

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING AGE

Chronological age vs developmental age

A child's chronological age is the age based on their date of birth. A child's developmental age is the age they are functioning at on a social, physical, intellectual, cultural and emotional level. Remember the word **SPICE!** A child may present as younger or older than their chronological age in any of these areas. This is sometimes linked to having to cope with early life experiences that were difficult and required the child to adapt. Some children may have developed the ability to look ahead and identify what they need to do to survive in the world. This can make the child seem a lot older than their chronological age, whilst other areas such as social or emotional age may be underdeveloped making them seem younger. Below are what each of these areas of development are.

SOCIAL AGE

The child's social age is their ability participate in co-ordinated play, share, collaborate, communicate with others, and resolve conflict. For teenagers this may also include the ability to interact using social media and other technical devices.

PHYSICAL AGE

The child's physical age focuses on their physical appearance, gross and fine motor skills, co-ordination and physical agility.



INTELLECTUAL AGE

This is the child's development of language and maths, as well as the ability for curiosity and wonder. Intellectual age includes the child's cognitive ability such as thinking and reasoning skills.



CULTURAL AGE

This is the child's cultural belief and understanding of their own culture as well as the culture of others.



EMOTIONAL AGE

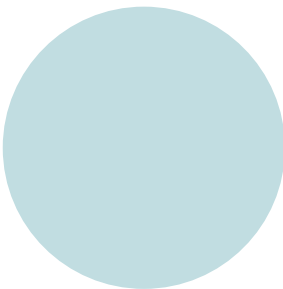
The child's emotional age focuses on their capacity to identify feelings, their ability to 'regulate' or manage their emotions, to experience empathy for others, to control their impulses, and to feel emotions such as joy.



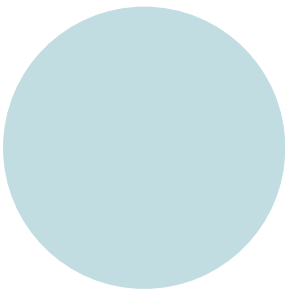
It is important to understand the difference between these age categories as it is possible that you, and other adults in their life such as teachers, may be reacting to your child's chronological age rather than their developmental. This can lead to frustrations when the child doesn't perform in a way adults are expecting for their age. It may be useful to think of each of these areas and what developmental age you would place them at. This will help to identify areas they may need extra support with. You can record the ages below.

My child's...

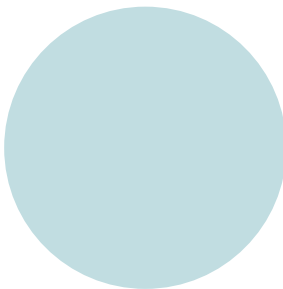
chronological age is...



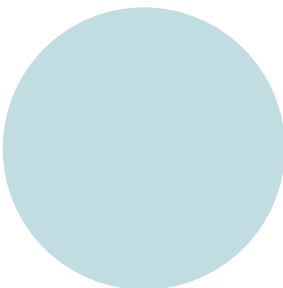
social age is...



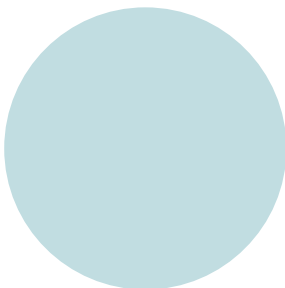
physical age is...



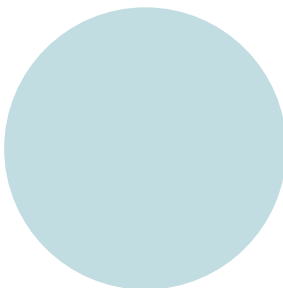
intellectual age is...



cultural age is...



emotional age is...



This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg