



Profiles of Developmental Benchmarks, ages 4-7

In writing for **IBW**, you will often be offered projects which indicate a very narrowly focused target audience, such as ages 4-5 or ages 5-7. (**Never** expect to create for an **IBW** project with an audience ages 2-14!)

Why do **IBW** projects have such *tight* audience specs? In addition to entertaining, **IBW** titles help children with literacy development.

Literacy development happens in stages: reading readiness, beginning reading, and so on. Each step toward literacy works in conjunction with the child's developmental skills and abilities.

IBW also teaches *visual text literacy*. Visual text literacy is aligned with benchmarks in cognitive, emotional and social development.

The following short, age-specific profiles are offered to help our authors get the feel for their audience. *Knowing who your audience is* always improves an author's storytelling.

How to use these profiles? It's simple. If you have an *audience ages 4-5*, read profiles *Age 4* and *Age 5*. Now *that is* your audience! It will enable you to write not only within the skills and abilities that is your audience's life, but will also help you write about experiences the reader knows/understands.

No, please do not feel you must consult a child development textbook to write **IBW** titles! We only hope that by referencing these short profiles, you will get *the feel for your audience* making you an even better children's book author!

Age 4

The 4-yr-old has a passion for creativity. This is a time to lay the foundation for a life-long love of the arts. This love of art and discovery also results in rapid progress in linguistic skills.

Physical: *Toddling is far behind. The 4-yr-old is now mastering balance, such as standing on tiptoe, and speed. (Why walk when you can run?)*

Linguistic: *The 4-yr-old is busy learning with lots of What, Why, and How questions. A sense of humor emerges with giggles at simplistic jokes and an evolving understanding of plays on words. Parents learn to stay alert as their 4-yr-olds learn to use language to negotiate their position and desires.*

Cognitive: *The 4-yr-old's creativity gets more detailed. Drawings include details such as hands with fingers, often, even the correct number of fingers! The 4-yr-old begins to communicate through pictures and symbols, as some understanding of abstract ideas develops.*

Emotional and Social: *The 4-yr-old is becoming a good conversationalist not only with other children but also adults. Be ready to be engaged by lengthy prose on everything that sparks the 4-yr-old's interest. The 4-yr-old also begins showing interest in how things have come to be (i.e. understands their own life has **history** as well as **today**.) For example, the 4-yr-old may ask questions such as: 'What was my first toy?' 'Who came to my first birthday party?' The 4-yr-old is also beginning to work out right-from-wrong situations.*

Age 5

The 5-yr-old is an explosion of interest in anything and everything.

Physical: *The 5-yr-old can play games involving balls with a good degree of coordination. And, finally, SUCCESS! Most 5-yr-olds can dress themselves, with the results being that all garments are worn in their proper locations!*

Linguistic: *The 5-yr-old blooms from more complex and prolonged conversations with adults. Most words are pronounced correctly. A new love arises: riddles! Listening to riddles, guessing riddles, even making-up riddles (though these are often lost on everyone but for the 5-yr-old)!*

Cognitive: *The 5-yr-old is becoming a storyteller, retelling a favorite story read to them, as well as making up stories on their own. (Anticipate a blurring between fact and fiction!) The 5-yr-old can also juggle listening to a parent's instructions without dropping what they are doing. (Yes, the first steps of multi-tasking skills development!) The 5-yr-old also explores new forms of communications such as music and writing (corresponds with acquisition of reading readiness skills).*

Emotional and Social: *The 5-yr-old begins to thrive in one-on-one relationships, such as having a best friend. These new relationships also help the 5-yr-old experience concern for and express sympathy towards others who are hurt, sad, frightened, etc. Cooperative play flourishes.*

Age 6

The 6-yr-old's formal education begins. An entirely new world, apart from home and family, unfolds. Learning, friendships and exploring their own independence dominate the 6-yr-old's interests. Both physical and mental curiosity abounds!

Physical: *The 6-yr-old's memory skills expand for extended processing, such as ability to recall sequences for a dance. Coordination increases in ways such as ability to ride a two-wheeled bike (usually with stabilizers) and kick a football. Pencil control is a no-brainer as writing becomes a staple of the 6-yr-old's school life.*

Linguistic: *The 6-yr-old is also learning the expectation to conform. Raising a hand to speak or receive the teacher's attention, turn-taking in conversations, and rules of working cooperatively in the classroom. The 6-yr-old is also beginning to realize there are rules for everything, such as when to use "would" and "could" in a sentence.*

Cognitive: *The 6-yr-old learns that fully integrated attention is a must-do for learning. FOCUS! FOCUS! The 6-yr-old distinguishes between fact and fantasy. Also, observation is becoming more a part of life. As the realization sets-in that he/she is NOT the center of the universe, the 6-yr-old begins noticing the rest of the world! (Parents suddenly realize their child pays attention to everything they do, and then tells it to everyone they know!) Finally, the 6-yr-old uses new-found independence to begin weighing possibilities in decision-making situations.*

Emotional and Social: *Open-mindedness to all things new and different is bringing about great emotional and social changes in the 6-yr-old's life. The 6-yr-old enjoys cooperative games, considers the wishes of others, can describe own feelings and experiences distress if friendships are disrupted.*

Age 7

The 7-yr-old is growing in mental prowess! Well-thought questions and inquisitiveness grow in leap and bounds!

Physical: *Physical development in the 7-yr-old is becoming more finely tuned. Movements are precise and controlled; greater balance-related abilities and good spatial awareness. Hand-to-eye skills, such as ball-catching, improve.*

Linguistic: *The 7-yr-old becomes quite a jokester, as jokes become more complex both in their creation, execution and comprehension. The 7-yr-old has mastered most of both the regularities and exceptions in language. The 7-yr-old TALKS about just about everything. But continual questioning gives way to exploration. With enhanced reading abilities, the 7-yr-old is off and running finding answers, facts and literary worlds!*

Cognitive: *The 7-yr-old can do simple mental calculations. Creativity takes new forms of expression in writing short pieces, often accompanied by a new drawing style that takes on more of the artist's own personality.*

Emotional and Social: *The 7-yr-old's play becomes more elaborate. Peer group influence comes onto the scene. The 7-yr-olds soon discover their new-found individualism challenged by playground colleagues: **conform or be rejected by The Group.** (Yes, it does begin THIS young!)*