



## Group Child Care (School Age)

Section 44—*Child Care Licensing Regulation*

### Program of activities

**44 (1) A licensee must provide to children a comprehensive and coordinated program of indoor and outdoor activities that**

- (a) is designed for the development and care of children,
- (b) is appropriate for the age and development of children in each group in the community care facility, and
- (c) complies with the program standards set out in Schedule G.

## What are the developmental needs of most 6 - 12 year old children?

### PHYSICAL DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT

#### A. Large muscle/gross motor development

**Young school-age children** are interested in perfecting skills that have recently come under control. They will spend much time and energy practicing a variety of movements such as running and jumping, throwing and catching. Games such as \*Mother May I?\*, \*Statues\*, \*Tag\*, \*Giant Steps\* and \*Red Light/Green Light\* are important because they allow the child to practice known skills and introduce them to rules and roles.

**Middle school-age children** delight in learning more complex skills related to team sports such as baseball, soccer and basketball. However, this is the time for learning the basic skills and rules of the sport. Keep in mind that everyone needs an opportunity to play and succeed, so traditional rules may need to be changed or adapted.

**Older school-age children** are now in greater control of their body and its movement and are ready to begin more structured and adult-like activities such as dancing, gymnastics, judo and karate. They are also ready to learn the fine points of team sports and will relate to the knowledge and experience of a coach, trainer or instructor.

#### B. Small muscle/fine motor development

**Young school-age children** work to develop their eye-hand coordination by practicing skills such as cutting, pasting, tearing or drawing. They are interested in doing rather than in creating an object or a product. They use all of their senses when involved in an activity. These types of activities are hard work for this age child, and they will tire easily. Keep this type of activity short.

**Middle school-age children** really enjoy sampling a wide variety of arts and crafts activities. Their visual-motor coordination is good, and they like using real tools and utensils. The process of doing is still more important than perfecting skills and creating products.

**Older school-age children** will have acquired adult-like abilities in this area. They are ready to engage in activities such as making models, building rockets and woodworking. They also enjoy making works of art - carvings, mobiles and sculptures.

### SOCIAL DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT

#### A. Outside world

**Young school-age children** are interested in what is happening in the homes of other children. That is the outside world for this age group. They want to structure their environment as their home is structured. They tend to see all adults as parents. They will enjoy activities that allow them to play the roles of family members.

**Middle school-age children** are intrigued with the community and all the people, businesses and events that occur there. They will enjoy field trips to neighborhood stores, factories and public buildings. They are interested in finding out what goes on in each of the facilities. They like to know the how-to, what and why of everything and everyone. Maps, making them as well as using them, are important to this age group.

**Older school-age children's** horizons are expanding to include the world beyond the neighborhood. They are interested in cultures, foods, languages and customs of people different from themselves. Attending or organizing cultural festivals, adopting a child from another country and fund-raising events for world hunger are the types of activities that appeal to this age child.

#### B. Friends

The **young school-age child** forms many friendships which last for short periods of time. Frequently a friendship will develop because both children share the same interests. Once the interest shifts, the friendship often dissolves.

The **middle school-age child** can often be found in groups of the same sex peers. A friend is anyone who can meet the peer group's criteria for admittance. As the criteria for admission changes, so does the membership of the group.

For example, all of the children who like to jump \*Double Dutch\* become part of "the group," or all of the children who like to play with GI Joes.

The **older school-age child** begins to understand the meaning of friendship. Qualities such as loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness and being a good listener are the characteristics that make a good friend. Being someone's best friend is important. Friendship groups are often small but intense in their feelings of togetherness. Often these groups or cliques serve as a security blanket for the members.

### C. Self-concept

**Young school-age children** see themselves as no longer being babies and take pride in being able to do things for themselves. They still, however, need and want the assurance of an adult's presence. This age child can best be described as having a fragile sense of power.

**Middle school-age children** think that they can do no wrong. They are quite certain that they are the smartest person they know and don't hesitate to let you know. Nothing about them is wrong, or so they think. Any criticism is considered a personal attack or the mutterings of someone who is obviously inferior to themselves. They are quick to correct others.

**Older school-age children** have a much more realistic understanding of who they are and what they can do. They are now able to describe themselves using a variety of adjectives. They tend to compare themselves to the adults they see. It is not unusual for them to adopt the hairdos, dress and mannerisms of popular sports and music stars.

## EMOTIONAL DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT

### A. Feelings and emotions

**Young school-age children** express feelings and emotions behaviorally. They are demonstrative with both positive and negative emotions. They experience feelings but are unable to label them. Overall, they are emotionally on an even keel. If they do erupt, the upset is usually short term.

**Middle school-age children** are beginning to use words more than actions to express feelings and emotions. Name-calling, teasing and rank-outs become a primary method for responding to upset. They use analogies or "kinda like" expressions for describing positive emotions. They definitely do not want to say or do "yucky" things, like giving their parents a kiss goodbye or saying "I love you."

**Older school-age children** are quite able to express themselves with words. They are aware of degrees of emotion and will spend a lot of time finding just the right word to describe their feelings. They use their voice and facial and body expressions to accent the various degrees of feeling they experience. Exaggeration and sarcasm are frequently used to describe subtle meanings and nuances. Although they can label many feelings and see their expression in others, older school-age children have problems seeing similar emotions in themselves.

... this article will continue in the next *Child Care Licensing News*

Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care - NNCC. Eller, C.L., & Mulroy, M.T. (1993). Developmentally appropriate programming for school-age children. *\*Beyond Opening Day\** series). Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension.



## CARING FOR MULTI-AGE GROUPS

**Advantages:** Multi-age groups promote family-like relationships; Children can teach and learn from each other; Children in such groups have greater freedom to develop at their own rate without being labeled as slow or extremely bright.

**Disadvantages:** Many providers feel that caring for children of varying ages makes it difficult to plan activities; Meal planning is a common concern; Same-age playmates are hard to come by.

### EIGHT RULES FOR WORKING WITH MULTI-AGE GROUPS

1. Arrange your play areas to provide a wide choice of activities.
2. Provide some play areas that are used specifically for an age group.
3. Consider the ages of children when you store materials.
4. Provide materials that can be used in different ways.
5. Become comfortable with the fact that very young children, like infants or toddlers, do not always have to "do" an activity.
6. Avoid large group activities.
7. Focus on experience-related activities rather than product-related activities.
8. Teach children self-help skills and encourage children to help each other.