



Developmental Considerations

1st grade (age 6)

Cognitive

- The language skills of six-year-olds become increasingly sophisticated. Their vocabularies rapidly increase, and their language moves beyond communication to provide a foundation for learning, including the development of independent reading skills. In general, their pronunciation of words is clear and they use complex grammatical forms accurately.
- Eager to learn and has a strong desire to please adults.
- Both cooperative & competitive. Both can promote learning.
- May focus on only one part of a situation. For example, a child of this age may believe that a tall, narrow bottle of soda contains more soda than a short, wide bottle with an equal amount because one is taller than the other.
- May believe that objects have feelings. For example, a child of this age might feel sorry for a car that has a lot of passengers in it.
- Will understand the concept of today, tomorrow, and yesterday.
- Will be able to follow two-step directions.
- Will know his full name, age and address.
- Will be able to answer who, what, when, where, why questions.
- Intuitive Phase: Speech becomes more social, less egocentric. The child has an intuitive grasp of logical concepts in some areas. However, there is still a tendency to focus attention on one aspect of an object while ignoring others. Concepts formed are crude and irreversible. Easy to believe in magical increase, decrease, disappearance. Reality not firm. Perceptions dominate judgment.
- Scientific discovery for children this age is affected by their tendency to straddle the world between make-believe and reality.

Physiological

- This period of childhood is the time each child begins to learn skills needed to become a self-sufficient person. Each child has his or her own personality that influences each step of learning and development. Physically, this is also a time of tremendous growth.
- Six-year-olds continue to enjoy moving in a variety of ways. Although far from proficient in motor skills, this does little to dampen their enthusiasm for trying out new activities and sports. They are able to run in various pathways and directions and can manipulate their bodies by jumping and landing, rolling and transferring their weight from feet to hands to feet. Their hand- and foot-eye coordination is still developing, so skills like throwing, catching, kicking and striking are still emerging. With the right equipment, however, and a skillful partner, their motor skills continue to improve.

Emotional

- Developing self-esteem is a central issue at this age.
- In terms of social and emotional development, six-year-olds are confident and delight in showing off their talents. They start to display an increasing awareness of their own and others' emotions and begin to develop better techniques for self-control. Six-year-olds enjoy sharing toys and snacks with friends, although conflicts among peers may remain quite frequent. Predictable routines are important sources

of stability and security for children this age. Six-year-olds also draw emotional stability from their interactions with adults with whom they feel secure, particularly during challenging situations and circumstances.

- Home is still very important and is the foundation for becoming independent.
- Increasing separation and independence from parents are healthy steps in the child's development.
- Children at this age tend to identify with parent of the same sex.
- Is beginning to compare her or himself against other people's expectations.
- Is becoming aware that child is one of many people in the world. Up to this time, most children are focused primarily on themselves. Sometimes, this makes a child seem less outgoing than before.
- Aware of gender
- Can express needs and wants in appropriate ways, but may express self impulsively. Shows uneven ability to describe and practice techniques for self-control. Enjoys routines and may become easily overwhelmed by excitement. Prefers to make transitions slowly. Finds predictable routines and activities both comforting and desirable. Experiences either "positive" or "negative" emotions, rather than mixed feelings. Expresses negative feelings less frequently with age. May cope with negative emotions by relying on direct support (e.g., physical comfort and contact) from caregivers or distraction (e.g., watching TV).
- Able to distinguish fantasy from reality
- Sometimes demanding, sometimes eagerly cooperative
- Often develops modesty around this time
- May become more interested in his/her genitals and begin fondling them

Social

- Sense of security is reliant on relationships with close adults, very much relies on "secure base" relationships with adults (parents, teachers) to feel secure and comfortable, trust in these relationships is based on feeling understood and responded to in a regular and predictable way, the skills the child demonstrates in non-social areas (such as at school) often are dependent on feeling safe and secure with the adults present in that situation
- Will begin to gravitate toward playing with children of his/her own sex
- Will begin to think about the world from someone else's perspective, before age 5 the child was pretty much focused on her view
- Wants to please friends
- Wants to be like his/her friends
- Begins to show an increasing awareness of own and others' emotions, can label what others are feeling (e.g., frustrated, excited), begins to identify reasons for others' feelings (e.g., says, "He's feeling sad because...") but typically offers reasons for others' feelings based on direct observations or experiences (e.g., "...he fell down." or "...he didn't get to stay up late")
- More likely to agree to rules
- Likes to sing, dance and act
- Shows more independence and may even visit a next-door neighbor by herself
- Is developing the social skills to make friends.

