



Assessments: Developmental Mapping; Child Development Stages

During childhood the brain develops, grows and organises at an intensive rate. Therefore, when adversity, abuse or traumatic experiences occur during this crucial period, it will potentially have an impact on the child's cognitive, emotional and social development, meaning the child's developmental age may differ to the child's chronological age.

'Researchers generally conclude that trauma in early development and impairment in the attachment relationship between child and caregiver, often impact upon executive functioning (attention, concentration, anticipation, planning, abstract reasoning, cognitive flexibility, impulse control); verbal IQ; verbal memory and expressive and receptive language skills.'

(Skuse and Matthew, 2015)

These factors may present as a lack of consequential thinking, avoidance, defiance, challenging behaviour, problems in controlling temper, lack of empathy, an unwillingness to provide explanations, etc. When intervening, it is vital that professionals connect with the child's development age so that presenting behaviours are understood in this context. If programmes are to be effective it's vital that interventions are matched to the cognitive abilities of the children (Skuse and Matthew, 2015).

This is not a formal evidence-based assessment but a subjective assessment that assists determine the age range to tailor interventions at. This is a useful tool to assist all professionals involved adapt interventions to suit the child's lowest level of functioning.

DEFINITIONS

COGNITIVE - Cognitive functioning refers to the child's ability to learn, think, reason, understand, remember, problem solve, use logic, decision make, and pay attention, shift from one task to another, multi-task, follow instruction.

EMOTIONAL – Emotional functioning refers to the child's ability to deal with, discuss and control emotions (ability to self-regulate) and how they experience emotions and react to other people's feelings and other people's feelings towards them. Their resilience, patience, confidence and their self-esteem.

SOCIAL – Social functioning refers to the child’s ability to interact and act appropriately in social contexts. Making friends, maintaining friendships, speaking to adults, assertiveness, coping skills, communication skills, body language, turn-taking, sense of space, flexibility, co-operation, recognition of social cues. Their sense of self and personal identity.

AGE	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
<i>1-2 Years</i>	Can’t focus on things that are not immediately in front of them. In the moment. Says "NO". Short attention span. May say a few words. New person anxiety.	Unpredictable. Normal to be fearful, anxious. Selfish. Is impatient and can be easily frustrated. Anxiety when separated from adults.	Apprehension about new people. Tends to be rebellious. Plays alone. Won’t share. Prefers the company of adults. Jealous when not center of attention.
<i>2 Years</i>	Refers to self by name/third person. Uses simple sentences. Can think about things outside of immediate experience but can’t reason or use logic. Follows two step directions. Solves problems by trial and error (repeats behaviours).	Developing trust in the world. Feeling they can control behaviour. Needs encouragement, support. Easily frustrated. Strives for independence; uses "NO". Can be stubborn. Needs routines. Conscious of adult approval/disapproval.	Joins in. Learning to share. Sense of self developing. Will co-operate in games with peers. Assertive. Instructs others to do things. Copies other people.
<i>3 Years</i>	Understands simple concepts. Creates imaginary friends. Developing attention skills. Problem solving skills. Short term memory and long-term memory.	Can express emotions, talks about strong feelings. Identifies feelings. Expresses likes/dislikes. Begins to show emotion in more acceptable ways. Is concerned with pleasing people. Is aware of their own feelings and other’s feelings. Talks about strong feelings. Develops sense of self. Feels responsible for their own actions. Follows rules.	Makes friends of similar ages. Likes to help. Understands rules. Seeks attention. Imitates peers. Requests needs and wants.
<i>4 Years</i>	Longer attention span. Asks questions. Is interested in death. Begins to understand time concept.	Talks about feelings. Manages impulses. Recognises and identifies emotions. Shows empathy. Likes to brag and boast. Interested in rules. Acts silly if tired. Behaviour sometimes out-of-bounds. Has many fears. Understands danger. Shows temper. Beginning awareness of good and bad. Very noisy.	Strong need for friends. Enjoys being silly. Tags along with older children. Likes being in a group. Starts to grasp sharing. Can take turns. May pick up things that do not belong to them. May tell tall tales/lies. Sense of humour. Asks why?
<i>5 to 7 Years</i>	Can shift attention. Able to give more thought to decisions. Uses cognitive skills to solve problems/attain goals.	Wants to be treated like an adult. Can accept fair punishment. Feels hurt when called names. Worries about being liked.	Can be tell-tale. Needs approval of friends and adults. Asks for lots of directions. More flexible, Solves conflict. Develops

	Begins to see others' point of view. Questions are fewer and meaningful. Logic appears but can only think about real life concrete experiences. Makes connection between ideas.	7 plus - Expresses feelings with words. Delays gratification. Manages change. Uses coping skills when upset.	judgement of right/wrong.
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AGE	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
<i>8 to 10 Years</i>	Understands the events are influenced by multiple factors. Can apply logical thought to practical situations. Beginning to understand cause and effect. Understands the concept of time; has ability to plan ahead. Better control over memory. Problem solving skills. Capacity to link behaviour to consequence develops,	Reacts to the feelings of others. Sensitive to criticism and ridicule. Seeks warm and friendly relationships with adults. Worries about personal safety, loss of parents, family finances and personal self-esteem issues. Can control temper most of the time. Good sportsmanship. Asserts self in positive way. Impulse control develops at age 10	Peer group and cliques more important. Cooperates in a group setting. Handles peer pressure. Enjoys group activities. Negotiates and compromises.
<i>11 to 13 Years</i>	Begin to think in abstract as well as concrete. Uses abstract words. Beginning of independent, critical thinking. Can apply logic to solve problems. Can consider alternatives in problem solving. Plans for the future.	Tends to lack self-confidence, may be self-conscious, shy, introspective. Worries about other's opinions, especially peers. Sometimes moody and unpredictable but emotional outbursts less frequent. Stands up for themselves. Manages fear and rejection.	Shows empathy. Learning to make appropriate decisions to resolve conflict. Develops persistence. Identifies with a peer group. Accepts personal and community responsibility.
<i>14 to 16 Years</i>	Concerned with the hypothetical, the future. Better able to plan for the future. Tests ideas and considers all possible ways a problem can be solved. Goals often exceed capabilities. Predicts the impact of time upon relationships and events. Identifies inconsistencies in arguments. Identifies how situational factors influence self and others	Competitive peer relationships. Daydreaming is common. Developing socially responsible behaviour. Reflective. Thoughtful.	Expresses the need for independence. Preoccupied with acceptance by peers. Groups continue to be same gender, but more heterosexual interaction begins.

REFERENCES

Piaget, J. *Tomorrows Stars* retrieved on 14th February 2021 from <[Tomorrow's Stars: Cognitive Development \(tomorrowstars-childdevelopment.blogspot.com\)](http://tomorrowstars-childdevelopment.blogspot.com)>

Skuse, T. and Matthew, J. (2015) *The Trauma Recovery Model: Sequencing Youth Justice Interventions for Young People with Complex Need*. Prison Service Journal 220. P16.