



Teaching Kids About Ages & States - Human Development Project

Every child grows and develops differently, doing things at their own pace. However, children generally reach certain milestones in their life at roughly the same time. Ages and Stages is a term used to broadly outline key periods in the human development timeline. The four stages are infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and middle childhood. Having a clear understanding of Ages and Stages will help 4-H youth who have chosen to take the Human Development project.

Infants (Birth to 18 months)

Infants see their world through their senses. To help infants mature and learn it is important to stimulate them. The goal is not to teach the infant but rather to help them interact and explore their world.

Toddlers (18 months to 3 years)

During this time a child is beginning to define them self. Activities that spur imagination and encourage vocabulary development are critical. Toddlers get into everything so it is imperative to keep them safe from potential accidents.

Preschool (3-5 Years)

During preschool years, children like to be busy cutting, pasting, painting, and singing. They are curious. Their minds are like little sponges always absorbing new information.

Middle Childhood (6-9 Years)

School age children continue to learn and are becoming more independent. Friendships are very important at this stage.

The *I Have What It Takes To Be A Babysitter* 4-H curriculum is a free download that can be found online at http://4-militarypartnerships.org/educator-staff/resources/curriculum/youth_babysitter.html There are interactive child development puzzles for each stage on pages 71-79 of the curriculum. Each puzzle lists multiple characteristics for a particular age and stage of children at is a good resource for 4-H youth.

Human Development exhibits for fair which involve designing a toy our activity made for a specific age group are based the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines found at <https://www.education.ne.gov/oec/early-learning-guidelines/> The six areas are:

Social Emotional Development: Projects should focus on creating strong, positive, secure relationships.

Language and Literacy Development: Projects should focus on communication skills such as talking, listening, playing, reading, writing, and learning.

Science: Projects should include a balance of content and multi-sensory experiences. Young children are curious and natural scientists.

Health and Physical Development: Projects could help promote fine and gross motor skills, as well as self-help skills. Children who are healthy and safe are more prepared for school.

Math: Projects should help children develop number and mathematical concepts through meaningful and active learning experiences.

Creative Arts: Creative arts projects should foster creativity and individual expression, self-esteem, imagination, and appreciation of cultural diversities.

