



Developmental Quadrant

Many children who were prenatally exposed to drugs and/or alcohol or experienced other trauma, are not on track developmentally due to the impact the trauma had on their brain. It is crucial that parents, caregivers, and support team members take into account their mixed developmental stages.

Fill in the developmental quadrant on the backside of this document for the child and use it as a tool to better support the child or teen.

Key points

- **Keep these ages in mind** in all interactions with the child, including: chores, play, expectations, frustrating situations, choices they make, etc. When determining their emotional, social & cognitive age, compare them to a neuro-typical child/teen of the same age.
- **Your child may display inconsistent behavior** in their abilities, reactions, responses, knowledge, etc. due to the brain injury they sustained in-utero from the exposure. Within the same hour, the child might display competency in a certain area, and not by the end of the hour.
- **It takes time** to re-frame how you support your child from a developmental age, but it will ultimately lead to fewer misunderstandings and behaviors. Many frustrations occur when we are not recognizing the developmental age of a child.

Directions

- 1 Physical/Chronological age:** Write down the child/teen's actual age. Compare the below ages to a neuro-typical child/teen of the same age.
- 2 Emotional age:** Think about what kind of things they like to play with, how they respond and react to being happy, mad, injured, sick, etc.
- 3 Social age:** Determine what ages of children they play with, what kind of things they play, what they watch, etc. The social age is often right in the middle between their emotional age and their actual age.
- 4 Cognitive age:** Look at their academic testing, or what levels of math or reading they are working on.

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