

6-8 Years



AGES & STAGES

Your school-ager is now ready for a steady pace of growing and learning, one in which real life tasks and activities overtake pretend and fantasy. Equipped with a longer attention span, your child also is ready to delve into projects, solve problems, and resolve arguments!

Physical development

- skilled at using scissors and small tools
- shows development of permanent teeth
- enjoys testing muscle strength and skills
- has good sense of balance
- can tie shoelaces
- enjoys copying designs and shapes, letters and numbers
- may have gawky awkward appearance from long arms and legs

Mental development

- may reverse printed letters (b/d)
- enjoys planning and building
- doubles speaking and listening vocabularies
- may show a stronger interest in reading
- increases problem-solving ability
- has longer attention span
- enjoys creating elaborate collections
- shows ability to learn difference between left and right
- can begin to understand time and the days of the week

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Provide opportunities for active play. Throwing at targets, running, jumping rope, tumbling, and aerobics may be of interest.
- Provide opportunities to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games: cards, dominoes, tic-tac-toe.
- Provide opportunities for your child to do noncompetitive team activities such as working a jigsaw puzzle or planting a garden.
- Encourage your child's sense of accomplishment by providing opportunities to build models, cook, make crafts, practice music, or work with wood.
- Encourage collections by allowing your child to make special storage boxes or books.
- Encourage reading and writing by encouraging your child to produce stories with scripts, create music for plays and puppet shows, produce a newspaper, record events, go on field trips, or conduct experiments.
- Help your child explore the world by taking field trips to museums, work places, and other neighborhoods.

Social and emotional development

- being with friends becomes increasingly important
- shows interest in rules and rituals
- wants to play more with similar friends—girls with girls, boys with boys
- may have a “best” friend and “enemy”



- shows strong desire to perform well, do things right
- begins to see things from another child's point of view, but still very self-centered
- finds criticism or failure difficult to handle
- views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs
- generally enjoys caring for and playing with younger children
- may become upset when behavior or schoolwork is ignored

Toy list

- arts and crafts materials
- musical instruments
- sports equipment
- camping equipment
- construction sets
- electric trains
- bicycles (use helmets)
- models
- board games
- skateboard (use helmets)

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, ISU Extension human development specialist.
Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

BOOKS



Books for parents

Parent's Guide for the Best Books for Children, Eden Ross Lipson

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk, Adele Faber and Elizabeth Mazlish

Caring for Your School-age Child: Ages 5 to 12, American Academy of Pediatrics

Books for children

A Chair for My Mother, Vera Williams

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst

Anna Banana and Me, Lenore Blegvard

Everybody Needs A Rock, Byrd Baylor

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi, Chris Van Allsburg

The Kid Next Door and Other Headaches: Stories About Adam Joshua, Janice Lee Smith

Little House in the Big Woods, Laura Ingalls Wilder

Ramona, Beverly Cleary

A word on development

Your child is unique. Each child's learning and growth rates differ from other children the same age.

If, however, your child is unable to do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you may wish to talk to an early childhood specialist. You are the best person to notice developmental problems, if any, because of the time you spend with your child. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

If you have questions about your child's development or want to have your child tested, contact:

- Your pediatrician or health care professional
- The local health department
- Area Education Agency - Early Childhood Special Education Consultant
- Iowa COMPASS 1-800-779-2001, TTY: 1-877-686-0032

Contact your county extension office to obtain other publications about children, parenting, and family life.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been compiled from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child's overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.

... and justice for all

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AGES & STAGES

Friendships and accomplishments are important to older children. Secret codes, made-up languages, and passwords are used to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Be prepared to use all your “patience” skills as your child may tend to think that he or she does not need adult care or supervision.

Physical development

Girls:

- are generally as much as 2 years ahead of boys in physical maturity
- may begin to menstruate

Boys and girls:

- have increased body strength and hand dexterity
- show improved coordination and reaction time
- may begin to grow rapidly at the end of this age period

Mental development

- shows interest in reading fictional stories, magazines, and how-to project books
- may develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- fantasizes and daydreams about the future
- enjoys planning and organizing tasks
- becomes more product and goal oriented
- has great ideas and intentions, but difficulty following through
- enjoys games with more complex rules

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Provide opportunities for older school-agers to help out with real skills. Cooking, sewing, and designing dramatic play props are useful ways to use their skills.
- Provide time and space for an older child to be alone. Time to read, daydream, or do school work uninterrupted will be appreciated.
- Encourage your child to make a call to a school friend.
- Encourage your child to participate in an organized club or youth group. Many groups encourage skill development with projects or activities that can be worked on at home.
- Encourage your older child to help with a younger one but avoid burdening older children with too many adult responsibilities. Allow time for play and relaxation.
- Provide opportunities for older children to play games of strategy. Checkers, chess, and Monopoly are favorites.
- Remember to provide plenty of food. Older children have larger appetites than younger children and will need to eat more.



Social and emotional development

- begins to see that parents and authority figures can make mistakes and are not always right
- often likes rituals, rules, secret codes, and made-up languages
- enjoys being a member of a club
- has increased interest in competitive sports
- has better control of anger
- may belittle or defy adult authority
- shows interest in opposite sex by teasing, joking, showing off
- prefers spending more time with friends than with parents
- may sometimes be verbally cruel to classmates with harsh “put downs” and snide remarks
- tends to see things as right or wrong, with no room for difference of opinion

Toys and hobbies

- arts and crafts materials
- musical instruments
- sports equipment
- camping equipment
- construction sets
- electric trains
- bicycles (26-inch wheels for kids 10 and older; use helmets)
- models
- board games
- skates

BOOKS

Books for parents

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- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, Adele Faber and Elizabeth Mazlish
- Caring for Your School-age Child: Ages 5 to 12*, American Academy of Pediatrics

Books for children

- Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, Judy Blume
- Chocolate Fever*, Robert Kimmel Smith
- How It Feels to Be Adopted*, Jill Krementz
- How To Eat Fried Worms*, Thomas Rockwell
- The Indian in the Cupboard*, Lynn Banks
- Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade*, Barthe DeClements
- The Oxford Book of Poetry for Children*, compiled by Edward Blishen
- Ramona's World*, Beverly Cleary
- Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, Judy Blume



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File: Family Life 8

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