

PBL Description of Learning Phases

The following descriptions are general guidelines to help families determine what level of classes may be appropriate for each child. Chronological age is only one factor and individual variation is "normal". Some children vary significantly from the proposed timeline. Parents are encouraged to refer to this table as an aid. PBL leaders welcome the opportunity to discuss individual needs and assist you in the placement of your child into appropriate classes so that each will have a positive learning experience with PBL.

NURSERY PHASE		
0-9 months	9-14 months	15-24 months
<p><i>Mothers of new infants (pre-mobile) are the most prepared to judge what their infant needs. Mother and nursery leader should be in close communication. Babes in arm are welcome to stay with Mom or another mom could be assigned to hold the baby if Mom is a lead teacher.</i></p>	<p><i>This stage brings early exploration for a child as they explore environment as well as new physical skills. They may be developing "stranger/separation" anxiety. PB adults try to allow as much safe exploration as possible and try to develop a warm relationship with these children they serve.</i></p>	<p><i>Children nearing age 2 may be ready for some limited structure in a small group setting. The structured time and need to follow instruction would be short. When ready, this stage can transition into "early cor" for short periods of time. (Coordinate with teacher.) Many children at this stage are still prone to "stranger /separation" anxiety. PBL is a place where they can find a new adult to trust.</i></p>

COR PHASE

Cor is the Latin root for "heart". This learning stage is a time to educate the heart. It forms the center of all other learning.

<-----Less structure More structure ----->		
early cor (18m-3 yr)	mid cor (2-5 yr)	late cor (4-6)
<p><i>A child in this stage can enjoy a short picture book with limited words. Labeling things is helpful as language is just developing. Too much structure and expectation can create anxiety. Short "lessons" (5-10 minutes) are most effective with good doses of unstructured time. A few children can still feel "stranger /separation" anxiety and need to develop a trusting relationship with a caring adult.</i></p>	<p><i>The child in this stage is able to understand simple instructions. They are beginning to play with others, but still may have a hard time sharing. They can attend to story books with simple story lines. Impulse control is possible but not yet well established. Cor lessons of "right and wrong", "good and bad" are the center of their learning. PBLO is a safe place to make mistakes since that is a great way to learn through gentle corrections.</i></p>	<p><i>"Another story" tends to be the request of this child. They attend to longer picture books and even short chapter books with fewer pictures. ABCs and 123s are intriguing. Nursery rhymes and simple songs are delightful. They enjoy a group setting and handle longer periods of structured activities well, although they also love free play. "Can we go to the playground" is also a familiar refrain.</i></p>

CONNECT PHASE

This phase is a time of introduction and exploration to all the imagination can fathom. The student develops a relationship or connection with a wide variety of topics. A good connect phase is one where the student's curiosity is nurtured and fed. Enthusiasm for learning is central and "testing knowledge" is minimized.

<-----Less Ability to Focus More Ability to Focus ----->

early Connect (6-8 yr)	mid Connect (7-10 yr)	Late Connect (9-12)
<p><i>Learning in groups with friends is important to the student at this stage. It is easy to get distracted because pleasing peers is in the forefront more than adults now. The world is just opening up and this student can become obsessed with an interest. If the learning atmosphere is not positive, the student may resort to focusing on "being cool" even if they secretly like the subject. Direct contact with great minds through living books and selected resources is essential. This is a time to develop habits of attention to the first reading through narration practice. It is a time to reinforce core lessons and help them live those core lessons. Impulse control should be pretty solid by this stage.</i></p>	<p><i>Good habits are continuing to form. This student can get deeply involved with a story and, if it has been encouraged and practiced, can narrate with increasing skill and detail. Longer periods of focus are possible, especially in areas of great interest. Peers continue to be a paramount influence and care needs to be taken to encourage positive communications and peer encouragement. The need to "be cool" can be positive or negative depending on the learning atmosphere. It may seem that "fun" is the only goal for this stage. By this phase, sharing and impulse control are well established.</i></p>	<p><i>Hints of maturity start to come through from time to time. There is often a struggle between wanting to play like a child and wanting to observe and listen to adult conversations. Friends remain center attraction, but the logical mind is awakening and it is increasingly easier to reason through issues. There are times when they study a topic without being directed to do so... this is a gentle transitioning into more serious scholarship. At times this student is ready to be a "teen" and at times they need a good dose of Connect activities. They have learned to communicate their needs and desires so that conflicts are smoothly resolved through compromise.</i></p>

(EN)COMPASS PHASE (Over 12)

One indicator of the Compass stage is the student beginning to discover areas of personal interest and talents that guide his/her desires and direction in life. It en-compasses all of the connections of the previous stage. Wider circles of understanding begin to form.

By the time a student reaches Compass phase he is more self-disciplined and able to focus especially in subjects of high interest to them for up to 40 minute stretches without a break. She is willing to explore areas that have not previously been appealing as she begins to understand that all knowledge is connected. Peers are still very important, but “play” tends to revolve around conversations that are rather adult-like in nature. If given the choice between playing with younger children and speaking with adults, they tend to prefer the adult option more and more. They choose to study alone for long periods of time without adult interactions. They don’t like “busy work”, but want to have real work and projects that are useful now or in helping them prepare themselves for the future. Good mentors are essential at all stages and parents have served most of that role, but now parents often need to help them connect with “experts” in areas that interest them.

CANVAS PHASE (Over 18)

A late Compass phase could easily go into the early twenties but sooner or later it yields to the Canvas phase where the student envisions a picture of what his or her life may be. It is like standing before a white canvas and beginning to add color and shape. You see physical manifestations of the unique way she directs a myriad of connections that have been stored in her heart. A beautiful and unique painting begins to emerge.
