



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

- 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

- 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



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
- Compass 1-800-779-2001.

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

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

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