



Understanding a Child's Perspective



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Instructional Objectives

- ✓ Explain the rationale for being a developmentally trained officer
- ✓ Study six key areas of child development
- ✓ Describe the characteristics of children in four stages of development
- ✓ Apply your understanding of child development to a set of vignettes
- ✓ Develop a personal set of guiding principles to help your work effectively with children

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Innocent children



Guilty adults

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Six Ways Children Grow

Physical	Undergoing biological changes, including puberty
Language	Communicating wants, needs and understandings
Psychological	Developing a sense of self, uniqueness & worth
Ethical	Distinguishing right from wrong
Social	Building productive relationships and perspectives
Cognitive	Capacity for logic, reason and creative thought

Developmental age does not always match chronological age

Culture, environment, health and personality affect every child at every age. Not every child develops at the same pace.



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What do we already know?



Primary



Intermediate



Middle School



High School

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Common Observations: Primary Students



Primary

- ✓ strong attachment to their home and family
- ✓ short interest span
- ✓ aware mainly of self & own desires
- ✓ imaginative, enjoys make-believe
- ✓ curious, likes to explore
- ✓ desires repetition of enjoyable experiences
- ✓ easily upset by changes in routine or environment
- ✓ boys & girls playing together readily
- ✓ depends on adults to meet physical & emotional needs
- ✓ needs patient understanding & close supervision

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Common Observations: Intermediate Students



Intermediate

- ✓ a longer attention span
- ✓ aware of others and are willing to share
- ✓ desires acceptance from their peers
- ✓ needs close friendship with playmate
- ✓ able to express freely in art forms and play
- ✓ desires better skills performance
- ✓ interested in group games and activities
- ✓ wants everyone to obey stated rules and regulations
- ✓ strongly identifies with own sex and age group

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Common Observations: Middle School



Middle School

- ✓ wants to make friends & be accepted
- ✓ wants to be together in groups & teams
- ✓ able to pursue short-term goals
- ✓ forms cliques & friendships with own sex & age group
- ✓ seeks status through skills & knowledge of grown-up things
- ✓ fairly competitive
- ✓ concerned with physical size & appearance
- ✓ likes to make, do & collect things
- ✓ enjoys being mischievous & daring
- ✓ going through puberty
- ✓ being greatly influenced by popular adults & teenage idols

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Common Observations: High School Students



High School

- ✓ strong drive to conform
- ✓ intense feelings and emotions
- ✓ rapidly changing interests & ambitions
- ✓ increased capacity for self-discipline
- ✓ Idealistic
- ✓ desire increased responsibility
- ✓ need to be treated as young adults
- ✓ occasionally revert to childish behavior
- ✓ self-critical; self-conscious

- ✓ seeks prestige & belonging to the power group
- ✓ specializes in selected skills & interests
- ✓ expansive & changing ambitions
- ✓ conflict between idealism & materialism
- ✓ develop crushes with depth of feeling
- ✓ tend to cover own weaknesses with similar weaknesses of the group
- ✓ prefers competition with outside groups over competition with friends

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Vignette 1: The Young School-Age Child (Elementary School)



Officer Martinez is preparing to talk to a new student, a third-grade girl, who has been accused of stealing money from a classmate. When Ashley meets with Officer Martinez, her first anxious questions are "Am I going to jail? Are you going to tell my parents?"

Officer Martinez realizes that his first challenge to getting to the bottom of the situation is to put Ashley at ease. In talking with Ashley, he discovers that she has been eating a meager lunch packed by her mother each day. She shamefully admits to stealing the money. When asked why, she shares that she is hungry a lot of the time, and all she wanted to do was to have some extra money to buy a snack like the other kids do.

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Vignette Questions



- ✓ **Based on your knowledge of children, what developmental issues are presented by this scenario?**
- ✓ **Which SRO role could be used to respond and what would that response be?**
 - Problem solver/community liaison
 - Educator
 - Law enforcement/safety specialist

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Vignette 2: Pre-Adolescent (Middle School)



Tommy is an 11-year-old boy in the fifth grade. He is an average student and has been mildly disruptive at times during the school year, but has not been involved in any serious events. He is generally well-liked by his peers. Teachers find him pleasant, but do not have much to say about him. A teacher reports to the vice principal that students are talking about a knife that Tommy was showing off to a group at the lunch table. Tommy was immediately sent to the office.

Officer Chen knows Tommy from the DARE class that she taught. At the request of the vice principal, Officer Chen talks with Tommy about the incident involving the knife. Tommy freely admits bringing the knife to school and states that he brought it to show to his friends. He also admits knowing it was against the rules to do so. He explains that his older brother who was visiting from the Air Force had just given him the knife with a cool Air Force insignia on it. Officer Chen asks to see the knife, and it is as Tommy described. It appears to be a small utility knife with a military insignia.

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Vignette Questions



- ✓ **Based on your knowledge of children, what developmental issues are presented by this scenario?**

- ✓ **Which SRO role could be used to respond and what would that response be?**
 - Problem solver/community liaison
 - Educator
 - Law enforcement/safety specialist

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Vignette 3: The Mid-Adolescent (High School)



Officer Lewis is called to an emergency in the hallway near the high school gym. When he arrives two sophomore male students are involved in a violent fight that includes name-calling and slurs regarding sexual orientation. The fight is surrounded by a large group of students who are yelling and egging them on. Both combatants are bleeding from their mouths. No weapons are immediately evident. Officer Lewis and several teachers disperse the crowd, and then, with great difficulty, separate the fighting students. They are both brought to the main office where they are put into separate rooms to complete incident reports.

Upon investigation, it is discovered that the instigator of the fight has been targeting certain students with similar accusations. It is also discovered that he has recently been bragging about being recruited by a local hate group.

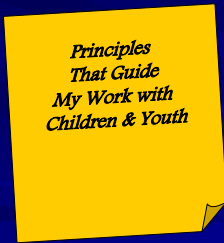
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Vignette Questions



- ✓ Based on your knowledge of children, what developmental issues are presented by this scenario?
- ✓ Which SRO role could be used to respond and what would that response be?
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Using what we know



Create a personal list of principles for working effectively with your students. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the group.

Developmental Protective Factors

School provides	Stimulating activities, learning opportunities, connection to school, social and academic skills, opportunities for responsibility & decision making, boundaries, motivation, positive climate, parent engagement
Community provides	Safe/caring neighborhoods, opportunities to belong and participate, role models, supervision, boundaries, spirituality, positive social values, opportunities to serve others, youth programs
Family provides	Support, communication, boundaries, roles models, expectations, supervision
Self seeks	Personal power, self-esteem, purpose, hope, to manage conflict, to resist pressure, respect for diversity, honesty, integrity, social justice, positive peer relationships

Children are not miniature adults