Display amazing amounts of vitality

## **Eight-Year Old Children**

1. Boys' height, 48 to 53 inches; weight, 22.25 to 31.8 kg; girls' height, 48 to 52 inches; weight 21.4 to 30 kg
2. Interested in games requiring coordination of small muscles
3. Arms lengthening and hands growing larger
4. Eyes can accommodate more easily
5. Poor posture in some children
6. Frequent accidents at this stage
7. Appreciate correct skill performance

## **Nine-Year Old Children**

1. Boys' height, 50 to 55 inches; weight 25 to 33.6 kg; girls' height, 50 to 54 inches; weight, 23.6 to 33.6 kg

2. Increasing strength in arms, hands, and fingers
3. Endurance improving
4. Need and enjoy much activity; boys like to shout, wrestle, and tussle with one another
5. A few girls near puberty
6. Girls gaining growth maturity up to two years over boys
7. Girls enjoy group games but are usually less noisy and less full of spontaneous energy than boys
8. Likely to slouch and assume unusual postures
9. Eyes much better developed and able to accommodate to close work with less strain
10. may tend to overexercise
11. Sex differences appear in recreational activities
12. Interested in their own bodies and want to have questions answered

## Ten-Year Old Children

1. Boys' height, 52 to 57 inches; weight 26.8 to 37.25 kg; girls' height, 52 to 57 inches; weight 25.9 to 37.7 kg
2. Individuality well-defined, insights more mature
3. Stability in growth rate and stability of physiological processes
4. Physically active and like to rush around and be busy
5. before onset of puberty there is usually a resting period or plateau, during which boys or girls not appear to gain in height or weight
6. Interested in the development of new skills
7. Reaction time improving
8. Muscular strength slower to develop than body growth
9. Refining and elaborating skill in the use of small muscles

## Eleven-Year Old Children

1. Boys' height, 53 to 58 inches; weight, 29 to 41.4 kg; girls' height, 53 to 59 inches; weight, 29 to 43.2 kg
2. marked changes in muscle system causing awkwardness and habits sometimes distressing to the child
3. Show fatigue more easily
4. Rapid growth in some girls and a few boys; evidence of the approach of adolescence
5. On average, girls taller and heavier than boys
6. Uneven growth of different parts of the body
7. Laziness in lateral-type children and fatigue and irritability in linear-type children due to rapid growth
8. Willing to work hard at acquiring physical skills, and emphasis on excellence of performance of physical feats
9. Boys more active and rough in games than girls
10. Eye-hand coordination well developed
11. Body growth more rapid than heart growth; lungs not fully developed

12. Boys develop greater power in shoulder girdle muscles

## **Twelve-Year Old Children**

1. Boys' height, 55 to 61 inches; weight 31.8 to 45.9 kg; girls' height, 56 to 62 inches; weight 32.7 to 48.6 kg
2. Becoming more skilful in the use of small muscles
3. May be relatively little body change
4. Ten hours of sleep considered average
5. Heart rate at rest between eighty and ninety

## **Emotional Needs**

A number of emotional characteristics are identified in the following lists.

### **Five-Year Old Children**

1. Seldom show jealousy toward younger siblings
2. Usually see only one way to do something
3. Usually see only one answer to a question
4. Want to be more independent
5. Reach for new experiences and try to relate to enlarged world
6. Overanxious to reach goals set by parents and teachers
7. Critical of self and sensitive to failure
8. Emotional pattern of anger more controlled
9. Becoming more impulsive and boisterous in actions than at six

### **Six-Year Old Children**

1. Restless and may have difficulty in making decisions
2. Emotional pattern anger difficult to control at times
3. Behaviour patterns often explosive and unpredictable
4. Jealous toward siblings at times; at other times take pride in siblings
5. Greatly excited by anything new
6. Behaviour susceptible to shifts in direction, inwardly motivated, and outwardly stimulated
7. May be self-assertive and dramatic

### **Seven-Year Old Children**

1. Curiosity and creative desires may condition responses
2. May be difficult to take criticism from adults
3. Develop sympathy and loyalty to others
4. Do not mind criticism of punishment if believing it to be fair, but are indignant if they think it unfair
5. Disdainful of danger to safety and self, which may be a result of increasing interest in activities involving challenges and adventure

## **Eight-Year Old Children**

1. Dislike taking much criticism from adults
2. Can give and take criticism in own group
3. May develop enemies
4. Do not like to be treated like children
5. Have marked sense of humour
6. First impulse is to blame others
7. Become more realistic and want to find out for themselves

## **Nine-Year Old Children**

1. May sometimes be outspoken and critical of the adults they know, although there is a genuine fondness for them
2. Respond best to adults when treated as individuals and they approach them in an adult way
3. Like recognition for what they have done and respond well to deserved praise
4. Likely to be backward about public recognition but like private praise
5. Inclined not to change plans in the middle of an activity, but would rather begin over
6. May fear being deprived of mother
7. Some definite personality traits evidenced
8. Are learning to get along better, but still may resort to quarrelling and fighting
9. Like to be trusted with errands
10. Enjoy performing simple tasks
11. Want to please and do what is expected of them
12. Are beginning to sense right and wrong in terms of specific situations

