4.4 Early Detection Guidelines

4.4.2.2 Assessment for Identified Concerns

4.4.2.2.5 How Children Develop - 7-8 Year Olds

The following section outlines the major developmental milestones for seven to eight year old children. Six areas of development are addressed: social/emotional, personal/social, gross motor, fine motor, language and communication and cognition. Developmental milestones given for each age should be considered as those that will typically be reached by the upper level of the age range.

A child’s development can be affected by how they process and use sensory information. This can impact on how they learn, attend and interact with others and express feelings. Their senses are the building blocks for developing many other skills including the six areas of development mentioned above. This document identifies warning signs for children experiencing difficulties with sensory processing, to provide an indication of when additional support or referral may be required.

The document also includes general warning signs for child developmental problems which may require referral for further assessment and intervention. The warning signs are indicators only and need to be considered in context of the child, their family, culture and community.

Children develop at different rates across each domain and within specific areas of development. Some children are slower than others but catch up with time. Other children, however, may have an underlying problem that causes their delayed development, and they may not catch up. There are a number of factors which can impinge on children reaching milestones, for example; bilingualism (for language development), ongoing illness, the presence of genetic abnormality, or family stress.

The document aims to assist community health nurses to assess seven to eight year old children and take early action to rectify problems when normal development deviates. This is not a checklist. It acts as a guide for community health nurses. It should be used in conjunction with professional judgement, and consultations with teachers and parents.
How Children Develop

Around the age of 7-8 YEARS

A child should be able to do some or all of the following:

**Social/Emotional**
- participate in well established, rule-based games
- resolve conflicts without seeking adult intervention
- understand the individual strengths and interests of other children
- display a need for their own place e.g. at the table or in the car
- participate in team games and sporting activities
- show an awareness of the need of others and understand their point of view
- learn more about talking to their friends e.g. negotiation, winning arguments, listening, how to start and finish a conversation acceptably
- has same-gender playmates
- show an interest in organised club and group activities

**Personal/Social**
- demonstrate independence in most aspects of self-care
- use a knife to spread and cut
- display modesty and self-awareness and develop a sense of privacy
- take responsibility for a daily task e.g. setting the table
- select clothes appropriately
- understand and follow through routines e.g. getting ready for school
- become aware of own body and movement and compare it to their friends
- form opinions, about moral values and attitudes
- give and maintain appropriate eye contact during conversation and in the classroom environment
- manage a variety of experiences within a classroom, respond appropriately and maintain focus on the activity at hand
- can tie shoe laces independently

**Gross Motor**
- ride a two wheel bike independently
- become skilled at gross motor sequences e.g. hopscotch
- become skilled with a small-sized ball e.g. can catch a tennis ball in one hand
- run up and down stairs
- place emphasis on achieving in physical ways
- display a mature pattern of throwing, kicking and striking
- exhibit significant improvement in agility, balance, speed and strength e.g. balance on one foot without looking, hop and jump accurately, display graceful and balanced movements
How Children Develop

**Around the age of 7-8 YEARS**

A child should be able to do some or all of the following:

- participate with confidence in movement activities in the classroom and playground
- jump over a rope which is around 30cm above the ground

### Fine Motor

- hold and use a pencil easily, moves fingers to write and draw rather than movement coming from whole arm or wrist
- write alphabet letters and numbers 1-20 and prints sentences with minimal reversals
- correctly form most letters (moves from top to bottom, left to right and anti clockwise)
- gradually write smaller letters which are appropriately spaced and on the line
- cut out irregular shapes, glue accurately and use sticky-tape
- be aware of left and right concepts
- have well established hand-eye coordination
- copy more complex shapes using angled lines
- touch and work with a variety of textures and grasps objects using all of hand confidently e.g. craft activities
- draw pictures in which more detail is apparent e.g. ornament human figures with clothing and jewellery

### Language and Communication

- can speak and understand 15 000 words or more
- communicate effectively in classroom and playground social settings
- use gestures to illustrate conversations
- use the telephone
- speak fluently and describe complicated happenings
- read out loud
- know different tenses and grammar
- be descriptive about character and place using language that is more precise and elaborate
- use gestures to illustrate conversations
- write letters to family or friends which include descriptions that are imaginative and detailed
- use secret code words or code language with friends
- use complex and compound sentences easily

