

## Key Principle: Considering Development

*Ratings should be completed considering the individual's chronological age to support identifying the needs and strengths of children/youth*

While every child/youth and environment is unique, we know that many developmental milestones (e.g. walking, talking, and toilet training) can be expected by certain ages. When rating any item in the CANS-NY, consider the child/youth as compared to their same-age peers. By comparing typical development, then identifying and rating needs, and strengths are more clearly defined. Think about how a child/youth's developmental stage impacts our understanding of whether social functioning, recreation, or anger control is a need. Let's review this example:

**Social Functioning:** Acts shy around peers, quickly reacts angrily to others, and at times shows frustration with others by throwing objects across the room.



**Jesse: Age 3**

This can be typical behavior of a 3-yr. old who is learning to navigate peer relationships, sharing, and exposure to other children.

**Grace: Age 6**

The behavior could be an indication of need. Though being shy is not the sole source of concern, Grace should be able to manage frustration without throwing objects.

**Jerry: Age 10**

This behavior could be an indication of need. Jerry's quick angry reactions could be an indication that he could use some guidance around expressing his emotions.

**Rayanna: Age 20**

Acting shy, her angry reactions to others, and throwing items, could point to areas of concern.

The School Achievement item is the only item that uses developmental age, rather than chronological age, when considering a need. According to the Reference Guide: "School achievement should be considered within the framework of expectations based on the child/youth's developmental age". If you used chronological age as your developmental frame, then every child with a developmental delay would be rated a '3' and would always be a '3'. Every child, however, can learn, they just learn at rates consistent with their developmental stage. Since we are focused on personal change it is best to consider developmental age with assessing School Achievement.

As you apply this principle in your practice, remember to: 1. Understand typical child/youth development. 2. Understand the basics of common developmental delays and disorders. 3. Caregiving capacity changes over time. 4. Be flexible in your understanding of strengths.

**Learn more:** [Considering Development Schoox Course](#)