



UConn 4-H Fact Sheet



Ages and Stages

This fact sheet is intended to help you gain insight into the needs and interests of your 4-H club members. The grid on the reverse discusses characteristics common to youngsters at each developmental level. With the aid of this information, you can help 4-H'ers have challenging experiences that will contribute to their growth and development. Keep in mind that no two individuals develop at the same pace and that transitions are gradual over time. A 4-H'er may seem very responsible and mature at one meeting, then noisy and bored at the next.

Characteristics of the four stages

There are some characteristics that children share at certain stages of life. The term developmental characteristics is used to describe how children think and act at a certain age. These characteristics are described in four areas:

- Physical— Focuses on the growth and maturity of their bodies.
- Social— Focuses on how children interact with others and respond in social settings.
- Emotional—Focuses on how they deal with their feelings and express those feelings to others.
- Intellectual—Focuses on how children think and learn. School-aged youth are grouped into four developmental age groups:
 - Early childhood (5-8) (UConn 4-H Explorers)
 - Middle childhood (9-11) (4-H Juniors)
 - Early Adolescents (12-14) (4-H Intermediates)
 - Adolescents (15-18) (4-H Seniors)

By knowing the characteristics of each age group, it is easier to plan and teach in a way that will work best for that age group. It also makes it easier for you, as Leader, to adapt activities for the range of youth in your club.

Things to Consider in your Club

Size: Adapt the number of items the learners are expected to learn or complete

Time: Adapt the minutes, hours, or days you allow for completion

Input: Adapt the way information is delivered

Output: Adapt the way the learners can respond to instruction

Difficulty: Adapt the problem type

Participation: Adapt the extent the participants are actively involved

Level of support: Increase adult support or peer support as needed

Alternate goal: Adapt outcome expectations while using the same materials.

Explorers (Grades K-1)

Short, unless topic is of great interest. May be easily frustrated by fine motor tasks that are beyond level of coordination. Curious, learns from hands-on experience. Developing language. Competitive activities not appropriate. Don't accept failure. Has difficulty with multiple step plans over a period of time. Seeks adult leadership and companionship. More interested in small groups, members of same sex, and under adult supervision. May have several best friends.

Beginners (Grades 2-5)

Short and Carried. (45 minutes) Easily motivated. High interest in doing active projects. Poor communication. High Curiosity, limited experience. Beginning abstract learning. Needs recognition. Limited ability, experience, and judgement. Accepts leadership easily from adults. Admire and imitate older youth. Needs to feel accepted. Show loyalty to members of the same sex and antagonism to opposite sex.

Intermediates (Grades 6-8)

Lengthens with experience and interest in subject or activity. Interested in skills for specific use. Can tackle more difficult jobs with more complex coordination. Increased depth and scope of learning. Want to make decisions but still depend on adult guidelines. Can plan better than execute. Can discuss current events, international affairs, and social issues with help. Needs and wants guidance but rejects domination. Interest in opposite sex, and in group acceptance. Can be selfconscious.

Advanced (Grades 9-12)

Almost adult is self-motivated. Highly skilled in areas of interest and practice. Continued increase related to experience. Can see relationships. Has need and ability to plan, Enjoy discussing world situations. Wants leadership on an adult level. High interest in groups, "couples" oriented. Strong desire for status in peer group. High interest in social activity.