Moral

- Will become very interested in the difference between truth and lies
- Six-year olds have to be right
- The early self is fragile when it begins to recognize the perspective of others
- Doesn't accept criticism or blame with composure, instead, child may argue or even lie to avoid blame - also hates losing and will blatantly cheat, or change the rules, to win in a competition
- Needs encouragement and praise, they need to know that it's okay to make mistakes and how to be a gracious loser, too much pressure for perfect grades and model behavior increases tension and is not appropriate at this stage of development, focus on being attentive and accepting to help him/her feel good about being whom child is at age six

3rd grade (age 8)

Cognitive

- In third grade, children select and combine skills and strategies to read fluently with meaning and purpose, they apply comprehension and vocabulary strategies to a wider variety of texts and are better able to check on and improve their comprehension as needed
- Children this age use their knowledge of text structures, vocabulary and the world to understand and communicate, they read for pleasure and choose books based on personal preference, topic or author; most children create engaging and detailed stories, as well as reports that are increasingly persuasive, informative or entertaining
- Is beginning to develop a subjective psychological conception of the self
- Is just beginning to be aware of a separate inner experience and outward appearance

Physiological

- Physically, this is the age when the amount of practice and play done in the earlier years begins to manifest itself in skillfulness and in what might be called "athleticism"; motor skills like throwing, catching, kicking, balancing, rolling and batting approach the mature stage and allow some youngsters to be highly successful in traditional sports like baseball, soccer and basketball; earlier years of practice also provide the foundation for success in sports like skiing, skating, golf, dance and gymnastics; this year is also the time when children frequently begin to identify themselves as "athletic" or "unathletic," thereby influencing their future involvement in sports and physical activity; during this period of development, children's actual skill levels will vary based on their amount of physical activity; sedentary children will not mature as quickly as those who participate in activities like dance lessons, team sports or backyard play

Emotional

- Developing self-esteem is a central issue at this age
- Eight-year-olds begin to understand the concept of masking emotions and can vary their use of coping strategies to deal with challenging situations
- Is learning to use standards like grades or home runs to measure his/her performance
- Home is still very important and is the foundation for the child to become independent
- Increasing separation and independence from parents are healthy steps in your child's development
- Tend to identify with parent of the same sex
- Beginning to compare him/herself against other people's expectations
- Is becoming aware that child is one of many people in the world. Up to this time, most children are focused primarily on themselves. Sometimes, this makes a child seem less outgoing than before
- Is a wonderful mimic. Child imitates both good and bad adult behavior
- Is able to communicate well with others without your help
- How other children perceive him/her will affect his/her self-image

Social

- Demonstrates knowledge of social customs for when and to who certain emotions are appropriate to express (e.g., receives an undesirable gift, and demonstrates arousal by biting lip, but says, "Thank you for the doll")
- Communicates needs, wants and emotions in healthy ways; consistently recognizes the views of others in classroom interactions; has become a good partner in play, shares ideas, sees others points of view and can work cooperatively toward a shared goal; participates in games with more abstract rules; enjoys making up elaborate fantasy games and situations

- Values friends greatly and makes them an increasingly important part of life; friends are those with whom she cooperates, exchanges good deeds and shares experiences; critical features of friendship include mutual trust, shared interests, a willingness to give and take, the ability to respond to each other
- Notices the impact of personal behavior on others and may modify behavior as a result; realizes that others have a similar awareness
- Recognizes also that people can be aware of each other's thoughts, feelings and perspectives; is conscious of the fact that mutual awareness influences each person's view of the other (e.g., says, "He won't be mad that I ate his cookie because he knows that I forgot my snack and was so hungry")
- Shows skills at settling conflicts with peers and may demonstrate leadership in this area; can talk things through and consider various perspectives when resolving differences; is also able to stay friends after a conflict and continue to work together
- Tend to be inclusive
- They play with everyone who is in their recess group and are generally kind and helpful to their peers
- They will fuss and fight, but hard feelings don't last long; eight will gladly comply because she is still accustomed to adult-directed play and rule setting
- Friendships at revolve around activities and proximity; friends will be the children in his/her classroom, in his/her neighborhood, at church or daycare, on team, or in his/her dance class
- Beginning to understand that his/her friends have families - starts to make sense of other people's family lives
- She/ He may spend the night with a friend whose parents are friends with his; or, he may go with a friend's family to a movie or event; but, he feels a bit left out and is happy to return to his family group
- Wants to have her friend over, but they get bored with each other and a little homesick without a structured, time-limited activity; she is happiest when she's with her own parents and siblings
- Introversions vs. Extroversions
- Social comparison becomes a basis of self-evaluation

