Understanding Child Development and Age Groups



Children naturally develop as they age and go through life, changing physically, spiritually, emotionally, or cognitively. As a teacher, knowing the skills children have developed and the ways they currently process information can help you keep them engaged and ensure your teaching is effective. Though all children develop at different rates, they often develop similarly to those closest to their age. However, it is also important to remember that all children are unique individuals with God-given gifts and personalities. Keeping these things in mind allow you to better facilitate the child's experience with God and His word.

1. No Two Children Are Exactly Alike

Each child is unique in areas such as development, skills, intelligence, personality, background, interests and energy levels. Even identical twins are not truly identical. Just because you have five 6-year-olds in your class doesn't mean you can expect them to all act the same.

2. Development Does Not Follow a Rigid calendar

Even if we were to completely understand the unique qualities of a child, he or she would be different the next time we saw them! Children grow and change at an amazing speed.

3. Culture Matters

Milestones toward maturity can vary according to where you live in the world and even from family to family. For instance, being able to perform certain actions independently may be a sign of maturity in one culture, but a sign of immature socialization in another.

4. Relationships Say More Than Birthdays

There is no substitute for getting to know the children you are teaching. The following guidelines will help you better understand children and choose appropriate learning activities, but always be open and attentive to each child's individual needs.

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5. Teaching Tips For Various Age-Groups

- Ages: 0-2 Years
- Ages: 3-4 Years
- Ages: 5-7 Years
- Ages: 8-10 Years
- Ages: 11-12 Years

References and Other Helpful Online Resources:

- The ABC’s of Spiritual Growth
- Power Point Slides about Age Characteristics
- Collection of Child Development Articles
- Child Development Information
- Play and Developmental Stages

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