4.4 Early Detection Guidelines

4.4.2.2 Assessment for Identified Concerns

4.4.2.2.6 How Children Develop - 9-10 Year Olds

The following section outlines the major developmental milestones for nine to ten 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 nine to ten 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 9-10 YEARS

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

### Social/Emotional
- display a sense of wanting to gain social approval and live up to the expectations of people close to them
- display an ability to resolve social problems, such as fights with friends and siblings
- understand other people’s points of view
- seek out friendships based on common interests and proximity (neighbourhood children or classmates)
- begin to show more interest in rules and basing games on realistic play
- begin to develop moral reasoning, adopt social customs and moral values (understand honesty, right from wrong, fairness, good and bad, respect)
- display an increased interest for activity outdoors, parks etc.
- display a wider interest in everyday affairs and enjoy adventures beyond their everyday world e.g. group adventures such as trips to the museum

### Personal/Social
- display frequent interest in learning life skills e.g. cooking, fixing things
- display egocentric thinking, although has developed a conscience
- display a need to achieve a sense of mastery and accomplishment
- show increased body awareness and self-perception
- accept failures and mistakes and take responsibility for them
- give and maintain appropriate eye contact during conversation and in a classroom environment
- manage a variety of experiences within a classroom, respond appropriately and maintain focus on the activity at hand
- begin to help in household tasks e.g. washing up, making tea

### Gross Motor
- participate in team games (soccer, football, cricket, tennis etc.) but might still need to develop some of the necessary complex skills
- demonstrate an ability to swim (if taught)
- show increased awareness of own physical skills and how they appear to others
- run, climb, skip rope, ride a bike and skate with skill and confidence
- throw a ball with accuracy
- participate with confidence in movement activities in classroom and playground
- use arms, legs, hands and feet with ease and improved precision

### Fine Motor
- draw three-dimensional geometrical figures
## How Children Develop

### Around the age of 9-10 YEARS

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

- display fluid and automatic handwriting skills
- display increased writing speed
- write well without ruled lines
- begin to join letters together when writing
- demonstrate consistent sizing and spacing of letters
- draw pictures in detail
- touch and work with a variety of textures and grasp objects using hand confidently e.g. craft activities

### Language and Communication

- can speak and understand 35 000 words or more
- use correct spelling and apply spelling rules in their writing
- read aloud fluently
- express feelings and emotions effectively through words
- use slang expressions commonly expressed by peers in conversations e.g. ‘sweet’, ‘cool’, ‘awesome’
- show advanced understanding of grammatical sequences; recognises when a sentence is not grammatically correct
- understand and use language as a system for communicating with others

### Cognition

- recall around 6 numbers after a single presentation
- trace events based on recall i.e. is able to think in reverse and follow a series of occurrences back to their beginnings
- recognise that some words have a double meaning
- use reading and writing skills for non-academic activities e.g. compiling grocery lists, composing scripts for puppet shows, drawing and labelling neighbourhood maps
- understand abstract concepts if real objects can be seen and manipulated e.g. “If I eat one cookie now, only two will be left”
- develop an ability to reason based more on experience and logic, than intuition e.g. “If I hurry and walk the dog, I can play with friends”
- read books that are longer, more descriptive and have complex plots
- master concepts of time, weight, volume and distance
# How Children Develop

**Around the age of 9-10 YEARS**

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

### Social/Emotional
- has little or no capacity to see things from another’s point of view
- has a poorly developed idea of right and wrong (still self-centred and toddler-like)
- has a poor ability to see how they can help in a problem situation
- shows a lack of compromise and flexibility

### Personal/ Social
- shows frustration and poor self confidence
- has low levels of self-perception regarding physical ability and appearance

### Gross Motor
- avoids sports in general
- avoids team sports
- has decreased levels of endurance and fitness
- has difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods

### Fine Motor
- has difficulty with construction and fine manipulative work
- has handwriting that isn’t fluid and automatic
- has difficulty keeping up with written demands in class
- relies heavily on structures/lines for setting-out written work
- gets tired easily when completing a fine motor or writing task

### Language and Communication
- can not read or tell a short story independently and logically using full sentences
- is withdrawn in conversation or in class
- is frustrated in the classroom or playground because they are unable to express themselves properly
- uses grammatically incorrect sentences
- 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,
# How Children Develop

## Around the age of 9-10 YEARS

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

- finds excessive reasons for approaching the teacher
- has difficulty maintaining posture for extended periods
- 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

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