Moral

- Doesn't always handle this awareness of self and others well
- Child often feels inadequate and unhappy
- Child will blame someone else when something goes wrong
- If child is criticized, he/she may burst into tears or take an attitude of who cares. It's as if he/she cannot tolerate being wrong or guilty, so child will go to any lengths to deny or explain away guilt
- On the positive side, the eight-year old have great courage and are very concerned with right and wrong.
- Needs his parents to guide him, to talk about what is right and wrong as he/she takes big steps to assert himself in the world around him. He/she is hungry for this type of guidance

5th grade (10 years old)

Cognitive

- Fifth graders can use deductive reasoning
- Fifth graders are capable of considering multiple possibilities before starting a problem; they can come up with a hypothesis and reason out the consequences

Physiological

- Motor skills are now well developed; many show great skill at sports

Emotional

- Don't often become angry, but they don't handle their angry feelings well -stomp off to room or cry and yell in anger
- With peers and siblings, can be quite explosive and even violent

- He/She will look for ways to get even with others whom she perceives to have treated her badly.

Social

- Is highly attuned to his/her peer group and recognizes his place in it
- Relates to parents with compliance and submission to authority.
- With peers, he is able to express the 'self' that parents don't always see; this is a critical step in preparation for the identity development to come
- Needs both the authority relationships with parents and teachers and the 'self' exploring relationships with peers
- Girls are very possessive of their friends and can be demanding and jealous ; they are constantly getting mad at or not speaking to a same-sex friend, usually because the other girl was friendly to someone else
- Girls begin spending the night with each other, sharing secrets and being best friends; because exclusion and put-downs are so common, parents need to keep a sharp eye on girls' friendships and cliques
- Most girls aren't really interested in boys at age ten, though some will begin to have crushes on popular boys
- Girls and boys play together well in groups or team sports at age ten
- Boys have an easier time with friendships; boys' relationships tend to be based on mutual interests rather than close, personal feelings
- Boys may have a few best friends and casual relationships with other boys on a team or in clubs such as Scouts
- Boys are seldom interested in girls at age ten, except to tease them or scare them; many boys claim to hate girls at this age; some will have a 'girlfriend' but are very casual about it
- Have good ability to sense the emotions of others and to read facial and body language
- Acceptance by the peer group is a critical step that seems to have a strong effect on the next level of development; poor peer acceptance at age ten is a strong predictor of behavioral and emotional problems in adolescence
- Do feel very close to their parents, siblings, and extended family; both boys and girls are happy to spend time with family in activities and outings; they do have frequent squabbles with siblings, fighting especially with younger siblings; they get along better with an older sibling, but may get their feelings hurt from criticism, teasing, or exclusion by their older brother or sister

Moral

- Child is not able to show principles underlying best behavior
- Only uses simple dos and don'ts imposed by authority
- Approaches concepts of God, death, and morality in a matter-of-fact manner
- Not concerned about death
- Most believe in God but see church attendance as either an accepted family ritual or a disliked chore
- Isn't guided by his conscience as much as by what parents and teachers tell him is right or wrong; but, he wants to avoid doing wrong and has a strong concept of fairness

More on Cognitive Development

Piaget's Four Stages:

Preoperational-
Age 2 through ages 6 or 7

General Description

Thanks in part to their rapidly developing symbolic thinking abilities, children can now think and talk about things beyond their immediate experience. However, they do not yet reason in logical, adult like ways.

Examples of Acquisitions

- Language: Rapid expansion of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Extensive pretend play: Enactment of true-to-life or fanciful scenarios with plots and assigned roles (e.g., mommy, doctor, Superman)
- Intuitive thought: Some logical thinking based on "hunches" and "intuition" rather than on conscious awareness of logical principles (especially after age 4)

Concrete Operations-

Age 6 or 7 through age 11 or 12

General Description

Adult like logic appears but is limited to reasoning about concrete, real-life situations.

Examples of Acquisitions

- Distinction between one's own and others' perspectives: Recognition that one's own thoughts and feelings may be different from those of others and do not necessarily reflect reality
- Class inclusion: Ability to classify objects as belonging to two or more categories simultaneously
- Conservation: Realization that amount stays the same if nothing is added or taken away, regardless of alterations in shape or arrangement