### Cognition

- understand similarities and opposites
- understand and carry out multiple-step instructions (approximately five steps)
- understand concepts within the classroom
- understand conversation amongst other children
### How Children Develop

#### Around the age of 7-8 YEARS

A child should be able to do some or all of the following:

- understand and follow rules of grammar in conversation and written form
- tell days of the week
- understand time and how to tell the time
- know months and seasons
- read a book on their own
- attend to tasks until completion
- understand concepts of space and time in ways that are both logical and practical e.g. a year is a ‘long time’, 100 kilometres is ‘far away’
- learn to use common sense and knowledge of the work to process information and start to ‘read between the line’
- know that words contain sounds which are represented by letters
- begin to grasp concepts of conservation e.g. the shape of a container does not necessarily reflect the quantity it can hold
- predict words in a book by using knowledge of grammar e.g. the person fell _ _ _ the ladder = off
- use sophisticated logic in efforts to understand everyday events e.g. is systematic in looking for a misplaced jacket or toy
- demonstrate an ability to hypothesise and solve problems beyond the here and now
- add and subtract multiple-digit numbers; learning multiplication and division
- repeat three digits backwards
- count backwards from 20
- learn to attend to long pieces of information and identify what is important
- follow fairly complex directions with little repetition

### How Children Develop

#### Around the age of 7-8 YEARS

**Warning signs - it may be of concern if a child:**

**Social/Emotional**

- prefers playing alone and has a lack of interest in other children or social play
- does not use problem-solving skills if frustrated or doesn’t get their own way
- withdraws when there are changes in the environment or routine

**Personal/Social**

- relies greatly on caregiver for bathing, grooming and feeding

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4.4.2.2.5 How Children Develop - 7-8 year olds
## How Children Develop

### Around the age of 7-8 YEARS

**Warning signs - it may be of concern if a child:**

- has persisting self-centred focus i.e. their problems are always somebody else’s fault

**Gross Motor**

- is not able to jump, skip, hop or run in a coordinated way
- has uncoordinated ball skills
- is unable to ride a bike without trainer wheels by the age of eight
- gets tired easily with every activity
- has difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods

**Fine Motor**

- finds it difficult and tiring to grasp and use a pencil
- has difficulty writing on the lines
- shows poor sizing and spacing of printing and displays extremely effortful or slow handwriting
- has difficulty using scissors
- is unable to tie shoelaces and dress independently
- is confused between left and right
- frequently reverses letters in writing

**Language and Communication**

- is frustrated in the classroom or playground because they are unable to express themself properly
- has trouble finding the right word when communicating
- has grammatically incorrect sentences
- shows persistent confusion in conversation with friends or in the classroom
- can not retell a story independently and logically using full sentences
- is withdrawn in conversation or in class
- constantly wanders off the topic in conversation

**Cognition**

- struggles with curriculum expectations
- displays frustration about learning or the classroom
- has difficulty following instructions or remembering important information

**Sensory Processing**

- avoids movement activities, especially when feet leave the ground e.g. playground/outdoor equipment or rough & tumble play
- seeks all kinds of movement, which interferes with daily routines e.g. can’t sit still, fidgets, finds excessive reasons for approaching the teacher
- has difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods
## How Children Develop

### Around the age of 7-8 YEARS

**Warning signs - it may be of concern if a child:**

- displays an unusual need to touch people and objects to the point where it is irritating to others
- avoids or has difficulty with close body contact with other children or adults
- avoids messy play or is repelled by the feeling of certain textures e.g. sand, paint, glue, tape
- avoids eye contact with children and adults
- misses written or demonstrated directions more than other students
- misses verbal directions in class more than other students
- seems oblivious within an active environment
- becomes distressed when there is a lot of noise in the area e.g. during assemblies, lunch or large gatherings

**Other**

- any parental concerns
- significant regression of skills and abilities