

Yardsticks (4th Edition)

Reviewed by Sara Alswager

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Age Range: Adult Educators

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Themes: This book is a teaching tool that defines developmental and social characteristics typically displayed by students at each year of life. Yardsticks was written to help educators better understand what students are going through from year-to-year, and how we can best help them feel understood and appreciated.

Review: Yardsticks is one of several books given to participants of the week-long Responsive Classroom training session, but you can order it online even if you have not taken Responsive Classroom training. I highly recommend this book because it's easy to forget what being a certain age feels like. I have found the descriptions given by the book to be extremely accurate and valuable when planning for a certain grade level, but also when talking to kiddos that are struggling in my class (and their parents). A book like this is also valuable in situations when parents or other teachers might say "they didn't struggle with this last year, I don't understand why this is happening this year with them in your classroom." When we can examine the differences socially and developmentally from year-to-year of childhood and adolescence, it's very easy to see how students can change from year to year. The best way we can set students up for success is honoring the changes that occur in their brain from year-to-year while they are in our care. As is unique to music educators, reading about developmental changes is necessary when we teach the same students multiple years in a row. Caring about the whole child begins with seeing them for who they are right now, not the age they were when we first met them.

