COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF

Seven-Year-Olds

In contrast to brash, noisy sixes, seven-year-olds are generally quiet, sensitive, and serious. Their intense moods often change quickly. Sevens tend to work hard at everything they do and need private time to manage their new thoughts and feelings.

SOCIAL

- May be moody, shy, sulky, touchy; sometimes depressed
- Prefer playing and working alone or with one friend
- May change friendships quickly and feel "nobody likes me"
- Rely on adults for help and reassurance
- Need the security of rules, routines, and physical boundaries

PHYSICAL

- Often keep their eyes focused on a small, close area
- Copying from board is very hard
- With head on arm or desk, grasp pencil point tightly and write very small
- Can do quiet work for longer periods
- Can get sick from worrying about tests, assignments, etc.

COGNITIVE

- Better at understanding ideas such as time, space, and quantity
- Learn new words and meanings quickly; enjoy writing stories
- Open to learning math
- Good at classifying, such as sorting buttons, pictures, leaves, and shapes
- Listen well and speak precisely
- Enjoy hands-on exploration of how things work
- Bothered by mistakes and try hard to make their work perfect
- Like to work slowly and finish what they start
- Enjoy repeating tasks and reviewing learning

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF

Eight-Year-Olds

Enthusiastic and imaginative, eights often love big challenges but lack the work skills and patience to complete their plans. Children this age need adult help to know their limits and work through the steps to their goal.

SOCIAL

- Love group activities and cooperative work
- Prefer playing with peers of the same gender
- Like to talk and explain ideas
- Good sense of humor
- Adjust well to change; bounce back quickly from mistakes or disappointments

PHYSICAL

- Full of energy; play hard, work quickly, and tire easily—do better with several short play breaks than one long one
- Eyes able to focus well on objects near and far
- May have growth spurt
- Limited attention span; short exercise breaks help concentration
- Better control of eyes and hands allows cursive writing and copying from board

COGNITIVE

- Industrious, impatient, and full of ideas; often take on more than they can handle
- Listen well but may not always remember what they've heard
- Getting good at handwriting, handcrafts, computers, and drawing
- Excited but also nervous about exploring the broader world
- May give up when things are hard but soon want to try again
- Interested in rules, logic, and fairness

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF

Nine-Year-Olds

The enthusiasm of eight often turns into brooding and worrying at nine. Nines tend to be critical of the world around them—nothing seems fair to a nine-year-old. But nine can also be a time of budding intellectual curiosity. Children this age look hard for explanations of how things work and why things happen as they do.

SOCIAL

- Very competitive, yet may form cliques
- Complain a lot; criticize self and others (including adults)
- Often say "I hate it," "I can't," "It's boring," etc.
- Like to work with same-gender partner
- Can work in groups but with lots of arguing
- Enjoy exaggeration, "dirty" jokes, and graffiti
- Need adults to be patient and explain clearly
- Need adult lightheartedness, humor, and encouragement to lighten their mood and relieve anxiety

PHYSICAL

- Coordination is better; boys love to rough-house
- Like to push physical limits; get tired easily
- Complain about aches, pains, and injuries
- Restless; can't sit still for long
- May bite nails or twist hair to relieve tension

COGNITIVE

- Worry about world events, parents' health, friends, school, etc.
- Work hard and pay attention to detail, but may jump quickly between interests
- Less imaginative than at eight years old
- Want factual explanations; enjoy scientific exploration
- Have trouble understanding abstractions such as large numbers, long periods of time, and vast areas of space
- Love language and word play
- Begin to see the bigger world, including issues of justice and fairness
- Enjoy "interest" clubs such as stamp collecting, chess, or rock collecting clubs

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