## **Ten-Year Old Children**

1. Increasing tendency to rebel against adult domination
2. Capable of loyalties and hero worship, and can inspire it in their schoolmates
3. Can be readily inspired to group loyalties in their club organisation
4. Like the sense of solidarity that comes from keeping a group secret as a member of a group
5. Each sex has a tendency to show lack of sympathy and understanding with the other
6. Boys' and girls' behaviours and interests different

## **Eleven-Year Old Children**

1. If unskilled in group games, may tend to withdraw
2. Boys may be concerned if they feel underdeveloped
3. May appear indifferent and uncooperative
4. Moods change quickly

5. Want to grow up but may be afraid to leave childhood security behind
6. Increase in self-direction and in a serious attitude toward work
7. Need for approval to feel secure
8. Beginning to have a fully developed idea of own importance

## **Twelve-Year Old Children**

1. Beginning to develop a truer picture of morality
2. Clearer understanding of real causal relations
3. Sexual maturation involves structural and physiological changes and possible perplexing and disturbing emotional problems
4. Personal appearance a source of great conflict, and learning to appreciate good grooming or the reverse may be prevalent
5. May be very easily hurt when criticised or made the scapegoat
6. maladjustment may occur when there is not a harmonious relationship between them and adults

## **Social Needs**

Social maturity and social fitness may be expressed in terms of fulfilment of certain social needs. If social needs are being adequately met then the child should be in a better position to achieve social development.

General needs include: (1) the need for affection, (2) the need for belonging; and (3) the need for mutuality, which involves cooperation, mutual helpfulness, and group loyalty.

The following lists reflect the developmental characteristics needed at different age levels.

## **Five-Year Old Children**

1. Interested in neighbourhood games that involve any number of children
2. Play vigorous games to test their skills
3. Enjoy other children and like to be with them
4. Interests largely self-centered
5. Seem to get along best in small groups
6. Show an interest in home activities
7. Imitate when playing
8. Get along well in taking turns
9. Respect the belongings of other people

## **Six-Year Old Children**

1. Self-centered and have the need for praise
2. Like to be first
3. Indifferent of sex distinction

4. Enjoy group play when groups tend to be small
5. Like parties but behaviour may not always be decorous
6. Most enjoy school association, have a desire to learn
7. Interests in conduct of friends
8. Boys like to fight and wrestle with peers to prove masculinity
9. Show an interest in group approval

## **Seven-Year Old Children**

1. Want recognition for individual achievements
2. Sex differences not of great importance
3. Not always good losers
4. Conversation often about family
5. Learning to stand up for own rights
6. Interested in friends and not influenced by their social or economic status
7. May have nervous habits such as nail biting, tongue sucking, scratching, or pulling at ear
8. Attaining orientation in time
9. Get greater enjoyment from group play
10. Show greater signs of cooperative efforts

## **Eight-Year Old Children**

1. Girls careful of their clothes; boys are not
2. Leave many things uncompleted
3. Have special friends
4. Have longer periods of peaceful play
5. Do not like playing alone
6. Enjoy dramatizing
7. Start collections
8. Enjoy school and dislike staying home
9. Like variety
10. Recognition of property rights is well established
11. Respond well to group activity
12. Interests in friends of own sex
13. Beginning of the desire to become a member of a club

## **Nine-Year Old Children**

1. Want to be like others; talk like others, and look like others
2. Girls are becoming more interested in their clothes
3. Are generally conformists and may be afraid of that which is different
4. Able to be on their own
5. Able to be fairly responsible and dependable
6. Developing some firm and loyal friendships
7. Increasing development of qualities of leaders and followers
8. Increasing interest in activities involving challenges and adventure
9. Increasing participation in varied and organised group activities

## Ten-Year Old Children

1. Begin to recognise the fallibility of adults
2. Moving more into a peer-centered society
3. Amazingly self-dependent
4. Increased self-reliance; intensified group feelings
5. Widening divergence between the two sexes
6. Great team loyalties being developed
7. Beginning to identify with their social contemporaries of the same sex
8. Relatively easy to appeal to their reason
9. On the whole, they have a fairly critical sense of justice
10. Boys show their friendship with other boys by wrestling and jostling with each other, and girls walk together with arms around each other as friends
11. Increased interest in people, in the community, and in affairs of the world
12. interested in social problems in an elementary way and like to take part in discussion

