On the Psychology of Different Age Groups

PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL

(Stages 1 and 2—birth to adolescence)
Moral judgment *is self-centered*. What is right is what one can get away with, or what is personally satisfying. Moral understanding is based on rewards, punishments, and the exchange of favors.

1 Punishment-obedience orientation

Focus is on self-interest—obedience to authority and avoidance of punishment. Because children at this stage have difficulty considering another's point of view, they also ignore people's intentions.

2 Instrumental-exchange orientation

Children become aware of others' perspectives, but their morality is based on reciprocity—an equal exchange of favors.

CONVENTIONAL LEVEL

(Stages 3 and 4—adolescence and young adulthood)
Moral reasoning is *other-centered*. Conventional societal rules are accepted because they help ensure the social order.

3 Good-child orientation

Primary moral concern is being nice and gaining approval; judges others by their intentions—"His heart was in the right place."

4 Law-and-order orientation

Morality based on a larger perspective—societal laws. Understanding that if everyone violated laws, even with good intentions, there would be chaos.

POSTCONVENTIONAL LEVEL

(Stages 5 and 6—adulthood)
Moral judgments based on *personal standards for right and wrong*. Morality *also defined in terms of abstract* principles and values that apply to all situations and societies.

5 Social-contact orientation

Appreciation for the underlying purposes served by laws. Societal laws are obeyed because of the "social contract," but they can be morally disobeyed if they fail to express the will of the majority or fail to maximize social welfare.

6 Universal-ethics orientation

"Right" is determined by universal ethical principles (e.g., nonviolence, human dignity, freedom) that moral authorities might view as compelling or fair. These principles apply whether or not they conform to existing laws.

Age Group	Physical Characteristics	Social Characteristics	Mental Characteristics
7 to 10 Years Old	❖ Rapid growth – 2" average per year ❖ Frequent fatigue ❖ Nutritional disturbances ❖ Gaining control of small muscles of hands, feet and body ❖ Body movements more rhythmical	❖ More group conscious ❖ Evidence of cooperation ❖ Eager to learn ❖ Adventurous ❖ Attitudes and appreciations developing ❖ Interest in accomplishing tasks begun	❖ Initiative ❖ Imaginative ❖ Readiness to pretend ❖ Creative ❖ Craves to know why ❖ Rapid development of motor-mind coordination ❖ Skill in judgment and timing
10 to 12 Years Old	❖ Rapid growth, change in organs ❖ Girls developing slightly faster than boys ❖ Skill growth marked ❖ Sex characteristics developing ❖ Increased muscular coordination ❖ Health growing rapidly	❖ Very group conscious ❖ Loyalty ❖ Appreciate team play ❖ Self-conscious ❖ Some interest in the opposite sex ❖ Desire to be independent, strong ❖ Adventurous ❖ Developing into individual	❖ Rapid growth in ability to concentrate ❖ Struggle between realistic and idealistic ❖ Can see through things rapidly ❖ Increased ability to judge things well
12 to 15 Years Old	❖ Girls tire more easily than boys ❖ Rapid muscular growth ❖ Girls advance physically over boys ❖ Unskilled – very self-conscious ❖ Anxious about health and physical growth and appearance	❖ Self-conscious ❖ Loud and boisterous ❖ Hero worship ❖ Peer relationship extremely important and sometimes all consuming	❖ Intellectual interests growing and more selective ❖ Handles responsibility well when treated in adult manner ❖ Understands adult concepts ❖ Unpredictable – sometimes dependent, sometimes independent