

Needs of Ages and Implications for PA Leadership

1st-3rd grade

- Very active
- Many friends at a time
- Aware of peer opinions
- Focused on self
- Beginning awareness of empathy
- Fairness is “being nice to others so they’ll be nice, too.
- Leader is a central figure
- Wants to avoid punishment
- Sensitive to criticism
- Concrete thinking based on what they know.
- More interested in doing than end results
- Focus on one thing at a time
- Put in small groups and encourage interaction
- Use role play to build empathy
- Help each child achieve success
- Use cooperation where everyone wins
- Show adult approval
- Be available to discuss fears
- Work on doing rather than finishing.
- Demonstrate rather than explain
- Plan short activities
- Allow for exploration
- Plan active projects

4th-6th grade

- Like to be with others similar to themselves
- Strong sense of loyalty
- Concerned about physical appearance
- Like to make others happy
- Still self centered
- Concerned with fairness and rules
- Wants to feel valued and needed
- Wants to act grown up
- Beginning to question authority
- Looks to adults for approval
- Likes to help plan
- Can understand new ideas
- May be moody
- Wants to make useful products
- Vary activities to accommodate differences
- Freedom within structured limits
- Allow for time to spend with friends
- Assist in formation of groups
- Encourage negotiation of rules prior to activity
- Reinforce positive communication and negotiation
- Give correction quietly and one-on-one
- Help them identify success.
- Recognize unique abilities
- Redirect inappropriate behavior
- Encourage goal setting
- Don’t play favorites

Camper Signals

If a child wants to belong she may:

- Act out to get attention
- Sit alone watching others play
- Be overeager to make new friends

If a child wants independence she may:

- Break rules just because she can
- Want to do it all alone even when she needs help
- Take on big tasks and not finish them

If mastery is important to a child, she may:

- Not want to quit when it's time
- Not want to do anything else
- Get mad if asked to share
- Want recognition for a job well done

Paying attention to age needs and camper signals, what would be good to do if:

One 1 st grade camper keeps leading the others into climbing all over you.	
One fourth grader keeps getting ignored by everyone else in the group.	
One 5 th grader keeps trying to form her own 'harem'.	
A camper, any age, refuses to follow directions.	
One 3 rd grader keeps demanding your attention.	
One 5 th grader keeps reacting negatively to anything you propose. It's starting to spread to others.	
When doing fun activities, one 6 th grader just keeps getting out of control.	