## Eleven-Year Old Children

1. Internal guiding standards set up; although guided by what is done by other children, they will modify behaviour in line with their own standards
2. Do a number of socially acceptable things, not because they are right or wrong
3. Although they are obsessed by standards of peers, are anxious for social approval of adults
4. Need for social companionship of children their own age
5. Increased interest in organising games
6. Girls likely self-conscious in presence of boys; usually much more mature than boys
7. Team spirit very strong
8. Boys' and girls' interests not always the same; may be some antagonism between the sexes
9. Often engage in silly behaviour, such as giggling and clowning
10. Girls more interested in social appearance than boys are

## Twelve-Year Old Children

1. Increasing identification of self with other children of their own sex
2. Increasing recognition of fallibility of adults
3. May see themselves as children and adults as adults
4. Getting ready to make the difficult transition to adolescence
5. Pressure is being placed on them to begin to assume adult responsibilities

## **Intellectual Development**

The potential for intellectual development exists through sports.

## Five-Year Old Children

1. Enjoy copying designs, letters, and numbers
2. Interested in completing tasks
3. May tend to monopolise table conversation
4. Memory for past events good
5. Look at books and pretend to read
6. Like recordings, words, and music that tell a story
7. Enjoy counting objects
8. Over 2,000 words in speaking vocabulary
9. Can sing simple melodies, beat good rhythms, and recognize simple tunes
10. Daydreams involve make-believe play
11. Attention span increasing up to twenty minutes in some cases
12. Are able to plan activities
13. Enjoy stories, dramatic plays, and poems
14. Enjoy making up dances to music
15. Pronunciation usually clear
16. Can express needs well in words

## Six-Year Old Children

1. Speaking vocabulary is over 2,500 words
2. Attention span inclined to be short
3. Know number combinations up to ten
4. Know comparative values of coins
5. Can define objects in terms of what they are used for
6. Know the right and left sides of body
7. Have an association with creative activity and motorized life experience
8. Drawings crude but realistic and suggestive of early man
9. Will contribute to guided group planning
10. Conversation usually concerns own experience and interests
11. Curiosity is active and memory is strong
12. Identify themselves with imaginary characters

## Seven-Year Old Children

1. Abstract thinking is barely beginning
2. Are able to listen longer
3. Read some books by themselves
4. Are able to reason, but have little experience upon which to base judgments
5. Attention span still short and retention poor, but they do not object to repetition
6. Reaction time still slow
7. Learning to evaluate the achievements of themselves and others
8. Concerned with their own lack of skill and achievement
9. Becoming more realistic and less imaginative

## **Eight-Year Old Children**

1. Can tell day of the month and year
2. Voluntary attention span increasing
3. Interested in far-off places, and ways of communicating now have real meaning
4. Becoming more aware of adult world and their place in it
5. Ready to tackle almost anything
6. Show a capacity for self-evaluation
7. Like to memorize
8. Not always good at telling time, but very much aware of it

## **Nine-Year Old Children**

1. Individual differences clear and distinct
2. Some real interests beginning to develop
3. Beginning to have a strong sense of right and wrong
4. Understand explanations
5. Interests are closer to ten- or eleven-year-olds than to seven- or eight-year-olds
6. If a project fails to hold interest, it may be dropped without further thought
7. Attention span greatly increased
8. Seem to be guided best by a reason, simple and clear cut, for a decision that needs to be made
9. Ready to learn from occasional failure of their judgment as long as learning takes place in situations where failure will not have too serious consequences
10. Able to make up their own minds and come to decisions
11. Marked reading disabilities begin to be more evident and may tend to influence the personality
12. Wide range of interest in reading, in that many are great readers and others may be barely interested in books
13. Will average between six and seven words per remark

## **Ten-Year Old Children**

1. Work with executive speed and like the challenge of mathematics
2. Show a capacity to budget time and money
3. Can attend to a visual task and at the same time maintain conversation
4. Some become discouraged and may give up trying when unsuccessful
5. The attention span has lengthened considerably, and they are able to listen, follow directions, and retain knowledge more easily
6. Beginning understanding of real causal relations
7. Making finer conceptual distinctions and thinking reflectively
8. Developing a scientific approach
9. Better oriented with respect to time

10. Ready to plan the day and accept responsibility for getting things done on time

## **Eleven-Year Old Children**

1. Increasing power of attention
2. Able to maintain a longer period of intellectual activity between firsthand experiences
3. Interested in scientific experiments and procedures
4. Can carry on many individual intellectual responsibilities
5. Able to discuss problems and to see different side of question
6. May lack maturity of judgment
7. Increased language facility
8. Attention span is increasing; concentration may be given to task for a long period of time
9. Level of aspiration increased
10. Growing in ability to use several facts to make a decision
11. Insight into a causal relationships is developing more and manifested by many "how" and "why" questions

## **Twelve-Year Old Children**

1. Learn more ways of studying and controlling the physical world
2. The use of language (in many cases their vocabulary) to exchange ideas for explanatory reasons
3. More use of reflective thinking the greater use of distinction
4. Continuation in development of scientific approach